

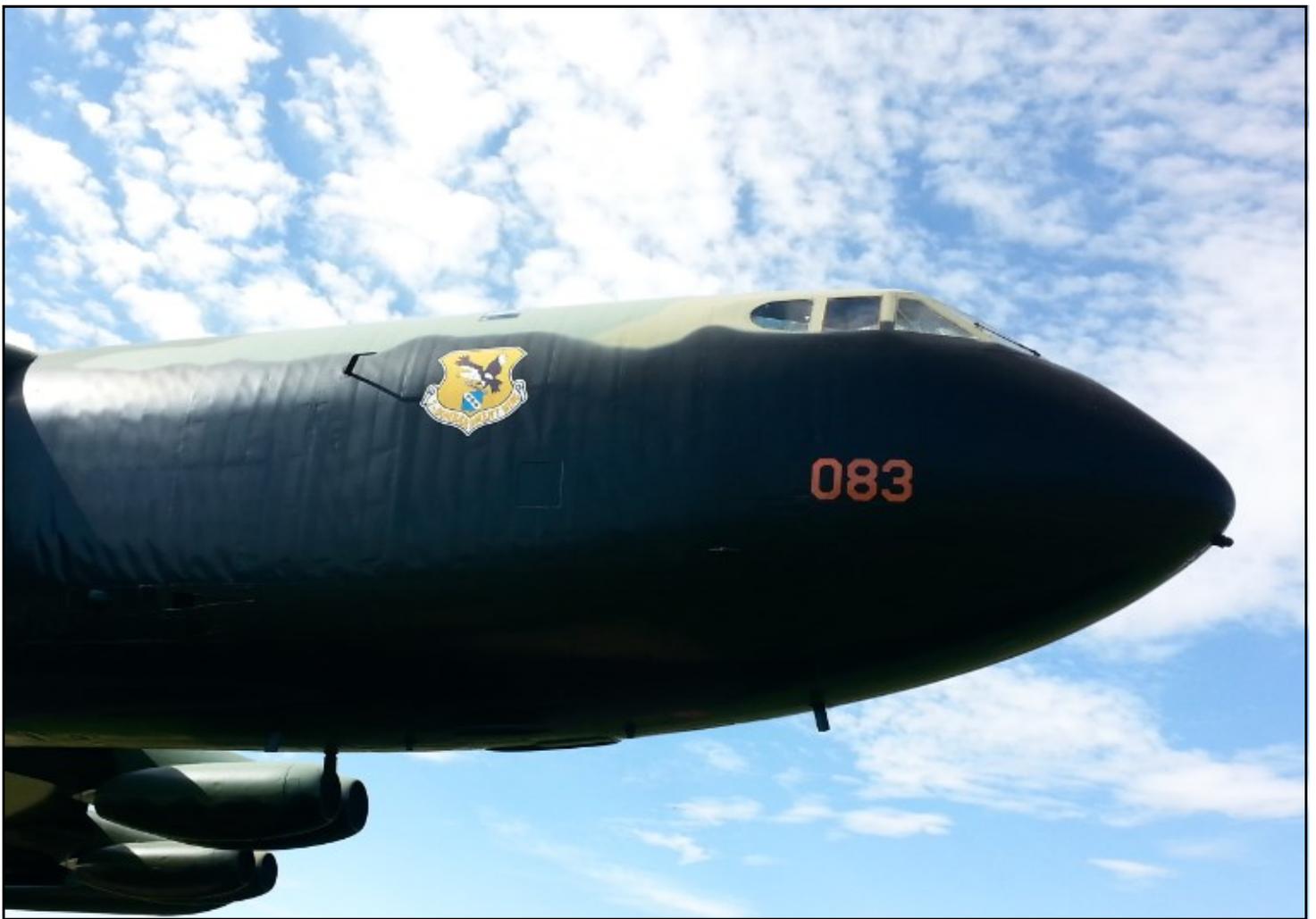
SHORT BURSTS

Air Force Gunners Association

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December 24, 1972 -- Airman 1st Class Albert Moore, tailgunner aboard the B-52D "Diamond Lil" is credited with shooting down a North Vietnamese MiG-21 fighter while flying in support of LINEBACKER II, one of two confirmed kills by aerial gunners in the entire war. Diamond Lil is placed on display at the Academy after its decommissioning in 1983.

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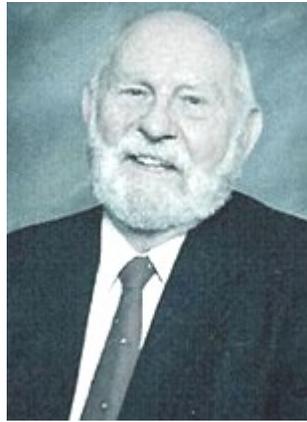
Memorial Day 2017 is almost upon us. In this issue you'll find tributes, first-hand remembrances of gunners that aren't here anymore. In homage, we all still remember the true meaning of Memorial Day as Frank reminds us with tears at every reunion when he makes his special presentation. REMEMBER!

Distinguished military members are still risking injury and death in stinking hellholes with endless brown dust and sand. This may continue for another decade before it is all resolved. REMEMBER!

The front cover depicts one of the nicest D models on display at the Air Force Academy. I was recently there attending a funeral. The widow accepted the flags of both her B-52 husband and cadet son. Having served on the Honor Guard, I thought I witnessed everything but never a father and son funeral.

After the AFA Cemetery burial, I swung by Diamond Lil and got to commemorate Al Moore, Steve Creech her crew chief, and all others that have gone before us. Wish they all were still here to attend the reunion. Now go and contact your gunner buddies, REMEMBER all of them too, and wish them peace!

FORMER AFGA ASSOCIATION OFFICERS



NEIL RICHARDS PAUL SAVKO ANDY ANDERSON DON MURPHY



BOB MATHERLY JIM HOKE PARKER BLAKE IGGY CRUZ

HONORARY GUNNERS KNOWN TO ATTEND REUNIONS



Lt Gen James Keck was our Guest Speaker at the 1995 Washington DC Gunner Reunion. He spoke so eloquently about his B-24 Gunners and the monkey they kept as a mascot on his crew they picked up while in transit over North Africa.

General Keck was recently honored and awarded the **Air Force Association Lifetime Achievement Award**. His lifetime contributions spanned from World War II with determined efforts that ensured peerless support to airmen and their families including all of us in the Air Force Gunner Association.

His distinguished career in association with Aerial Gunners began in training for World War II. He completed two combat tours of duty as a B-24 Pilot with the 8th Air Force in Europe, participating in all the campaigns of the 8th Air Force.

He served from June 1960 to June 1970 with the Strategic Air Com-

HONORARY GUNNERS, LT GEN JAMES M. KECK (Continued)

mand in tactical units employing B-47, B-52, KC-97 and KC-135 aircraft. He was Commander of Pease Air Force Base, New Hampshire, and the 465th Bombardment Wing at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

He served as inspector general and later as director of materiel for Headquarters 8th Air Force at Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts, and then as commander of the 72nd Bombardment Wing at Ramey Air Force Base, Puerto Rico.

General Keck took command of Second Air Force on May 1, 1972, and assumed the SAC Vice Commander position October 1, 1973. He was awarded the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) with oak leaf cluster, and the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters.



Standing: Walter Reed - BTG, Roy Rice - TG, Robert Elliott - RO, James Sutton - NTG Grover Summey - E
Kneeling: Gerry Banghart - CP, **James Keck - P**, Bud Eyer - B, William Dayson - N

HONORARY GUNNERS, LT GEN JAMES M. KECK (Continued)

Keck and Crew 34 went through Tonopah Combat Crew Training along with the rest of the 458th Bomb Group. They came to England via the Southern Ferry Route (where they picked up their crew monkey mascot) in January 1944. The 458th Bombardment Group (Heavy), arrived at RAF Horsham late in January 1944 from Tonopah Army Airfield Nevada. The group flew its first mission on 24 February with Consolidated B-24 Liberators.



Keck's crew flew the group's first combat mission on March 2, 1944 to Frankfurt, Germany. The next day the 458th was to bomb Berlin, but Keck's aircraft, Ye Olde Hellgate had several mechanical problems, and the crew was forced to abort for no sortie credit. Due to increasingly bad weather conditions over the Continent, this mission was recalled, the majority of the crews receiving sortie credit. It was three days later that the Eighth Air Force finally made it to Berlin in force. March 6, 1944 saw the fledgling 458th lose five of their Liberators and crews, the *highest single mission*

loss for the group's 13-month tour of combat. Keck's crew was lucky; they picked up a couple of pieces of flak, but made it back to RAF Horsham intact.

Keck did not fly on the April 8th mission to Waggum Airfield near Brunswick, but his Bombardier, 2Lt Harold "Bud" Eyer did. It is not known which crew he was with, but flying the nose gunner turret, Eyer was credited with an enemy fighter destroyed on this date!

Co-pilot 2Lt Gerald Banghart flew on this mission as well. He was a fill-in on the crew of 2Lt Stephen F. Davidson. Two DFCs and a Soldier's Medal went to this crew for their actions in bringing their severely damaged B-24 back to base for a safe landing with only minor injuries to the crew. Davidson and his Engineer were awarded the DFC and Banghart would collect the Soldier's Medal.

On this same day, 2Lt William R. Dayson, Navigator on Crew 34, was also a substitute on Crew 32, piloted by 2Lt Edward A. Sievers. This crew was the only loss of the day for the 458th. All ten men parachuted safely and spent the rest of the war in a German POW camp. Dayson went to Stalag Luft I on the Baltic coast.

On April 12, 1944, Crew 34 began to fly in the lead and deputy lead positions. After flying seven lead missions in April and May, Keck's entire crew was transferred to the 491st Bombardment Group (H) who had recently arrived from the States.

The new bomb group needed experienced crews and Keck fit the bill perfectly. After flying several lead missions, Keck was promoted to Major and transferred to 491st Group HQ. Gerald Banghart became the crew's Pilot and they completed their tour of combat missions.

The 458th Bombardment Group (Heavy) flew its last combat mission on 25 April 1945, flying *240 missions losing 47 aircraft in combat* along with another 18 before returning to Sioux Falls AAF, South Dakota in July 1945.

James Keck flew two combat tours in the European Theater of Operations and remained in the service to eventually rise to the rank of Lieutenant General and Vice Commander of SAC retiring in 1977. We salute you, Sir!



AFGA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - JOHN STALLINGS



Hello Gunners, Families, and Friends!

I hope everybody is enjoying the mild winter. Even though this has been a mild winter for most it is very cold for me since I just returned from my *sixth deployment* and when I left the desert the temperature was in the mid 70s. Since I live outside Chicago, Illinois the temperature this morning was below freezing and that is a 40-degree drop from what I'm used to. I wouldn't mind going back for a few months 'till it warms up. (Not sure if the family would like that).

The reunion is fast approaching! The **reunion** will be from **August 31 - September 3, 2017** in Nashville, Tennessee at the **Sheraton Music City Hotel**. The **registration** for the reunion will be **\$140 per person**. The rate for the room is **\$125.00 plus tax**. That rate is good for three days before and three days after the reunion.

The **Sheraton Music City Hotel**, 777 McGavock Pike, Nashville, Tennessee 37214, is just five minutes away via a complimentary roundtrip shuttle from the airport. The shuttle service is on the hour and half hour.

To make reservations for the hotel you can go to the gunners website (www.gunners.net) and under the reunion link you will see a link that will allow you to register for your room on line.

You can also **call the hotel direct at 1-888-627-7060**. Make sure you **ask for the Air Force Gunners Association Guestroom block**. If you have a special request i.e. King or Queen bed, room close to elevator, handicap room, you can ask at that time based on availability.

The hotel is square-shaped and has long hallways so if you would like to be close to the elevators please let them know. **YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE YOUR HOTEL RESERVATIONS BY SATURDAY, JULY 29, 2017**.

The following tours will be offered:

Friday Morning: Music City Tour with stop at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum – Lunch on your own.

Friday Night: Dinner and off to the **Grand Ole Opry**.

Saturday Morning – Ladies: Tour of Fontanel Mansion (former home of Barbara Mandrell).

Sunday: The Hermitage, home of the seventh President of the United States with lunch included. This is also where we will be doing our Memorial Service at the Hermitage Church.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO ON THESE TOURS, YOU MUST SIGN UP BY **WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2017**. ANY REQUEST TO ADD PASSENGERS AFTER THE GUARANTEE FINAL COUNT IS SUBMITTED WILL BE BASED ON AVAILABILITY AND SUBJECT TO AN ADDITIONAL \$10 PER PERSON, PER TOUR LATE SIGN-UP FEE. THIS IS FROM THE TOUR COMPANY *NOT THE AFGA*. Please see the following page for a description of each tour.

After the tour descriptions, you will find the **registration form** that you need to fill out and **return to Dan Danish by 25 July 2017**. His address is on the bottom of the registration form. You will also need to make your meal selection and tour selections. If you have questions about the form, please contact Dan Danish at **210-520-1517**.

Every attempt was made to keep the cost of the reunion down. Nashville is an expensive place and hope you are able to attend. For those of you who have not been to a reunion, I encourage you to come. The reunions are a great way to see old friends and meet new ones and you might even have fun while you are there.

Hope to see you in Nashville,
John Stallings 815-276-7067
jstallings4269@hotmail.com

AIR FORCE GUNNERS ASSOCIATION REUNION TOUR DESCRIPTIONS, September 1-3, 2017

MUSIC CITY TOUR - \$56

Friday September 1, 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

An enlightening and entertaining narrative will include the downtown area with some of its colorful history and beautiful architecture. Also, a drive by the historic **Ryman Auditorium**, world famous **Tootsie's Orchid Lounge** on **Honky Tonk Row**, the original **Ernest Tubb Record Shop**, the **State Capitol** and more.

You'll learn about Tennessee's rich history with a drive through **Bi-Centennial Mall Park**, view **The Parthenon**, the world's only exact scale replica of The Parthenon from Athens, Greece, and view the **WWII Memorial**.

A drive through **Music Row** where you'll learn about the recording industry from songwriting to record production to famous recording studios and the performance rights organizations ASCAP and BMI that monitor airplay of songs all over the world, to get royalties for songwriters.

We'll stop at the **Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum** (admission included) where you can explore the many, ever changing exhibits telling the story of country music all the way up to today's contemporary artists.

A lunch stop will follow the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum tour.

GRAND OLE OPRY DINNER TOUR - \$91

Friday September 1, 4 - 10 pm

We'll start our evening with dinner at the **Santa Fe Cattle Company** then we're off to the world famous **Grand Ole Opry**. Since 1925, the longest running radio show in radio history celebrates its' 92nd Anniversary in 2017. Dedicated to honoring country music's rich history, the Grand Ole Opry showcases a mix of country legends and the contemporary chart-toppers that have followed in their footsteps. This is the premier show that made Nashville famous and *not to be missed*.

LADIES FONTANEL MANSION TOUR - \$51

Saturday September 2, 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

It's labeled a "Ladies Tour", but men are also welcome. You'll enjoy a **guided tour of the Mansion at Fontanel**, a 33-thousand square foot log cabin and former home of country music legend and Hall of Fame member Barbara Mandrell. This is the only "home of the star" tour in Nashville that you can actually go inside! The Mansion boasts over twenty rooms, thirteen bathrooms, five fireplaces, two kitchens, an indoor pool, and even an indoor shooting range. The Mansion at Fontanel has been filled to the brim with photos, memorabilia, and personal items from the period when the Mandrell Family lived there. Additionally, the personal collections of current owners Dale Morris and Marc Oswald are featured, including one-of-a-kind items, personal photos, and keepsakes of the artists they currently manage – Alabama, Kenny Chesney, Big & Rich, Gretchen Wilson, and many others!

After touring the mansion you'll have free time on your own to explore **Natchez Hills Winery Tasting Room**, **Prichard's Distillery**, the **Stone House Gift Shop** or have lunch at **Café Fontanella** all located on the property.

THE HERMITAGE, MEMORIAL SERVICE and LUNCH TOUR - \$65

Sunday September 3, 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

We'll begin at **The Hermitage Church** for a memorial service. The church was constructed in 1823 from funds donated by Andrew Jackson and others. For generations, it has been a highly sought historic and intimate venue for special occasions. The hushed stillness of the quaint Hermitage Church will set the tone for the **Gunner Memorial Ceremony** and the simple brick structure is the perfect backdrop.

After the memorial you'll enjoy costumed guides on a **guided tour of The Hermitage**, beloved home of the seventh US President, Andrew Jackson, restored with hundreds of his well-preserved original belongings. Guides will share the stories, history, and lore of each of the rooms. Then at your leisure, you can explore the grounds, Jackson's tomb, and gardens.

Last stop is for **lunch** at **Hermitage House Smorgasbord** for a delicious buffet of southern fare.

AIR FORCE GUNNER ASSOCIATION NASHVILLE REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

August 31 - September 3, 2017 at the Sheraton Music City Hotel

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? IF SO, PROVIDE COMMENTS ON BACK. YES <input type="checkbox"/>				
REGISTRATION & BANQUET/OPEN MIKE (SEE NOTE 1)	BANQUET MENU CIRCLE ONE (CHOICES BELOW)	MUSIC CITY TOUR (FRIDAY AM) SEE NOTE 2	GRAND OLE OPERA TOUR (FRIDAY PM) SEE NOTE 2	LADIES FONTANEL MANSION TOUR (SATURDAY AM) SEE NOTE 2	THE HERMITAGE, MEMORIAL SERVICE & LUNCH TOUR (Sunday) SEE NOTE 2	ONLY ATTENDING BANQUET (SATURDAY PM) SEE NOTE 3	ONLY ATTENDING OPEN MIKE (SUNDAY PM) SEE NOTE 3	SUB TOTAL ACROSS
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
\$140.00	1 2 3 4	\$56.00	\$91.00	\$51.00	\$65.00	\$65.00	\$55.00	\$ _____

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NOTE 1: Each person attending the Reunion is Expected to Register. Your fee of \$140 includes Banquet & Open Mike Meals and all associated costs of setting up Reunion.

NOTE 2: ALL TOURS MUST BE SELECTED BY 15 JULY. UNFORTUNATELY, ANY LATE TOUR REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ASSESSED A LATE FEE BY THE TOUR COMPANY.

NOTE 3: ONLY SELECT THIS OPTION IF YOU DO NOT PLAN ON ATTENDING THE ENTIRE REUNION AND JUST WANT TO ATTEND BANQUET OR OPEN MIKE.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM AND SEND CHECK MADE OUT TO AFGA
NO LATER THAN 15 JUL 2017 TO:

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

GRAND TOTAL FROM
BOXES ABOVE

\$ _____

- BANQUET MEAL CHOICES**
- 1 = PECAN CRUSTED CHICKEN
 - 2 = SAUTÉED SAFFRON SALMON
 - 3 = MAPLE PECAN CRUSTED PORK CHOPS
 - 4 = VEGETARIAN CHEESE RAVIOLI

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.

Air Force Gunners Association

Event date:
August 28 - September 4, 2017

Venue:
Sheraton Music City Hotel

Air Force Gunners Association

Group rate available until July 29, 2017. Subject to availability.

[BOOK A ROOM](#)



Sheraton Music City Hotel

777 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37214, United States Phone: (1)(615) 885-2200 - [Contact Us](#) - [Announcements](#)



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[GUEST ROOMS](#)

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Enjoy a warm, southern welcome at the Sheraton Music City Hotel.

Connect with the heart of downtown Nashville at the Country Music Hall of Fame or experience the awe of The Grand Ole Opry. Spend a relaxing day at one of Nashville's beautiful state parks, the Adventure Science Center, or the home of President Andrew Jackson – The Hermitage. The Nashville International Airport is also just minutes away.

Gather with friends for a relaxed conversation in our beautiful open-air courtyard. Or swim to your heart's content in our indoor and outdoor swimming pools. As evening falls, retreat to your spacious guest room or suite and step into the fresh air on your private balcony or patio.

Over 32,000 square feet of centralized and elegant meeting space invites groups of 20 to 1,300 for meetings, events, galas, and weddings. As the second largest freestanding convention hotel in Nashville, we are honored to be recognized with ten consecutive "Gold Key Awards" for meeting excellence from Meetings & Conventions Magazine.

Find all the comforts of home and spend time with loved ones at the Sheraton Music City Hotel.

The toll free reservations number for the Sheraton Music City Hotel is **888-627-7060**.

Ask for the Air Force Gunners Association Guestroom block rate when making reservations.

A personalized web site for Air Force Gunners Association Reunion reservations has been set up by the Sheraton Music City Hotel for the special rate for rooms occurring between August 28, - September 4, 2017.

Guests can access the site to learn more about the event and to book, modify, or cancel a reservation from now to July 29, 2017.

Below you will find the appropriate link for participants to access the site:

<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/events/start.action?id=1606226912&key=1FB1DBB7>

(Copy and/or paste the link into your web browser on your smart phone or computer to access the Sheraton site displayed above to make your reservation on line or call the free reservation number **888-627-7060** to book direct)

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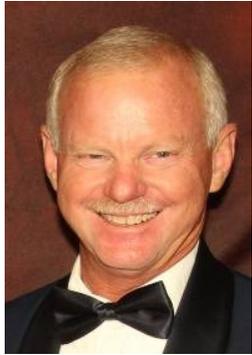
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AFGA VICE PRESIDENT - BOB ASHLEY



Hello Fellow Gunners,

My first duty station was Barksdale AFB. There were two bomb squadrons, the 596th and the 62nd. I was in the 596th but both squadrons pulled alert together. I met Bob Moehring while on alert and became good friends. Both our wives, also in the Air Force, best friends too. One time while on detachment alert at Whiteman AFB we were watching the Hueys fly the missile crews out of Whiteman going to some location out in the middle of no where. Bob turned to me and said, "I'd love to fly choppers some day."



Well after a couple of thousand hours in the B-52, Bob got out of the Air Force in 1982, after 10 years, and worked all kinds of odd jobs to make ends meet, but after two years of that civilian fun stuff, Bob decided to enlist in the Army 1984, and try to make that helicopter dream come true. He passed the Flight Aptitude Selection Test and with only a heart murmur during the flight physical, was selected for flight training at Fort Rucker in helicopters. He completed basic flight training was commissioned as a Warrant Officer and went on to train and fly the Cobra Attack Helicopter. A few years later he trained and flew the Apache Helicopter. In 1991, Bob flew the Apache in the Gulf War being stationed or positioned out in the middle of the desert of Saudi Arabia. Bob flew combat missions in Iraq and received an Air Medal during that time.



In 1994 Bob retired from the Army as a Chief Warrant Officer 2. Bob, being from the Fort Worth area, got a job with the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department to become one of the pilots. Until the position actually came open, he got hired as a jailer working the night shift (not quite a flying position). After nine months in the jail, Bob started flying a sheriff helicopter. About a year later, two other pilots crashed one of the helicopters and Tarrant County closed their flying positions.



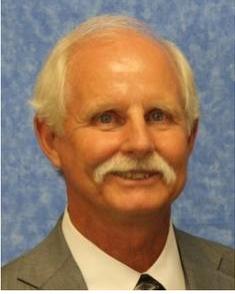
Bob then got hired on with the Guardian Glass Company as their corporate pilot, flying clients in and out of DFW. Again money getting tight with the glass company, Bob sought for a position flying an air ambulance. Bob flew with Air One out of Corsicana, Texas for a few years then heard about a need for a pilot for Cook Children's Hospital where he has been flying for the past couple of years.

Bob has over 7,000 flying hours and has made his dream of flying helicopters come true. His position with Cook Children's flies sick kids from all over to this highly acclaimed children's hospital.

Bob Ashley



MEMBERSHIP CORNER - CHUCK DEAN



Greetings from the membership corner. We've had a short winter and spring is just around the corner. Hope OUR membership will blossom just like the flowers in the next coming weeks!

We had three new members since our last SB issue. Also, I've had a couple members upgrade to LIFE membership.

Our new members are:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mark Fowler | B-52 |
| Robert Berryhill | B-52 |
| Patrick Nugent | B-52 |
| Mansell (Mike) Gilmore | upgraded to LIFE member |
| Clebernce Eldridge | upgraded to LIFE member |

We have about six months until OUR reunion in Nashville. I think this is going to be a really great reunion! I hope to see a lot of new faces there.

When you send in a payment for dues or the Short Burst, please make your checks out to AFGA instead of a specific person. Also, include your membership number on your checks. Thanks.

Chuck Dean

Aviators -

Once the wings go on, they never come off whether they can be seen or not. It fuses to the soul through adversity, fear and adrenaline and no one who has ever worn them with pride, integrity and guts can ever sleep through the 'call of the wild' that wafts through bedroom windows in the deep of the night. When a good aviator leaves the 'job' and retires, many are jealous, some are pleased and yet others, who may have already retired, wonder.

We wonder if he knows what he is leaving behind, because we already know. We know, for example, that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, it will remain as a longing for those past times. We know in the world of flying, there is a fellowship which lasts long after the flight suits are hung up in the back of the closet.

We know even if he throws them away, they will be on him with every step and breath that remains in his life. We also know how the very bearing of the man speaks of what he was and in his heart still is. Because we flew, we envy no man on earth.
-Author Unknown



HISTORIAN'S COMMENTS - RORY KOON



On March 31, 1977 a B-52H tail number 0039 crashed at 11:35 PM, 3½ miles north of K.I. Sawyer A.F.B., Michigan, during a routine training mission, killing all eight crew members on board. The crew was Stan Eval Crew S-03. I took this crash personally since I had just left S-03 to PCS to Castle AFB to become a CCTS Instructor. I was replaced by MSgt John “Bill” Moore who was the gunner that died in the crash. Bill was also known to many as “Fiddling Bill” and could play a mean fiddle when properly motivated. He was also an avid weight lifter and fisherman. Bill had always taken the time to help mentor the younger gunners, on and off duty, including myself. He was always out and about with the younger guys at the gym providing weight lifting advice or at the lake shore providing fishing tips.

I would say Bill was fated to be on that flight. Six months earlier, he had been selected for a special duty assignment as a courier in Europe. He was thrilled with the prospect of being able to go to Europe and travel. He sold just about everything he had in preparation for the PCS. He sold his boat and much of his fishing gear to fellow gunners. We had a rousing farewell as he headed out for his dream job.

If I recall correctly, Bill was handed a message when he arrived at Dover AFB for his departure to Europe, cancelling his PCS and directing him to return back to K.I. Sawyer. The individual he was supposed to replace had extend his tour. Bill took it in stride and came back to K.I. to resume his duties as a gunner. I had just received notice of my own PCS and it was a no brainer to figure out who the replacement on Crew S-03 would be. Of course, many of the items he had cherished and sold to fellow gunners before he departed made it back to him none the worse for wear. Life went on... I left for Castle AFB and Bill replaced me on crew S-03.

I received a phone call from Butch Foster, the S-02 Gunner, on the early morning hours of April 1st. At first I thought it was an April Fools Joke. SSgt Foster provided me with the details of what had happened and who was on board. It was one of the most sobering phone calls I have ever received and a personal reminder to me the dangers that came with the job. I had been with many on that crew for years and knew them well and considered them friends. Bill Moore was more than that to me. He was more like a big brother or uncle. Always there and always ready to offer advice or guidance. I like to think he helped mold me into the NCO I became. I like to think I reached out to help the younger airmen as I progressed in my career the same way he did.

It's hard to believe the crash took place 40 years ago. It was the first B-52H from the 410th Bomb Wing at K.I. Sawyer to crash. It was an honor to know MSgt Bill Moore and to be able to call him a friend. At the time it was very difficult to say goodbye to the crew I knew well and thought of as friends as much a crewmates. They were comrades who you knew you would never see again. Over the years, I know we have all lost some great folks to crashes and accidents. I can not think of a single way a person could ever serve his country better than in the armed services. The greatest are those called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice to their country.

In the coming months, keep those you remember in your hearts and prayers who have given the ultimate sacrifice that they not be forgotten. I only hope I continue to honor his memory and do it justice through my own actions as I progress in life. God speed Bill, Always.

“C’EST LA VIE”

Rory



HISTORIAN'S COMMENTS - RORY KOON



Wreckage of the B-52H Stratofortress that crashed about five miles north of KI Sawyer. The bomber was on final approach when air traffic controllers lost radar and radio contact. A team of Air Force investigators headed by Brig. Gen. James R. McCarthy, 42nd Air Division Commander from Blytheville, Arkansas had the difficult task to find the cause of the crash.

We PCS'd to KI Sawyer and reported in January 1977. We arrived on the weekend it snowed 18 inches. SMSgt Art Pollard was both the wing and squadron gunner, Lt Col Profilet was the squadron commander, and Maj Gene Habiger was the ops officer. (Gene Habiger became CINCSAC several years later).

I had just got requalified on the H model and remember Friday the 31st of March very well. It was snowing and on that evening, Dennis Thornburg stopped by the house (he was my favorite buddy boom operator and lived a few duplexes down Liberator Drive on base) and I remember him saying he just landed after they had refueled the stan-eval bomber earlier Friday. He said it was "hell" getting back in and they almost diverted for very low visibility.

Very early Saturday morning, Butch Foster came to the door and as I looked out the window, I could tell Butch was tore up about something very bad and he definitely wasn't his normal self. Normally, Butch was an easy going, always smiling, stan-eval gunner with Bill and was very innovative at playing the practical joker especially on alert.

I can remember it just like yesterday, Butch was very somber, with a tear in his eye, and just said Bill Moore didn't make it back last night. They crashed just short of the runway and none of them survived on the stan-eval crew.

I hadn't known Bill Moore for long but we became fast friends since both of us grew up in North Carolina and he was ecstatic to know I was a serious, professional musician with stories just like him. We never got together to play music as we had talked about and planned to. Life has a way of being totally unpredictable just like that.

I was on my second hitch (enlistment) as a gunner and it seemed like every year we were losing one or two BUFFs on training flights. Oddly, I still felt like I was an invincible youngster and went flying as normal that following Monday. I never went or looked at the site and blanked everything out about that horrific crash. *Pete*

EDITOR'S COMMENTS - PETE KARJANIS



In today's mail (December 2016), I received a short note from Mrs. Loretta E. Hanz in California about her dear husband's passing in August of this year past year. They lived in Banning, California. It is east of March Air Force Base, thirty minutes up in the mountain pass on Interstate 10.

Bob flew on B-26, B-29, B-36, and B-52 bombers. That's a very distinguished flying career that spans a lot of technological advances in air-to-air combat crew duty. I can only sit here and wonder of his gunner profile and story, got to be just amazing. *If you are reading this and knew Bob Hanz, please call, e-mail, or write what you know about Bob's story as a gunner in World War II, Korean War, SAC Cold War, and possibly Vietnam!* I got to know Bob when I researched looking everywhere I could for his obituary and any other information I could find which wasn't much. We got to do better than that. We have to tell these distinguished stories of our gunner history. Everyone of you all can contribute and help by just sending in a note or a simple e-mail of what you can recollect in their honor! Send in your tributes and thoughts now!

So very privileged to be able to hear so many stories through the years from the very first Orlando Reunion in 1987. As I mentioned in the last edition, the gunners with World War II and Korean War experience were a very large group in attendance early on. That was *three decades ago* and at the last reunions, you could count the World War II and Korean War gunners on one hand. Whether your first reunion or many, make sure to take more than a few minutes and really listen to these older veteran's stories. You won't believe your hearing experiences first-hand that are more than amazing, inspirational, motivational, and with a shared common core of aerial gunner experiences we all possess, suppressed somewhere in our memories. The reunion is the perfect time to recollect and reflect.

As we go to print, it was very difficult getting any Gunner Profile stories for this edition. Please compile your thoughts, write them down, and make sure to send them in with copies of pictures if available. You could honor your gunner buddies by writing their profile or story you recollect too. Thanks Bob for your first-hand recollections about Willie Vanwey! We need to get our stories for all to enjoy reading and remembering since we are all connected by what we did even if it was in a different era. Doesn't matter. Next edition comes out in August right before the Nashville Reunion. Thanks to all for sending in your pilot experiences. Your special stories made very interesting reading in the past editions, thanks very much again! Thanks to our several consistent contributors Cease, Harry, Pete, Bill, and one-time or more, contributors too. Reader feedback has been very positive about all your special contributions.

We hope you got your paper copy in the mail of the Special, 24-page Reunion Edition of the Short Bursts. It contains all the information to answer every question about the Nashville Reunion along with what the Nashville area has to offer. The reunion committee did a lot of behind-the-scenes work and effort to get all the details worked out so we could have some fabulous world-class tours set up. John also arm wrestled everyone in hotel and tour management to get the gunners the outright best prices he could; this was his mission to make it as affordable as possible to keep costs down and get the absolute most bang for our bucks. Please take the time to thank him for his many sleepless nights as he planned, coordinated, and worked out the best deals he could possibly do for all of us.

We need every one of you reading this to talk it up with your special gunner buddies and get them excited to attend this reunion in Nashville over the Labor Day weekend. This reunion is a great time to renew special bonds of friendship and to pick up from where you left off as if it were yesterday even though several years or even several decades have gone by. Life, commitments, family, job, finances, and daily events have a way of making the reunion a lesser priority and we fully understand and experience that ourselves too. If you are one of those procrastinators that have thought you'll go to the next one, we may not have the numbers in our association committing to put on the next reunion. Unfortunately, our ranks are thinning and some in the association are unable to travel the distances required to attend even though they want to and have attended in the past. Please do all you can to come out to Nashville. We would love to see you again! So will the many gunner friends you may have forgotten about through the years. Life is indeed short, put aside any differences and come out to enjoy being a gunner again with your many notable gunner peers. Great times and even greater unforgettable memories will be made so see you all in Nashville!

MEMORIAL DAY 29 MAY 2017

As you read this, remember Memorial Day will be upon us again. Take and make time to remember your special gunner comrades that have gone West along with others you've held exceptionally in your lives and memories.



GUNNER PROFILES

Where they've gone from here...

Please enjoy reading about other outstanding gunners that definitely made the difference! Keep those historical gunner submissions coming in for our enjoyment, enlightenment, and to get them documented in print forever!

James Douglas Drewry Jr. (I go by Doug)

I was at Carswell 1972 to 1976, 20th Bomb Squadron, Crew S-08 / E-08. I was only a couple of classes behind the first mini gunners. Had my first flight in the tail while I was still 17 years old at Castle, flew combat missions at 18 mostly from Guam with a couple from UT after diverts.

You know one of the saddest things I thought about back in 1991 when I heard about doing away with BUFF gunners was what a lost opportunity it was for the American people. I guarantee the four-year investment they made in me as a gunner has been repaid many times over. My MSgt Dad (who at one time worked with Iggy Cruz in the Carswell command post) took an assignment in Germany starting in what would have been my senior year of high school so my Mother could see some of the world before he retired. I chose plan B, after much arguing/fighting with my parents.

I snuck off one day and drove a buddy 50 miles to take his GED so he could join the Army (I wasn't exactly the model student anyway, but I had no idea it was going to be an all day event, so once there the college said I might as well take it too). Anyway, with GED in hand, I announced I was going to join the Air Force rather than go to Germany - of course that started another round of fighting.

I wanted to be a Boomer and fly but the recruiter explained to me you could only get there by cross training so my next choice was to be an MP. Another round of fighting at home as my Dad absolutely refused to sign (I was only 17) if I didn't come up with something more promising. (No offense to the MPs out there, but I finally appreciated my Dad's earlier "counsel" when we went out to our Alert bird on Guam during my second tour. There I found a guy walking in the rain around the red line painted perimeter of our BUFF, M16 over one shoulder and dragging an empty dog leash with the other hand - pausing occasionally to turn and talk with his imaginary friend... I have to admit my crew and I actually thought it was great - but his supervisors didn't share the same sense of humor...).

Anyway, I maxed out all my qualifying scores (except Admin - thank God) and ended up enlisting with an unspecified job but guaranteed in the electronics field. I wasn't a dummy, but I definitely had no direction in my



GUNNER PROFILES, James Douglas Drewry Jr. (I go by Doug)

life and at this point and honestly I was a high school dropout with a GED rather than a diploma. Due to having three years ROTC in high school, I was appointed Dorm Chief for my basic training flight. Approaching the two week point at Lackland, the Dorm Chief of our sister flight, who had a couple of years of college ROTC, came over and said if we took a test we could bypass Basic Training. Long story short, after passing the test and the final PT test (barely for me) we were sent to the Casual Squadron to await our career assignments.

It just so happened that while we were waiting for the in-processing briefing to get started, some guys came and sat in the row in front of us and I overheard a couple of them telling their buddies someone had tried recruiting them to become Boom Operators. They had stated in no uncertain terms their feet were never leaving the ground. I grabbed a shoulder, found out who talked to them and immediately after the briefing, we went looking for this guy.

I remember walking in this door saying we wanted to be boomers and the guy in front went running to the back room yelling, "We have volunteers!" Typical disconnect between recruiters and the actual needs of the service - or at least time delays I guess. Anyway, people were talking to both of us very excitedly until we each said we were guaranteed enlistment in the electronics field. Faces dropped and they were explaining that Boomer fell under the mechanical specialty and they couldn't take us. Then someone in the back looked up and asked, "How would you like to become Defensive Fire Control System Operators?" Didn't have a clue but it was flying and B-52s sounded cool. Its amazing how pure chance and happenstance came to have such an influence on my whole life and arguably the rest of the country for that matter (you can make your own judgment there). So Phil Lee and I became gunners.

Anyone reading this understands how tight most crews were during the Arc Light years. In Guam we all lived and bunked together as a crew, five officers and one enlisted guy. Needless to say I developed some close and life-long friends. The light came on for me one day, or I should say I was hit over the head walking back from Gilligan's Island with my NAV and EW. Keep in mind I was technically an 18-year-old, high school dropout and I have to say these "old" guys (must have been all of 25 or 26 themselves) were wizened men of the world to me. They were having the usual banter about college life and some tough courses they had taken when I must have muttered something along the lines of, "I could never do that."

They stopped in their tracks and together said, "Dummy, I (we) didn't know how to do it either before I took those courses!" I have to admit that up to that point I guess I didn't know if I was even smart enough to go to college, it was never really an option growing up as with six brothers and sisters and an enlisted father's salary. My parents were more work and survival oriented. It was never stated but college was for other people. This was new, it never dawned on me before that anyone can do it.

Long story short, after we stopped touring South East Asia, I signed up for part time classes Texas Christian University was teaching on base at Carswell. I got out at the end of my enlistment to attend school full time but that turned out to be somewhat unrealistic with a growing family.

I had some cool jobs over the next several years including with Northrop training astronauts underwater to do spacewalks and I will say it was always my USAF and B-52 experience that got me in the door. I had some not so cool jobs in there too and several starts and stops at college work. I finally earned my degree ten years after separating from the Air Force. It took a while but I was finally hired by McDonnell Douglas to build operations procedures for the planned Space Station Alpha, the degree was necessary to get past the HR people but again it was the B-52 experience that actually got me hired.

A year later NASA recruited me. I retired from NASA about three years ago after we retired the Space Shuttle but during my career I got to do some incredible things and work with some of the most amazing people on the planet. I worked on the operations side several years before moving to the design and engineering side. I was on the first team sent to Russia to figure out how to incorporate them into the space station (trust me it wasn't NASA's

GUNNER PROFILES, James Douglas Drewry Jr. (I go by Doug)

idea, direction came directly from the White House).

I was the Program Manager for the design, build, and launch of the first flight of the International Space Station and I smile knowing that it still passes overhead every 90 minutes today. I ran the Structures Division at the Johnson Space Center for several years and was deeply involved in the Columbia accident, but I also led the efforts to develop the repair kits that were flown on every subsequent Shuttle mission to deal with inflight damage should it occur.

My last five years were as Chief Engineer in the Shuttle Program Office where I led the Debris Integration Team and where among other things I got to do the final walk downs of the Shuttle and be in the Launch Control Center before every launch and one of the first to get to it after landing - one of the absolute coolest and most fun jobs in the world. There were at least three times I made the call that allowed us to launch, what would have been an otherwise scrubbed launch, saving not only the mission but millions in taxpayer dollars. The constant throughout my whole career was my experience as a SAC Trained Killer. I assessed every situation from operations to design to manufacturing and even my go/no go decisions against my personal experience as a crewmember. There was always, "What would I do if I was flying it?" I can easily close my eyes and see every switch and control in the gunners compartment today, I can even smell the smells. I remember those peacetime and wartime missions as if it was yesterday and those experiences and the interactions with my own crew and those crews around me are what provided the real background for what I did at NASA. I learned a few things along the way and NASA sent me back to school for graduate work, but it's the experience that makes a difference, not book learning.

The cracked helmet on an Oil Burner Route, a tip gear failing and rupturing the tip tank while taxiing, the engine shelled out on take off, and the pure professionalism and camaraderie among the crew are what made the difference in my life. I wouldn't trade it for the world and I certainly wouldn't have done the things I was able to do. It's what gave me the confidence for everything that followed.

So back to the opening statement; I consider what I and so many other ex-Gunners that I know have done and it's easy to say that eliminating the Gunners in 1991 to save a few dollars was a very poor decision. The opportunity cost alone is incalculable. Besides all that - it was fun! (OK, maybe that's looking back through rose colored glasses - but you know what I mean!) C'est La Vie! Doug



GUNNER ACCIDENT RECOLLECTIONS by HARRIS TOLMICH



WESTOVER AFB, 1 JANUARY, 1971, B-52C, S/N 54-2666. PILOT: WILLIAM LEMON, LT.COL, GUNNER: TSGY JERRY ACHEY.

Aircraft s/n 54-2666, call sign Hiram 16 launched scheduled for three bomb runs at Bayshore, Michigan. Air refueling was accomplished with no problems. Enroute to the low level entry point Oil Burner (OB) Route 9. Weather was forecast to be 2500 feet overcast, visibility two miles. The first bomb run on Bayshore Radar Bomb Site low level on targets Echo and Fox-trot, bombing was accomplished from an altitude of 800 feet. Both releases were scored reliable. The aircraft made a right turn and proceeded back to the reentry point for the same type run on targets Delta and Charlie. Release on target Delta was preceded by a normal 20 second tone and followed by a verbal "bombs away", the aircraft then turned six-degrees left towards target Charlie. 30 seconds after the first release, the tone was reinitiated for release on Charlie. The tone was interrupted after four seconds duration. Attempts to locate the aircraft by radar and radio were unsuccessful. Shortly thereafter area residents reported a large fire on the lake surface. All crew members suffered fatal injuries. The aircraft and crew members were never recovered.

FOOTNOTE....The gunner Jerry Achey was a personal friend of mine. We met at Fairchild AFB. I was on alert with Jerry when he received orders for Vietnam. Orders were for PCS as an ammo loader. We did not know what that meant. On arrival in Vietnam, Jerry was assigned to a AC-47 Dragon Ship, little did we know. He was the second gunner assigned to that duty. The first gunner also from Fairchild was MSGT Larry Thornton. Larry Thornton's aircraft was shot down, he survived. Jerry made it back to the States OK and was assigned to Westover AFB. He survived 'Nam and then lost his life performing his old job as B-52 Gunner.



Major Carter, SSGT, 4-11-1983, B-52G s/n 58-0161, Robins AFB, GA. Lure 75 and Lure 76 cleared into LL route IR 176, weather was minimum ceiling 4600 feet, visibility 7 miles. Lure 75 entered LL at 1800Z, Lure 76 entered 3 minutes later. (Prior to entry Lure 75 reported problems with mapping radar, no indication from Lure 75 that the problem was corrected). Lure 76 reported variable weather conditions thru the LL route, requiring repeated transitions between terrain avoidance altitudes in VFR conditions and IFR altitudes over cloud obscured mountains and peaks. Lure 75 impacted 7050 Square Top Mountain at the 6800 foot level. There were no survivors.

I had the honor to speak at Major's church service at Savannah, Georgia. Several gunners attended the church service and gravesite ceremony. Steve Kennedy, Major, and I were very close; we were on the same squadron flight that pulled alert together, and we took four B-52Gs to RAF Fairford in the fall of 1982. We just celebrated Major's birthday in March and the birth of Steve's daughter, Major's God daughter.

I was at the AFLC NCO Academy at Warner Robins on the Friday of the crash in April. It was a two-ship cell headed for Red Flag at the Nellis Range. There was a lot of confusion with what was going on at that time since the bombers didn't return to home station. It took several hours after the second aircraft landed at March AFB to confirm the crash. Major's crew was supposed to return to Robins with wives, family, and friends awaiting since it was the last flight of four crewmembers to celebrate with champagne. It wasn't good out on our ramp. This was Major's last flight before he was to cross-train into the OSI. It was the last flight of his pilot and a couple more crewmembers on that crew before they PCS'd. The Bomb Wing DO, Col Guenther, was in the IP seat. The crew was having radar mapping equipment problems. The Radar Nav was a 'baby Nav' inexperienced second lieutenant, that didn't upgrade as usual from the Nav position. This was a command management program to ease the Nav shortage at the time. *Pete*



GUNNER ACCIDENT RECOLLECTIONS and REFLECTIONS

ARCLIGHT MISSION SEPTEMBER 1966



The 91st Bomb Wing, Glasgow AFB, Montana departed for Arclight on September 1966. Approximately on our 9th or 10th mission we were the number 11 aircraft in Black Cell, Black 2 from a combined 15 aircraft on an Arclight mission. The time was near midnight, altitude was 38,000 feet, when suddenly the aircraft shuddered and there was a loud bang. Flames shot out from the left side of the aircraft and fire was streaming as far back as my windows. I could see 1 and 2 engines were OK, and I could see 3 & 4 engines were on fire. At about the time I called the pilot, he reported number 3 and 4 fire warning lights were on.



At that time Black 3 who was in trail said, "Black 2, you are torching".

I cannot write what our pilot's response was to Black 3, it is not printable for this publication. The engines were still sending large flames past my windows, parts of the engines were flying by, they looked like VW wheel rims as they fell into the darkness below. The pilot said, "Do not bailout", and said something to the effect of "we are making an emergency steep descent to try and put the fire out".

Next thing I know, I am on my back in the seat as the aircraft is in a steep, rapid dive, The flames are still going near my windows. As the dive increased and airspeed was building, the flames were slowly diminishing. At approximately 18,000 feet, the fire was out and the aircraft leveled out. The pilot said we will continue to our target.

We slowly climbed back to our assigned altitude and contacted Skyspot informing them of our situation and being late for our time over target (TOT). Our cell was long gone, Skyspot confirmed clearance for the bomb run. After bombs away, we contacted Clark AFB for an emergency tanker that was scrambled to meet us. We were using fuel at a rapid rate and we had lost a lot of fuel during the fire and after the fire.

Our RN spotted the tanker on radar at 100 miles and closing rapidly, at 12 miles the tanker started his U turn. During training missions sometimes a pilot may have a little difficulty hooking up to the boom, NOT this time, our pilot connected to the boom right away. Arriving near Guam our navigator checked the bomb bay and reported we had a MK82 hung up by the rear attaching mount. The bomb was hanging nose low and armed. EOD and the fire department were alerted and posted. Our pilot, bless his heart, made the smoothest landing I ever experienced in a B52. The flight surgeon met us and had a bottle of Old Overholt whiskey, (we referred to it as Old Overcoat).



I am proud to say that I am a member of a profession that performed in a hazardous environment without question. God Bless our members, active and departed! *Harris Tolmich*



GUNNER TALES

MANY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THIS ADVENTURE TOOK PLACE

The place was a B-36D airborne over western Oklahoma on the way to Carswell AFB, Texas from Fairchild AFB, Washington. We were returning to the SAC Strategic Evaluation Squadron to redeem our rightful status in the 325th Bomb Squadron, 92nd Bomb Wing (H), 15th Air Force, Strategic Air Command, United States Air Force, by God!



During this mission, our bomb nav team called for a 360 degree maneuver in the bomber stream in order to kill time for the bomb run. That was a major 'no-no' and we flunked the SAC Eval. Oh my God!!

As luck would have it, we did avoid the mid-air collision, and upon landing we were immediately sent home to Fairchild, very embarrassed and no longer a SAC Select Combat Crew!!

Our squadron commander kept us busy with days and nights of intensive training... the growing of mustaches, learning to walk with a limp and other efforts to disguise ourselves for the upcoming re-evaluation.

We the gunners led by Bud Conder, spent a lot of our days polishing the blisters, changing the sheets on our six bunks, lubricating the cart in the tunnel, and rebuilding the chaff dispenser, (garbage disposer).



We practiced loading and unloading the bomb bays with different heavy objects, (B-10 power units, cars, etc.). Maybe we shouldn't have snickered so openly at the zero's up front...

The 325th bomb squadron had a little Nash Metropolitan (????) painted AF blue with the SAC stars and stripe across the hood area. There was a platform built so it could be loaded in the bomb bay. We became very proficient at the skills required for that chore.



In order to load those various items, there were two racks each with two reels of cable which we would take to the top of the aircraft, above the bomb bay. We would ratchet the four cables down to the object to be loaded, attach them, then hand crank them up to the bomb releases on the bomb racks. No simple operation as we had to keep the object level by being synchronized turning the manual crank handles.

Time to return to Cow Town... New flight suits, new red leather hats, scarves, parachute cord boot laces, power unit loaded, white glove inspection, ready for anything... It's time to get those spot promotions back...

Of course our squadron commander was aboard to ensure our success.

We had scheduled a bomb run on the radar scoring site at Oklahoma City to check out the bomb navigation systems... We were making a practice bomb run on the pre initial point (IP)... I was in the lower left gunner seat and announced, "Bomb bay doors open, power unit away, bomb doors closed." I heard in my headset, "Knock it off back there gunner," so I did... Come to think of it I heard that statement a lot in my short and inefficient military career.



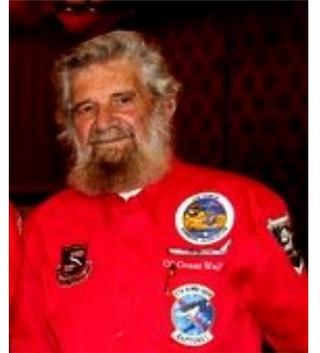
GUNNER TALES (Continued)



After we landed, we completed our postflight check lists and since there was no need to get the equipment out to lower the power unit, we were standing around smoking, telling lies, and awaiting the crew bus. We were amazed at the chaos when they found the power unit gone!

Damn lucky we made that practice bomb run on the pre IP...

Later we heard that a farmer from western Oklahoma had called the Air Force and told them there was a big yellow thing in his field that had USAF painted on it and if you want it, "Come get it!!!"



Cease 'CC' Walker



Enjoy the work you guys do. Not much info or stories from us B-36 gunners it was a great plane a joy to fly with

Always need interesting stories about life and times in the B-36 (or any bomber). Can a gunner with B-36 experience write a story and explain what is going on in this picture? Send it in to me in time for the August Short Bursts. *Pete* (Contact info on page 3)

GUNNER FLIGHT TEST, CHUCK DEAN



I have been hounding Chuck to write about his experiences in the 10th Test Squadron while he was assigned as the only B-52 Gunner at Tinker AFB.

It always lifts my spirits when I hear that 8-engine familiar sound or see the smoke trail in the pattern here at Tinker. We live three miles south of KTIK.

It is really indescribable to be able to see the BUFF or BOne in the pattern every couple of weeks. I always wondered what the flight test gunner did. Thanks Chuck for enlightening all of us on your unique duties while assigned at Tinker! *Pete*



When I got assigned to Oklahoma City Flight Test Unit at Tinker Air Force Base, we (the crews) performed Functional Check Flights (FCF) on A7, B-52G, E-3 and various models of the KC-135 aircraft.

Our office consisted of:

- 3 B-52 Pilots
- 4 KC-135 Pilots
- 1 B-52 Radar Navigator (RN)
- 1 KC-135 Navigator (N)
- 1 B-52 Aerial Gunner (AG)
- 1 A-7 Pilot
- 1 Civilian performed B-52 RN and KC-135 N duties
- 1 Civilian performed B-52 AG and KC-135 Boom Operator (BO) duties

I was the only enlisted among the 11 military personnel assigned. Being the only enlisted had its' good/bad points. After a couple of years we did get assigned a 135-BO and E-3 Flight Engineer (FE).

My duties included but were not limited to assist the crew during in-flight evaluations of the landing gear, flight controls, environmental control and terrain avoidance systems. The major Program Depot Maintenance (PDM) performed while I was assigned to the Flight Test Unit was the air condition/cabin pressurization upgrades and auto pilot modifications. I'm sure there were others but these two I remember the most. The Fire Control System (FCS) was not part of the system upgrades while I was assigned.

A typical day at the Flight Test Unit:

On an initial Functional Check Flight (FCF) we (the crew P, CP, RN, and AG) would meet with the maintenance crew supervisor to go over the 781 form. This would take approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Once the crew was satisfied with the forms, we would proceed to the aircraft to perform our pre-flight. On these initial FCFs, I would help the RN check out the bomb bay, 47 section, and assist the pilots as needed. I would then perform my pre-flight as per the check list.

On initial FCFs all crew members would take off in their ejection seats. After leveling off, I would perform my

GUNNER FLIGHT TEST, CHUCK DEAN, (Continued)

FCS system checks. Once my systems checks were completed, I would move forward to the Instructor Pilot (IP) seat or down stairs to the Navigator's seat and assist as needed, depending on the PDM for that aircraft.

The PDM upgrades that we seem to have the most issues with was the cabin pressurization system. Most of the time it was the outflow valve stuck open or fluctuating. I would have to pull the panel at the left load central, get on my hands and knees to check the valve. Sometimes I could tap on it to get it to close.

Probably the most exciting (heart pumping) flight was on an initial FCF with the Auto Pilot upgrade. We were at 25,000 feet (I'm sitting in the IP seat), performing the auto pilot test when the auto pilot put us in a dive. It took both pilots to finally pull the aircraft nose up and get the wings to level after losing approximately 7,000 feet.

On initial FCF landings, once the drag chute was deployed and the aircraft slowed to 90 knots, both pilots would stand on the brakes to check the anti-skid. If it didn't cycle before five seconds, we were going to blow tires. It seemed like this always occurred on Friday afternoon!

After a couple of years we started performing FCFs on the B-1B aircraft. However, we did not have any B-1B crew members assigned to the unit yet. Therefore, Rockwell would fly in their B-1B crews on an F-106 to perform these FCFs.

One of my neatest days was when I got to fly the backseat of the F-106 chase plane. My pilot was Olie (a retired Air Force Colonel) he was really cool. We had our crew brief with the B-1 crew and headed to the aircraft. We taxied out and took-off first, as soon as we sucked up the landing gear, made a left hand turn and started down wind. Olie said, "You got it!"

I took over the controls on down wind, we turned base and made a call to the B-1. They started to do their taxi to the active runway. I turned final and lined up on the infield between the active and taxi way. The B-1B took the active for takeoff roll, he went to AB (afterburners). We also went AB to keep up, Olie and I proceeded to fly off the B-1's right wing out to our air work area.

Once we got to the air work area, Olie took the aircraft. We proceeded look for the proper function of the bomb bay doors and other external systems when the B-1 would perform these systems checks. At one point we started on the right wing and rolled upside down over the top of the B-1B and back under the belly to the right wing.



After all the high altitude checks were completed, the B-1 went low level while Olie and I stayed in the air work area. He asked what I wanted to do and I said, "Fly upside down and go fast." Needless to say I had a great time flying that aircraft. The only bad thing was I made myself sick, but I got over it and continued to have the time of my life.

I did get the opportunity to fly in every type of aircraft we flew at the flight test unit. This was a great assignment and I learned a lot more about the performance capabilities of the B-52 and got to do some really neat stuff. I owed this great experience to my good friend David Donatto.

U-TAPAO AIRBASE, THEN... AND NOW by PETE DeFELICE, CMSgt (Ret)

U-TAPAO ROYAL THAI NAVY AIRBASE, MAIN GATE 2017



I've been working at U-Tapao Royal Thai Naval Airbase several times a year since 2004 in the conduct of military exercises and real-world operations. To this day, it is still amazing to watch the base evolve, to include the development of an adjacent international airport. I figured Gunners would be interested in a little information on the history of the base, and to see how it looks today.

Location and History

U-Tapao is located in southeast Thailand, approximately 100 miles southeast of Bangkok. U-Tapao is situated amongst a network of military bases in the area to include Sattahip Royal Thai Naval Base and Sattahip Royal Thai Marine Base, both located 10 miles west. U-Tapao is still in active military use with seven Thai Navy maritime patrol squadrons assigned. The east side of the base is called U-Tapao International Airport with regional and international airline services.

Prior to 1965, U-Tapao was a small Royal Thai Navy airfield. By October of that year, an improved runway was completed. The 11,500-foot runway was officially opened on 6 July 1966 and the first aircraft to land was a Royal Thai Air Force HH-16 helicopter, followed by a USAF C-130. By 1967, the remainder of the base development was completed. With the completion of U-Tapao, select US forces to include KC-135s were transferred from elsewhere in Thailand, and U-Tapao RTNAF became a front-line facility for the USAF in Thailand lasting from 1966 to 1975. The USAF forces at U-Tapao were under the command of Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), with the 4258th Strategic Wing (SAC) KC-135 units being tenants.

Bufs arrive in mainland Southeast Asia



U-TAPAO RAMP 1970



On 10 April 1967, three Guam-based B-52F bombers landed at U-Tapao following a bombing mission over Vietnam. The following day, B-52 operations were initiated at U-Tapao.

***U-TAPAO AIRBASE, THEN... AND NOW* by PETE DeFELICE, CMSgt (Ret)**

Unfortunately, U-Tapao suffered its first crash and fatalities in October 1968 when a KC-135A tanker (55-3138) lost power on the Number Four engine on takeoff killing all four crew members. In the history of the base, U-Tapao based B-52s would conduct not only **Operation Arc Light** missions in Vietnam, but they also supported **Operation Niagara**, the close air support bombing missions against Khe Sanh, Vietnam in 1968 in support of the US Marines there. By March 1969, U-Tapao-based B-52s were flying night bombing operations in a 19-mile wide swath of Cambodia, guided by MSQ-77 ground radars. On 21 January 1970, the 4258th SW was re-designated as the 307th Strategic Wing. The 307th SW was the only regular SAC Wing stationed in Southeast Asia. The 307th was under the command and control of Eighth Air Force, based at Andersen AFB, Guam.

Sappers Hit U-Tapao

Many do not realize that Sappers attacked U-Tapao on 24 December 1971. On that date, a small group of insurgents, most likely from the communist People's Liberation Army of Thailand (PLAT) attempted to destroy B-52s with sappers and military engineers using satchel charges and dynamite-filled packages. While the size of the attacking insurgent group remains unclear, estimates of the number of attackers vary from three to more than ten, to include off-base fire support from mortars. Gunfire between the insurgents and the defending USAF base security forces was exchanged and there were a number of explosions that occurred simultaneously. This still remains as the only officially reported enemy attack against U-Tapao air base.

Linebacker and MiG Kills

307th SW B-52s continued operations from 1970 to 1972 to include **Operation Linebacker I** missions. Some missions included strikes against North Vietnam targets to counter the spring 1972 North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam, although most of the U-Tapao B-52 sorties were **Operation Arc Light** missions elsewhere. The North Vietnamese offensive was crushed, but the strikes on North Vietnam continued. These airstrikes wound down in October 1972, just ahead of the United States presidential election, which resulted in Richard Nixon being re-elected. Once the election was over, the B-52 attacks quickly ramped up again in November.



By the fall of 1972, all B-52s in theater were confronted with substantial North Vietnamese surface-to-air missile (SAM) defenses. On 22 November 1972, a B-52D was damaged by an SA-2 SAM in a raid on Vinh, an important rail center in the southern part of North Vietnam. The crew managed to get the burning aircraft back to Thai airspace before the crew bailed out, leaving the aircraft to crash near Nakhon Phanom in northeast Thailand. The crew was recovered safely.

The Nixon Administration ran out of patience in late 1972 and ordered the all-out air offensive against North Vietnam we know as **Operation Linebacker II**. These bombing raids began on 18 December 1972 against Hanoi and Haiphong.



***U-TAPAO AIRBASE, THEN... AND NOW* by PETE DeFELICE, CMSgt (Ret)**

Linebacker II, involved attacks by almost every strike aircraft the US had in theater, with the B-52s from U-Tapao and Guam playing a prominent role. In the first few nights of Linebacker II, B-52Gs were taking a disproportionate share of damage and losses. Some of this was due to the wet-wing design of the B-52G. Another cause was the B-52G ECM equipment needed modifications to counter the latest North Vietnamese SAM and AAA threats. As result, the B-52G Wings stood down for two days during **Linebacker II** for needed ECM and tactics upgrades. Meanwhile, thirty B-52Ds from U-Tapao flew strikes on 21 December with the loss of two more bombers. The next night, 22 December 1972, thirty U-Tapao B-52Ds attacked again, but this time their attacks were performed from unpredictable directions and altitudes, which resulted in no losses. In addition, airstrikes were also made on SAM sites to reduce the threats to follow-on attacks. We all know that in the eleven days of concentrated bombing, **Linebacker II** B-52s completed 729 sorties and dropped 15,000 tons of bombs, which many historians believe was the primary motivation for the North Vietnamese leadership to sue for immediate peace.

Sam and Al

Since the first day at CCTS, every B-52 Gunner is taught that SSgt Sam Turner made the first confirmed MiG-21 kill by a B-52 Gunner on 18 December 1972, the first night of **Linebacker II**. We also know that five days later, on 24 December 1972, A1C Al Moore scored the second confirmed MiG-21 kill while on a mission to the Thai Nguyen railyards. Aside from the obvious historical contributions to B-52's lineage, Al Moore's MiG kill had greater significance. It marked the *last confirmed kill of an enemy fighter by a bomber gunner*. Both Sam and Al were assigned to the 307 SW based at U-Tapao.

U-Tapao: Postwar Seventies

After the Paris Peace Accords of 1973, B-52 operations at U-Tapao began to draw down while the KC-135s remained a bit longer. In addition, the US military presence in Thailand became an issue for the Thai Government following collapse of the Khmer Republic of Marshall Lon Nol, the subsequent fall of Phnom Penh Cambodia; and ultimately the 1975 South Vietnamese collapse, when many US aircraft provided to South Vietnam, fled to U-Tapao. The US had no interest in recovering the Vietnamese aircraft it considered obsolete, but it did try to recover a single Vietnamese F-5 from U-Tapao. The attempt to lift the F-5 by helicopter failed when the harness broke.



When the Thai Prime Minister learned of it, he ordered further recovery efforts to cease until legal ownership of the aircraft could be determined in accordance with international law and the planes were abandoned.

On 25 April 1975 the South Vietnamese President fled the country, and the final collapse of the South Vietnamese government was imminent. Aircraft started to arrive at U-Tapao in South Vietnamese markings almost immediately. They arrived over the next few days. These C-119s, C-130s, and C-47s were filled to capacity with men, women and children. After their arrival at U-Tapao, the Vietnamese refugees were sequestered in tents near the runway. The adjacent parking ramps and grassy areas were soon filled to capacity with South Vietnamese helicopters and aircraft, including many F-5E/F aircraft which had been delivered to South Vietnam just a few months earlier.

By 29 April 1975, the North Vietnamese brought AAA and mobile SAMs to the Saigon area. Mortar and

artillery rounds were impacting Tan Son Nhut Air Base (the major airport / air base in Saigon), which severely disrupted the evacuation. On 30 April 1975, the South Vietnamese government finally surrendered. The handful of South Vietnamese Air Force planes that had been performing last-ditch air strikes completed their missions and recovered to U-Tapao. The last air rescue helicopters returned to Nakhon Phanom RTAFB on 2 May 1975 and the war between North and South Vietnam was over.

U-Tapao and the SS Mayaguez

On 12 May 1975, less than two weeks after the fall of Saigon, units of the Cambodian Khmer Rouge navy seized the American-flagged container ship SS Mayaguez, taking the crew hostage. On 13 May, Seventh Air Force developed a contingency plan for volunteers of the USAF 56th Security Police (SP) Squadron from Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base to be dropped onto the containers on the decks of the Mayaguez. The following morning, 75 SPs from the 56th SPS boarded helicopters of 21st Special Operations Squadron to proceed to U-Tapao for final staging. One of the CH-53s crashed, killing 18 SPs and the five-man flight crew. This hasty attempt to recover the vessel and crew using only Air Force resources was abandoned. As a result, U-Tapao then became a staging point for US Marines to deploy aboard the remaining CH-53s of the 21st SOS plus HH-53s of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, to assault Koh Tang Island, where the Mayaguez crew was thought to be held. At sunrise on 15 May 1975, the US forces arrived at Koh Tang in the USAF's first-ever helicopter assault operation. (The literal translation for Koh Tang is horse shit).

Everything that could go wrong did. The Marines and helicopter crews never received good intelligence available about the island's defenders. They went in expecting 18 to 40 lightly armed militiamen but instead found a reinforced battalion of elite Khmer Rouge naval infantry. The Cambodians shot down three of the first four CH-53 helicopters to approach the island, one of them carrying the Marine forward air controller (FAC) team. The fourth was badly damaged and forced to abort. For hours, USAF A-7s sent from Korat RTAFB to provide close air support (CAS) could not find the Marines, let alone provide CAS. The Marines hung on while the remaining helicopters of the assault wave brought reinforcements. The Cambodians inflicted severe damage to most of the remaining seven helicopters and only three landed in commission back at U-Tapao. A boarding party finally seized the Mayaguez, only to find the ship deserted. The Cambodians had taken its crew to the mainland two days earlier.

USAF withdrawal

With the fall of both Cambodia and South Vietnam in the spring of 1975, the political climate between Washington and the Thai government had become very sour. The USAF wanted out of Thailand by the end of the year. The USAF implemented **Operation Palace Lightning**, the plan to withdraw aircraft and personnel from Thailand. The SAC units left in December 1975 however, the base remained under American control until it formally handed to the Thai government on 13 June 1976.

Current Military Use of U-Tapao

My personal tie to U-Tapao is due to the real-world operations and training exercises I participate in as part of USPACOM. For several years, beginning in 1982, U-Tapao has hosted major parts of **Exercise Cobra Gold**, the largest multinational military exercise in the world, jointly involving all branches of the US, Thai, Singaporean, Malaysian, Indonesian, Japanese and South Korean armed forces.



U-TAPAO AIRBASE, THEN... AND NOW by PETE DeFELICE, CMSgt (Ret)

It consists of large-scale combat training operations to include amphibious landings, air-to-air combat, live fire exercises, demining, noncombatant evacuations, humanitarian-disaster relief training, and medical instruction. Due to its proximity to air, land, and maritime training ranges, U-Tapao offers unique venues for these countries to plan and practice joint and multinational combat operations. Finally it is designed to build ties between the nations and promote interoperability between these military components. My job is to design and deliver training scenarios for **Cobra Gold**. In addition, U-Tapao hosts service-specific exercises with Thai and US services all year long.



Thailand is an important element in the Pentagon's strategy of "forward positioning". Despite Thailand's neutrality on the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Thai government allowed U-Tapao to be used for staging and maintenance of USAF and USN warplanes flying into combat in Iraq, as it had earlier done during the war in Afghanistan. In addition, U-Tapao 'may' be where Al Qaeda operative Abu Zubaydah was transferred to and interrogated, according to some retired American intelligence officials.

After the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami in the Indian Ocean, USPACOM initiated **Operation Unified Assistance**, the US portion of the international tsunami response effort. Upon orders from the National Command Authority, the commander of USPACOM ordered the stand up of Joint Task Force 536 on December 28, 2004. This was 48 hours after the earthquake and tsunami devastated parts of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar. Between December 29 and December 30, initial relief supplies were transported from U-Tapao to affected nations along with disaster relief assessment teams. The forward element of Joint Task Force 536 arrived at the U-Tapao in 48 hours. The command element of III Marine Expeditionary Force arrived at U-Tapao from Okinawa, and the force was designated as Combined Support Force (CSF) 536 on January 3, 2005. CSF-536 was a multinational military and civilian disaster force headquarters was established adjacent to the parking apron at U-Tapao to lead and coordinate humanitarian aid efforts. As part of the USPACOM response contingent, I arrived at U-Tapao as a civil servant on 31 December 2004 for a 2-month deployment where I was in charge of Current Operations of the Combined Coordination Center (CCC). The CCC became the center of coordination and a vetting body when responding to and addressing the hundreds of requests for support from the tactical levels. It was here that much of the detailed operational-level interplay between civilian and military humanitarian assistance groups occurred.

From 12–20 May 2008, U-Tapao again served as a disaster response hub as USAID and the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) coordinated the delivery of nearly \$1.2 million of relief commodities to Yangon Myanmar on 36 military C-130 flights, with supplies sufficient to provide assistance to more than 113,000 beneficiaries. The US Military efforts were under the direction of Joint Task Force Caring Response. Recently, in 2015, U-Tapao reprised its role as a regional disaster response center in response to the mega-quake in central Nepal. For over three weeks, US Marines and USAF Airmen staged C-130s, C-17s and



U-TAPAO AIRBASE, THEN... AND NOW by PETE DeFELICE, CMSgt (Ret)

MV-22s out of U-Tapao and brought needed food and humanitarian aid from a variety of sources, through U-Tapao, and on to Kathmandu Airport in Nepal.

Finally, in 2015, the US Government rented space at U-Tapao from a private contractor for use as a "major logistics hub for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars." Because the lease was technically with a private contractor, this allowed "U.S. and Thai officials to insist there's no U.S. 'base' and no inter-governmental basing agreement... Here are some photos of U-Tapao as of 2017. Same Q rooms since 1968...



U-TAPAO BOQ / BEQ 2017



U-TAPAO FLIGHTLINE EXIT 2017



USN P-8 PARKED ON U-TAPAO RAMP



U-TAPAO BEACH 2017

Instead of writing his story about **gunner-to-pilot experiences**, my lifelong gunner friend, Jeff Rowley invited me to go flying with him. It was hard to imagine two former gunners in the pilot and co-pilot seats of a multi-million dollar aircraft. He is a corporate pilot flying doctors and medical staff to hospitals and clinics lacking in certain services and specialists. Obviously a very nice, dream job! Many thanks Jeff for inviting me along! What a grand, unforgettable, lifelong memory. *Pete*



LETTERS AND E-MAILS, GUNNER PILOTS

Long ago, in a land far away lived a young lad on the fast-track to living the life of a tie-dyed shirt wearing, motorcycle riding, Pink Floyd listening, long haired hippie type that joined the Air Force against his better judgement to support his bride and family. "Open General" the recruiter said, the fastest way to 3 squares and a paycheck in this military. So I raise my right hand and repeat some mumblings I don't really understand and off to Lackland I go. I soon learned that the only openings were for cook and cop, but they were taking volunteers for the dangerous jobs like PJ and B-52 Gunner. Clearly PJ was too much work for a hippie at heart but gunner sounded cool. I must have guessed right on the ASVAB, and fooled them on the background check as they let me give it a go and even gave me a top secret security clearance. I found myself surrounded by some incredible characters. There was this one scary dude, Pete Karjanis that helped me to understand the gravity of the oath I had mumbled earlier, and the sacrifice that others before me had given. He convinced me to take this position and myself for that matter seriously. And I did.



I fooled them again and four years later. I cross-trained to be a flight engineer on the C-141 and began to look ahead to a pilot career. After 12 years of active duty, Desert Storm, Somalia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Haiti, and too much loss, I went reserve. I completed school, flight training, instructed and flew a Chieftain for some high tech mapping, and then flew my first jet, a CRJ out of Memphis for the regionals. Somehow it all sneaks up on you and before I knew it I'm a captain at Alaska Airlines flying 737s to the most incredibly beautiful places on the planet.

I've collected a handful of significant memories along the way and I'll share two of the good ones. In September of 1993 Gen Jimmy Doolittle passed away and I had the honor and privilege to fly him on his final flight from Monterey, California to Arlington, Virginia to rest in peace and in remembrance of a grateful nation. What a legend and a powerful link to my bomber days. I met his son, Col John Doolittle, and many of his grandchildren. I have included a photo taken by an Air Force photographer of the occasion. The other is a bit more somber. After 9/11, I flew that Chieftain over ground zero and fed infrared and laser imagery of the sight to the NY SEMA folks to aid in the search and rescue efforts. Aviation has a way of throwing you directly in the path of history as most of you reading this know.



In the meantime, my old boss PK was promoted to Chief and then again to tie-dyed shirt wearing, motorcycle riding, Pink Floyd listening, long haired hippie type. I'm still trying to figure out how he swapped paths on me. He was always a fast burner. I blame my present predicament all on PK and I am working hard to escape this salt mine and resume my pursuit of hippie. In the meantime, I'm enjoying every minute of the pilot gig until they finally catch on to me. And when I retire, I'm gonna take that bride of mine in the boat, let loose the lines and head to Jamaica to join Pete impersonating Bob Marley.



C'est la vie, *Vince Budinger*

(Thanks Vinnie, *Pete*)



Perhaps some gunners would remember B Gen Vernon Wedemeyer, who commanded March AFB.

The son of General Wedemeyer of WW II fame; then Captain "Doc" Wedemeyer is shown standing in the front on the far right.

Tail gunner SSGT Bill Gaddes is kneeling, third from the left.

REFUSAL TO FACE REALITY: RESULTING IN THE HORROR OF AIR COMBAT OVER THE SKIES OF GERMANY IN 1943 AND 1Q 1944

PROLOGUE

Both American and British bomber commands suffered non-sustainable losses over the skies of Germany in 1943 through the second quarter of 1944. There was total denial by their top level commanders. "Bomber" Harris continued to waste resources on Berlin. Berlin was a battle which "Bomber" ultimately lost. The targets should have been aircraft production facilities. It is a mystery why Harris was never fired, as he defied orders from the Air Ministry almost the entire war. By the 3Q of 1944, the RAF loss rate at night was acceptable, primarily due to lack of fuel and trained Luftwaffe pilots.

General Eaker was claiming victory in 1943, while in reality the Eighth Air Force was suffering overwhelming and tragic defeat. In four operations, more than 150 bombers were lost. Morale plummeted, as crews realized that with these losses, one could not survive 25 missions. In addition, there were more than 200 US bombers that sought refuge Switzerland and Sweden. Post war interviews indicated that most of these aircraft were in condition to make it back to England.

THE COMBAT HORRORS

One of the most poignant descriptions of the terrors suffered and the heroic response by American bomber crews may be found in "Bomber Command"; a British book by Max Hastings. It is a history of the RAF Bomber Command. Hastings does a great job of describing the hell faced by American bomber crews in the skies over Germany. Consequently, we members of bomber combat crews owe the WW II bomber crews for their incredible legacy.

EPILOGUE

Most historians blame the early catastrophe on the lack of a long range fighter. This is true, but the failure was the lack of drop tanks and plumbing for the P-38, P-47, and P-51 aircraft. No technology breakthrough was required.

This was just a massive planning and logistics failure which caused the loss of more than 10,000 crew members and 1,000 heavy bombers. The tragic outcome was that our bombing during that period was of negligible effect. The tragic effort was only a “pinprick” on German industry. It was incredible that the majority of bomber crews manned their aircraft and flew these missions in the face of these incredible odds. They were certainly the “Greatest generation”.

Bill Gaddes

SAVING EUROPE FROM ITSELF: FOR THE THIRD TIME

Europeans will not admit it, but we Americans have saved Europe three times. For the last 25 years, however, the U.S. has not had a coherent plan to stop Russian aggression. Such a plan may not be feasible at this time. Russia has begun re-cobbling its empire; and covets the rich lands to the west, as it had previously. Now is the time for the U.S. to step in; not wait as it did previously. The stakes are possibly too high, however. The military balance has shifted to Russia.

NATO’s forces, including the U.S. military, have atrophied to less than 15 percent of that deployed in 1987. Also, we deploy virtually no US Navy ships in the Mediterranean. President Trump wants NATO to commit to its funding obligations, which would increase 59 percent or \$87 Billion annually.

Russia has installed nuclear armed mid-range cruise missiles that are a direct threat to NATO, in violation of the SALT Treaty. Our NATO response would rely upon conventional weapons, as a limited nuclear response appears to be no longer feasible. NATO needs a powerful, quick and effective response force to counter Russia’s moves; but none exists nor is one in the planning stage. Europe’s situation is reminiscent of the 1930s, but with the nuclear threat added. Russia could overrun the Baltics, or nibble it away “piece by piece” as we and NATO stand idly by.

Source: Wall Street Journal

Bill Gaddes

NORTH KOREA NEED NOT TEST ITS LOWER YIELD OR EMP NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO GO OPERATIONAL

There is a history of successful low yield nuclear weapon operational deployments without testing. At least eight countries have developed these weapons and deployed them; mostly without testing. Israel, Pakistan, and South Africa all come to mind. It is likely that North Korea has weapons in the 20 to 30 kiloton range; developed with Pakistani help. It is a serious mistake to consider North Korea’s nuclear weapons as “primitive, bulky, and unreliable”.

North Korea has an intermediate missile capability, and is on the threshold of an intercontinental missile. They are prioritizing the development of a nuclear “Super EMP” weapon. Such a weapon could paralyze the United States by blacking out the electrical grid. Chaos would ensue.

Three steps are immediately required: (1) strengthen our national grid, (2) deploy our AEGIS cruisers to the Korean Peninsula, and (3) reinstate Regan’s “Strategic Defense Initiative”.

Ignoring the North Korean nuclear threat has gone on long enough. To continue will threaten the very existence of the United States of America.

Source: Wall Street Journal

28 February 2017

Bill Gaddes

LETTERS AND E-MAILS

Four Gunners Assoc

Thanks for advising me. Usually send several years at a time but I am almost 91 so I guess I will just pay by the year. If I am even around I will send check next year. Thanks Richard (?)

P.S. March 23, 1945 will be 71 years since I bailed out over Gr. Escaped over Germany to Russia. Still alive; Go to nursing home for veterans and talk. Jumped out of plane just before my 90th birthday. Still in pretty good shape but have trouble walking, hearing, and seeing. Come to see me if in Andersen. Phone 934-3714

Richard J. Ricks

(Recent letter to Chuck Dean)

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From: Ed
 To: Chuck Dean
 Subject: B-52 Gunners Info
 Date: Wednesday 16 Feb 2017 10:09 am

Chuck, Here is the info you need.

Edward F, Ricks
 Phoenix, AZ

B-52D model in the 1960s over 900 hours flying backwards. Thanks, Ed

A Memorial for Outcome 54 and Outcome 55.

The families of two of the airmen killed in the awful crash of two B-52 bombers are planning a memorial. It was a beautiful late summer day in 1958. Outcome 55, a nearly new B-52D assigned to the 327th Bomb Squadron was completing a Cold War training mission and had called the Fairchild tower "just completed touch and go, going around for a full stop. End of mission." It's sister aircraft, Outcome 54, from the 325th Bomb Squadron of the 92nd Bomb Wing was making a simulated instrument approach. They never saw each other and collided over Airway Heights, two miles from the end of the runway. The 327th Commander was killed along with 12 other officers and airmen. Three men survived. The families are planning a granite memorial to be placed in Memorial Park, Fairchild AFB, WA near the existing memorials for the 1994 accident and the Shell 77 crash. If you have questions or comments or would like to offer financial support, you can contact the families at outcome54@outlook.com or by mail at: Greg Staples

4715 W Larchwood Ct
 Spokane, WA 99208

Anything helps. Thank you.

Peace is Our Profession
 Dedicated to the heroes of the Cold War

On September 8, 1958 thirteen men lost their lives defending freedom during the Cold War with the Soviet Union when two B-52s collided in the Fairchild AFB traffic pattern 2 miles from the runway.



<p>Outcome 54 Major Theodore Held Major Donald Staples Capt. Homer Crump 1Lt. John Cork 1Lt. Reggie Frazier</p> <p>Survivors Capt. David Birdsell SSgt. Lowell Younger</p>	<p>Outcome 55 Lt. Col. Andrew Creo Capt. Roy George Capt. Ernest Marker Capt. Russell Snow 1Lt. John Black 1Lt. Gerald Limberg SSgt. Aubrey Moore SSgt. David Archer</p> <p>Survivor 2Lt. Walter Maguire</p>
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HONORING THE FALLEN

ON SEPT. 8, 1958, TWO B-52 STRATOFORTRESSES COLLIDED WHILE LANDING AT FAIRCHILD AIR FORCE BASE. THIRTEEN AIRMEN WERE KILLED AND THREE INJURED. THE INCIDENT WAS THE WORST DISASTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND'S B-52 BOMBER OPERATIONS.



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Outcome 54

Major Theodore Held
Major Donald Staples
Capt. Homer Crump
1Lt. John Cork
1Lt. Reggie Frazier

Survivors

Capt. David Birdsell
SSgt. Lowell Younger

Outcome 55

Lt. Col. Andrew Creo
Capt. Roy George
Capt. Ernest Marker
Capt. Russell Snow
1Lt. John Black
1Lt. Gerald Limberg
SSgt. Aubrey Moore
SSgt. David Archer

Survivor

2Lt. Walter Maguire

Families raising funds for monument to crew at base's Memorial Park

By Jim Camden

jimc@spokesman.com, (509) 879-7461

Greg Staples remembers hearing a big “thump” as he was sitting down to dinner on a late summer evening in 1958 with his mother, brother and grandmother, who was celebrating her birthday. They looked out a window from their home on Fairchild Air Force Base and saw a B-52 on fire and ejection seats.

He and his brother didn't pay much attention to the schedule their father kept as a B-52 navigator, but their mother did. “She was on the front porch, screaming his name,” Staples recalled recently.

Maj. Donald Staples, a World War II veteran who had flown 25 missions over Europe, was aboard Outcome 54, which was coming in for a landing at Fairchild. Another B-52, designated Outcome 55, had just finished a “touch-and-go” landing and was coming around for its final landing. Both were on training missions.

Outcome 54 was scheduled to practice an instrument approach; Outcome 55 was practicing visual flight landing. About 2 miles from the runway, over the town of Airway Heights, the two mammoth bombers collided, then exploded, sending a torrent of airplane pieces raining down. The two planes had 16 crew members between them; 13 died.

ABOVE: Greg Staples holds his father's vintage flight jacket. Maj. Donald Staples (pictured at right in 1944) died in a B-52 crash in 1958.



THUNDERBIRDS BLUE ANGELS

April 1 - 2	Melbourne Air & Space Air Show 2017	Melbourne	FL	Thunderbirds
April 1 - 2	Wings Over South Texas 2017	NAS Corpus Christi	TX	Blue Angels
April 8 - 9	Maxwell AFB Air Show 2017	Maxwell AFB	AL	Thunderbirds
April 8 - 9	Sun N Fun Air Show 2017	Lakeland	FL	Blue Angels
April 22 - 23	Gulf Coast Salutes Air Show 2017	Tyndall AFB	FL	Thunderbirds
April 22 - 23	Air Power Expo 2017	New Orleans	LA	Blue Angels
April 29 - 30	Chennault International Air Show 2017	Lake Charles	LA	Thunderbirds
April 29 - 30	MCAS Beaufort Air Show 2017	MCAS Beaufort	SC	Blue Angels
May 6 - 7	Travis AFB Air Show 2017	Travis AFB	CA	Thunderbirds
May 6 - 7	Barksdale Open House Air Show 2017	Bossier City	LA	Blue Angels
May 6 - 7	Fort Lauderdale Air Show 2017	Ft. Lauderdale	FL	Snowbirds
May 13 - 14	Wings Over Pittsburgh 2017	Pittsburgh	PA	Thunderbirds
May 13 - 14	Memphis Airshow 2017	Memphis	TN	Blue Angels
May 20 - 21	Star Spangled Salute Air Show 2017	Tinker AFB	OK	Thunderbirds
May 20 - 21	Seymour Johnson Open House 2017	Goldsboro	NC	Blue Angels
May 20 - 21	Rhode Island Air Show 2017	North Kingston	RI	Snowbirds
May 27 - 28	Bethpage NY Air Show 2017	Wantagh	NY	Thunderbirds
May 27 - 28	Millville Airshow 2017	Millville	NJ	Blue Angels
June 3 - 4	Duluth Air and Aviation Expo 2017	Duluth	MN	Blue Angels
June 10 - 11	Scott Air Show & Open House 2017	Scott AFB	IL	Thunderbirds
June 17 - 18	Thunder Over Valley Air Show 2017	Youngstown ANG	OH	Thunderbirds
June 17 - 18	OC Air Show 2017	Ocean City	MD	Blue Angels
June 24 - 25	Dayton Air Show 2017	Dayton	OH	Thunderbirds
June 24 - 25	Westmoreland County Air Show 2017	Latrobe	PA	Blue Angels
July 1 - 2	National Cherry Festival Airshow 2017	Traverse City	MI	Thunderbirds
July 8 - 9	Gary Air & Water Show 2017	Gary	IN	Thunderbirds
July 8	Pensacola Beach Air Show 2017	Pensacola	FL	Blue Angels
July 14 - 16	Royal International Air Tatroo 2017	RAF Fairford	UK	Thunderbirds
July 15 - 16	Milwaukee Air & Water Show 2017	Milwaukee	WI	Blue Angels
July 22 - 23	Flight Over The Falls 2017	Great Falls	MT	Thunderbirds
July 22 - 23	Idaho Falls Air Show 2017	Idaho Falls	ID	Blue Angels
July 26	Frontier Days Air Show 2017	Cheyenne	WY	Thunderbirds
July 29 - 30	EAA Air Venture 2017	Oshkosh	WI	Blue Angels
July 29 - 30	Inland Northwest Skyfest 2017	Fairchild AFB	WA	Thunderbirds
August 5 - 6	Boeing Seafair Air Show 2017	Seattle	WA	Blue Angels
August 12 - 13	Westfield Air Show 2017	Westfield ANGB	MA	Thunderbirds
August 19 - 20	Chicago Air & Water Show 2017	Chicago	IL	Blue Angels
August 19 - 20	Selfridge Air Show/Open House 2017	Selfridge ANG	MI	Thunderbirds
August 23	Thunder Over The Boardwalk 2017	Atlantic City	NJ	Thunderbirds
August 26 - 27	Great State of Maine Air Show 2017	Brunswick	ME	Blue Angels
August 26 - 27	Dover AFB Open House/Air Show 2017	Dover	DE	Thunderbirds
September 2 - 3	Thunder Over Michigan 2017	Ypsilanti	MI	Blue Angels
September 2 - 3	Cleveland National Air Show 2017	Cleveland	OH	Thunderbirds
September 9 - 10	Talladega Speedway Air Show 2017	Lincoln	AL	Blue Angels
September 9 - 10	Altus AFB Airshow 2017	Altus AFB	OK	Thunderbirds
September 16 - 17	NAS Oceana Air Show 2017	NAS Oceana	VA	Blue Angels
September 16 - 17	JB Andrews Air Show 2017	JB Andrews	MD	Thunderbirds
September 23 - 24	MCAS Miramar Air Show 2017	San Diego	CA	Blue Angels
September 23 - 24	Pikes Peak Regional Airshow 2017	Colorado Springs	CO	Thunderbirds

THUNDERBIRDS BLUE ANGELS

September 30 - 1	Huntington Beach Air Show 2017	Huntington Beach	CA	Blue Angels
October 7 - 8	Minden-Tahoe Air Show 2017	Minden	NV	Thunderbirds
October 6 - 8	Fleet Week Air Show 2017	San Francisco	CA	Blue Angels
October 21 - 22	Wings Over North Georgia 2017	Rome	GA	Blue Angels
October 21 - 22	Wings Over Houston Air Show 2017	Houston	TX	Thunderbirds
October 28 - 29	Bell Fort Worth Alliance Air Show 2017	Fort Worth	TX	Blue Angels
October 28 - 29	Moody Appreciation Day 2017	Moody	GA	Thunderbirds
November 4 - 5	JB Lackland-Kelly Air Show 2017	JB Lackland-Kelly	TX	Thunderbirds
November 4 - 5	Birth Place Blue Angels Air Show 2017	NAS Jacksonville	FL	Blue Angels
November 10 - 11	Blue Angels Homecoming 2017	NAS Pensacola	FL	Blue Angels
November 11 - 12	Aviation Nation Open House 2017	Nellis AFB	NV	Thunderbirds



KI AIRSHOW 1977



LETTERS AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR

Arc Light/Young Tiger Reunion, 6 -- 10 June 2017

The Arc Light and Young Tiger reunion planning is underway, it will be the best we ever had.

We selected and secured accommodations at Downtown Embassy Suites in historic Old Market of Omaha. There are restaurants and "watering holes" within two blocks of the Hotel. The hotel has provided an excellent package for our guests. Established room rates are \$139.00 per day for single or double suites, \$154.00 for a triple rate and \$169 for a quad rate. Included with the suite rate is:

- Complimentary wireless internet in guest rooms
- Complimentary cooked to order Breakfast
- Complimentary Manager's reception (drinks and snacks) every evening
- Complimentary shuttle to and from Omaha Eppley Airport (Call Embassy Suites upon arrival)
- Complimentary shuttle to the local casinos (Shuttle will carry @10 people)
- Complimentary shuttle to the Henry Doorly Zoo
- Use of a provided Hospitality room for informal meetings, chats and fellowship

Guest accommodations will be available at 3:00 PM on 6 June and reserved until 11:00 AM on departure day -- 10 June. Accommodations are suites consisting of a living room, bedroom, bath, and mini-kitchen. All very accommodating. There are TVs in both the bedroom and living room.

In order to assign specific room types to the attendees, each sleeping room in the room block must BE CONFIRMED NO LATER THAN SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2017 (Reservation due date). We will also use this date to confirm the events you wish to participate in. The event registration form will be attached to the web site information.

Reservations will be made by individual call-in or online to Embassy Suites.

Upon arrival and registration, each member will be provided a package with all the necessary tickets, passes and instructions to make your stay pleasant and enjoyable.

A link to the registration form will be posted as soon as final details on events and pricing are resolved.

Planned activities for now are: Golf tournament, Shopping trip with special pricing to Borsheim's (one of the world's largest jewelry stores), and a day at the Henry Doorly Zoo, the number one rated zoo, by some, in the world.

There will be presentations available in the hospitality room of timely and interesting topics.

Johnny Jjohn71660@cox.net

Subject: Gunners Sculpture

I am still working on getting a sculpture to put in the Maxwell/Gunter Memorial Park at the Enlisted Heritage Hall at Gunter. The sculpture will represent all enlisted gunners that flew on bomber aircraft in the Army Air Corps & United States Air Force. I want ideas. I would like inputs from as many people as possible. I want to know if they think the idea is good.

I would like to know how many in the AFGA will support this idea. It will require fund raising. I think the sculpture should be a larger-than-life gunner in a flight suit, holding a flying helmet, which will stand approximately 81" tall. The cost will be approximately \$40,000. The reason I think we should do this is, we are the last of the aerial gunners that flew on bombers.

The project will take about a year to complete once the decision is made as to what it should look like. We could make a wall with all the aircraft that had aerial gunners, are just a few ideas about what we can do. E-mail APollardFlyboy@aol.com

Thank you,
Art Pollard



AFGA NEWSREEL

An **engine fell off** the wing of a **B-52** Stratofortress during a training flight Wednesday, 4 January 2017, at Minot AFB, North Dakota, and the pilots were able to land the bomber without any incident. The Pratt & Whitney TF33-P-3/103 turbofan engine, one of eight on the aircraft, fell off and landed in an unpopulated area 25 nautical miles north-east of the airfield, according to an Air Force statement. There were five crewmembers on board, with no injuries reported. The base sent a UH-1N Huey from the 54th Helicopter Squadron to recover the remains of the engine. The incident happened as Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James was visiting the base in part to highlight the need for modernization and improvements to the Air Force's nuclear community. The base has obviously launched an investigation into the incident.

The accident doesn't signal that the Stratofortress fleet needs a quick re-engining, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said Friday, 6 January 2017. Speaking to an AFA-sponsored, Air Force industry breakfast in Arlington, Virginia, James broke with protocol, which usually demands that senior leaders refrain from discussing accidents until investigations are completed, saying the episode appears to have happened because the engine "seemingly disintegrated" and "came off the aircraft" during the training flight. The root cause is still unknown, James said, but it's hoped more will be learned if the engine can be recovered. It's believed to be at "the bottom of a riverbed," she added, saying efforts are being made to retrieve it. There were no injuries associated with the mishap. "Timing is everything," James observed, noting the irony that the accident happened while she was visiting Minot to take a final pulse of nuclear airmen at the base—before she leaves her job—to see if changes applied to the career field in recent years have had a positive effect.

However, the episode doesn't create "more urgency" to a proposed B-52 re-engining, she said. Though the idea has merits, it has consistently come up short against other priorities, James explained. She didn't rule it out, though, saying the Air Force continues to look at "various tests and comparisons" and "creative financing" vehicles that could pay for such a program. USAF has previously looked at leasing new engines, finding that such a program would pay for itself in fuel savings in only a few years, but has lacked the start-up money to do it, and the need is "not critical enough." She added that there were "more critical upgrades" needed to keep the B-52 combat-capable. Overall, the B-52's mission capable rate remains "excellent," she said, and there's no reason yet "to think this is a fleet-wide problem," even though the B-52 is "one of our oldest aircraft."





A legendary B-17 from World War II will be on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. **The "Memphis Belle,"** the first US Army Air Forces heavy bomber to complete 25 missions over Europe and return home, will be on display beginning May 17, 2018, the museum announced. After its war deployment, the B-17 flew across the country to boost morale and collect war bonds, spreading the name that is now nationally known. The aircraft also lent its name to the famous 1944 documentary film "The Memphis Belle." "The B-17F Memphis Belle is an icon that represents the thousands of bomber crews, maintainers, and others supporting the bomber mission, whose service and sacrifice helped win WWII," museum curator Jeff Duford said in a news release. The aircraft first came to the museum in 2005, where workers began conservation and restoration work. The eventual display will include interactive displays, film footage, and personal artifacts, Duford said.



The inaugural Enlisted Remotely Piloted Aircraft Pilot Selection Board selected 30 enlisted airmen from a total of about 200 applicants to fill pilot training slots for fiscal years 2017 and 2018, the service announced on March 8. The board, which convened Feb. 6-8, selected two senior master sergeants, five master sergeants, nine technical sergeants, 14 staff sergeants, and five alternatives. The airmen will join the other 12 enlisted airmen who are part of the **Enlisted Pilot Initial Class, or EPIC**. The Air Force opened the door to enlisted airmen to fly the RQ-4 Global Hawk last year, and the service expects the number of enlisted pilots to grow to 100 within four years, states the release. The first EPIC class is comprised of "very experienced enlisted members" who served in career fields such as RPA sensor operators, said Air Education and Training Command boss Lt. Gen. Darryl Roberson told reporters at AFA's Air Warfare Symposium last week. "They are very familiar with the operations, the concept, and how we do all this together ... We put them through first not only to see how it goes but to get their thoughts and inputs in how to make it better for the classes that follow," said Roberson. So far, there have not been any big surprises from the students' performances or their inputs. "Each of those EPIC classes will have less experience and less familiarity," added Roberson. "The last EPIC class will deliberately have people with no knowledge on this."



B-52s from Minot AFB, N.D., are **deploying to the Middle East** for their turn to fight ISIS. The bombers, assigned to the 23rd Bomb Squadron, will deploy to US Central Command to replace B-52s that deployed last year from Barksdale AFB, La. A Minot spokesperson on Wednesday confirmed the deployment to Air Force Magazine but did not provide a timeline. An advance group has already deployed to the base, the *Grand Forks Herald* reported.

B-52s have been busy combating ISIS in Iraq and Syria, with the aircraft recently setting a record for consecutive sorties without a single flight canceled due to a maintenance issue, Maj. Gen. Jay Silveria, deputy commander of Air Forces Central Command, said last week. Barksdale B-52s deployed last year to replace B-1s that had been continuously deployed to CENTCOM since 2001 but needed to return home for maintenance and upgrades.

The current **AGM-86 air-launched cruise missile (ALCM)** fleet, which dates back to the early 1980s, is on its "fifth service life extension," and the missiles will soon become "unreliable and not able to reach their targets," Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Stephen Wilson told the committee. Selva said the current US bomber fleet is performing well, but that "a decade from now these weapons will not be able to penetrate Russian air defenses."



AFGA NEWSREEL

US bombers and fighters, earlier in December, flew a **show of force sortie** over the South China Sea that included one B-52H, two B-1Bs, four F-15Cs, seven tankers, and a US Navy guided missile destroyer as tensions are raised in the region. The exercise, mentioned in an Air Force news release about the B-52s returning to their home base of Minot AFB, N.D., occurred after the aircraft participated in the **Phoenix Black** exercise in Australia. The operation was a "routine small force training sortie" that included several forward operating bases in the region. Capt. Chandler Anderson, the 24th Bomb Squadron assistant flight commander and airborne mission commander and a B-1B pilot on the sortie, said the flight "enabled us to practice tactics in the South China Sea that offered many valuable lessons learned that will make us more lethal in combat." The B-52 was one of three that deployed to Andersen AFB, Guam, on Dec. 13 for a 15 day rotation. The Stratofortresses at the base were in addition to the B-1s, already forward deployed as part of the Air Force's continuous bomber presence to the Pacific. The B-52s flew 15 sorties during the short deployment, the release states.

Andersen AFB, Guam, held a **memorial ceremony** Friday, 16 December 2016 in honor of **Operation Linebacker II**, the 1972 bombing campaign which lasted 11 days at the end of the Vietnam War. The ceremony concluded with a flyover by two B-1B Lancer bombers. A total of 15 B-52 Stratofortresses were shot down and 75 airmen died over the course of the campaign, which lasted from December 18-29 and has also been called 11 Days of Christmas. The operation saw 15,000 airmen supporting operations at Andersen to launch more than 700 long-distance missions in what became the largest US bombing campaign since the conclusion of World War II. "The operation proved successful," according to Jeffrey Meyer, 36th Wing historian at Andersen. "North Vietnam was brought back to the negotiation table, officially ending direct US involvement in the Vietnam War and obtained the release of 591 prisoners of war in February 1973."



B-52s deployed to the Middle East recently **set a record**, flying 277 sorties straight without a single flight canceled due to a maintenance issue. Maj. Gen. Jay Silveria, deputy commander of Air Forces Central Command said B-52s are flying regular missions against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, along with flying from its base in southwest Asia to conduct strikes in Afghanistan. The bombers deployed to Central Command last year to replace B-1s that had to return to the US for maintenance, and quickly became part of the campaign to bomb ISIS, Silveria said. The amount of strikes inside Afghanistan has picked up as of late, with the spring fighting season translating to more strikes, Silveria said. Air Force tankers are not permanently based in Afghanistan, but recently were sent to Bagram Air Base because bad weather in southwest Asia meant they couldn't take off and fly daily to Afghanistan to keep up the needed support.

Global Strike Command chief Gen. Robin Rand says he will "continue to advocate" for **re-engining the B-52** bomber. "We have some money to look at that," Rand told reporters at AWS17, though the funding is only enough for "feasibility analysis." Rand said he wants new engines on the airplane "not for safety reasons" but because new powerplants would need less maintenance—saving on maintainers badly needed elsewhere—as well as reducing fuel consumption, and extending range, meaning Air Mobility Command could put some of its bomber-supporting tankers to use on other missions. New engines would also require fewer spare parts and spend more time on-wing, meaning more availability of the jets for action, Rand said. "There are about four or five good reasons" to do it, Rand said, but it would require the approval of Congress to use "creative" financing schemes to get the engines, he said. Those include a possible lease if USAF opted to do the program, but not buy the equipment outright. Rand later told Air Force Magazine that the ballpark price of B-52 re-engining would be about \$7 billion, assuming eight engines on each of the jets in the fleet. But "all dollars are in competition" with other worthy projects, Rand said. Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Steven Wilson, himself former head of AFGSC, has been a big proponent of B-52 re-engining "and still is," Rand said.



A B-52 Stratofortress from the 96th Bomb Squadron, Barksdale AFB, La., recently traveled to Edwards AFB, Calif., for **Hazards of Electromagnetic Radiation to Ordnance (HERO) testing**. The 772nd Test Squadron managed the process at the Benefield Anechoic Facility. It took four days to situate the B-52 physically inside the building, which has a jack and a turntable to recreate in-flight conditions. The HERO testing is meant to ensure the aircraft's normal electronic operations will not accidentally activate the ordnance it will carry. The anechoic facility also allows faster and more reliable test results because it creates an environment that filters out the kind of electronic signal traffic usually found on a flight line.

Airframe: A B-1 Lancer from Dyess AFB, Texas, a B-2 Spirit from Whiteman AFB, Mo., and a B-52 Stratofortress from Minot AFB, N.D., rehearse formations moments before performing a bomber trio in-trail flyover at Barksdale AFB, La., Feb. 2, 2017. The all-bomber flyover took place to commemorate the **Eighth Air Force's 75th Anniversary**. Eighth Air Force, also known as "The Mighty Eighth," which dates back to World War II, houses all of the Air Force's nuclear-capable and conventional bomber fleet. The Eighth Air Force, which is in charge of nuclear and conventional bombers and is made up of five bomb wings at different locations, is one of two Active Duty numbered air forces with the Air Force Global Strike Command. The numbered air force traces its lineage to the VIII Bomber Command, which was activated on Feb. 1, 1942, at Langley Field, Va. VIII Bomber Command was re-designated as Eighth Air Force on Feb. 22, 1944.



Air Combat Command chief Gen. Hawk Carlisle expects the **B-1 bomber to retire before the B-52**, even though the "Bone" is twenty years younger, due to the BONE's heavy usage in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last 15 years. Carlisle told Air Force Magazine the B-1 is a "great airframe," but is expensive to fly and difficult to maintain. The ultimate decision is up to Air Force Global Strike Command chief Gen. Robin Rand because the B-1 moved from ACC's oversight to Global Strike's in 2015.

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) called on Congress to pass a defense supplemental spending bill before the end of the year to counteract what he called "eight years of neglect of our military" under the Obama Administration. While he did not discuss details of the proposed bill beyond its \$26 billion price tag, Cotton said his goal is to "stop the hemorrhaging in the short-term" and create "breathing space for a rebuilding of our military" in the long-term. Cotton said "the world's gotten a lot more dangerous in the last five years," and called for an increase in military spending that would acknowledge that reality. Cotton said, though he did call on the Air Force to **eliminate the B-52** and get enough B-21s to replace it." He also called for the full modernization of the nuclear triad, including ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, saying that because of the nuclear deterrence mission, "there has not been great power conflict in the last 70 years." Cotton said the US ground-based deterrent offers "a decisive advantage against Russia and against China." While "submarines can be sunk" and "planes can be downed," he said, the geographic dispersion of the US ground-based system makes it much more difficult to attack effectively.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER - JOHN STANTON



Greetings from soggy and drenched California. Our prayers were answered, at least at the moment. We have gotten a lot of rain in the valley and more important snow in the mountains. At the last measurement we are 160% snow in the mountains. This is great news especially for our farmers, as they will get normal water this year for their crops. It is still raining which will add to our totals for the year. We are getting local flooding and some landslides, but that is to be expected.

On a sadder note I attended the funeral and burial of Donald Laporì. He is being interred in the National Cemetery near Sacramento In Dixon, California. His service was well attended by gunners and other crew members from the Merced area. Donald was well known by many in this area. He was active in many organizations including the retired gunners, Italo Lodge, NAUS, American Legion, and the ROMEOS. He will be missed as he was one of a kind.



Pete asked me to reflect on my Combat Crew Training Squadron (CCTS) Gunnery Class during academics. I was one of five retrainees in my class. We had two E-6 TSgts including myself. Both were from electronics maintenance career fields and three E-4 Sgts one each from supply, air police and transportation. We all completed academics successfully. Three classmates were going to B-52G models, one to the B-52H model and I went to the B-52D model. Our standard uniform was 1505s. We had open rank uniform inspection every Friday in the hallway of academics building. Once a month open ranks was in class A blues.

After basic academics I went to Carswell AFB Texas for B-52D academic and flight training. I was the only gunner in my class so I got one-on-one attention. Being the only gunner in my class I got to fly two fireouts and four Fighter Intercept Exercise sorties. Upon completion of flight training I had my initial qualification check ride with CEVG Combat Crew Evaluation Group. CMSgt Fred Arthur administered my qualification check ride in May 1976.

Fast forward 11 years, In 1987 I was selected to be the next Wing Gunnery Program manager (Wing Gunner) for the 93rd Bomb Wing, Castle AFB California. Getting acquainted with my new duties I noticed a few new changes since I left Castle. One of the areas was in the 4017th CCTS. A new course of instruction was the Enlisted Aircrew Undergraduate Course (EAUC). This was a course developed by instructor gunners for airmen coming out of Basic Training. It was an introduction to SAC Aircrew duty.

The course included life support training including certification in the altitude chamber. Students also got their Military drivers license. Other classes included dealing with other base agencies including CBPO, Accounting and Finance, and Transportation. They learned about PCS and TDY orders, how to fill out travel vouchers, and how to make travel arrangements, both official and personal. Another class dealt with how to communicate and coordinate with Commissioned Officers.

The initial classes were Airmen Basics coming into Gunnery CCTS. Eventually Airmen coming into Boom Operator CCTS were included. It was designed to meet the needs of SAC. It wasn't long before word got out to the other flying AFSCs and they wanted to get involved. Soon it was determined that Load Master, Flight Engineer and Radio Operator Basic Airmen would be required to attend EAUC. With the incorporation of these other AFSCs the program was turned over to Air Training Command (ATC) and the school was moved to Sheppard AFB in Texas.

While the program was managed by SAC it was used as a screening tool to determine if these Airmen were capable of meeting the high responsibility of SAC Aircrew duty. Students could be eliminated from CCTS if they didn't complete the course satisfactorily. We noticed a slight decrease in student eliminations for disciplinary problems in CCTS. The initial response from SAC tactical units was positive. ATC was not agreeable to eliminating students for poor performance. Their idea was to retrain students until they passed the course.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER - JOHN STANTON



After the elimination of Gunner crewmembers on October 1st 1991 from the B-52, I lost track of how the EAUC was working out. We as Gunners can be very proud of coming up with this program.

I hope to see everyone at our reunion in Nashville. Until next time, so long from Central California.

John Stanton

Enlisted Aircrew Undergraduate Training

The special gunner course started under John Stanton's leadership at Castle was obviously a great idea, so much as he said, the boomers soon copied what the gunners were doing. When the gunners went away, this specialized course of instruction ended up at Sheppard AFB, Texas as John mentioned. At that time all cross trainees and basic trainees applying for enlisted flying duties entered the pipeline with this initial three-week course.

One of the first orders of business was the initial altitude chamber. This was the three-day course most of us attended at Fairchild in our time. After successful completion, the students were separated for specialized training as flight engineers, loadmasters, boom operators, airborne radio operators, airborne mission computer and radar technicians, airborne surveillance operators, flight attendants, linguists, and other career enlisted flying specialists.

During my time, the functional managers of enlisted aircrews figured out that the initial altitude chamber course at Sheppard could only support a little more than 700 students a year. At that time, to sustain the enlisted aircrew specialties and demand, we needed over 1100 aircrew students a year so we were in a chronic shortage that was only getting worse.

Another problem was basic trainees going from Lackland to Sheppard were 'getting lost' and often showing up late after their altitude chamber class had started, leaving an empty seat in the chamber. This backed up the pipeline flow even more with scheduling disruptions with demand for students competing for rescheduled seats.

The solution wasn't too difficult for Enlisted Aircrew Functionals, at a Worldwide Enlisted Aircrew Conference right before I retired as a 30-year enlisted aviator in 2002. There were several altitude chambers in the greater San Antonio area and by using those resources, we could put more than 1100 students through the system and no-show rates were all but eliminated.

One of the last things I contributed to was the establishment of the USAF Aircrew University at Lackland Medina Complex. The thought behind this concept was to locate the Aircrew Fundamentals Course and ground schools for all career enlisted aviators in one location. The aircrew technical ground schools at Keesler were moved to Lackland in 2004. Others soon followed making this location the Center for Enlisted Aircrew Excellence.

Survival school is still taught at Fairchild and flying training is conducted at various locations where the flying resources are based such as Altus where the boom operators train in KC-135 and KC-10 aircraft based there.

I have been trying to get John to write his story about the simple course they started in the '80s at Castle. That course spread to every career enlisted aviator aircrew specialty throughout the Air Force and grew into the Aircrew Fundamentals Course. This course was a game-changer that initially turned out noticeably sharper and motivated gunners into the field that wore their uniforms correctly, knew how to fill out a travel voucher, and were so much more informed about what was expected as a B-52 gunner and aircrew member. The initial response from SAC

tactical units was positive is a complete understatement! I called John at Castle when I was the squadron gunner at Fairchild and asked what the heck was going on with the noticeably improved gunners we were receiving. We had 38 assigned gunners in the largest bomb squadron in SAC and welcomed many new gunners with positive attitudes.

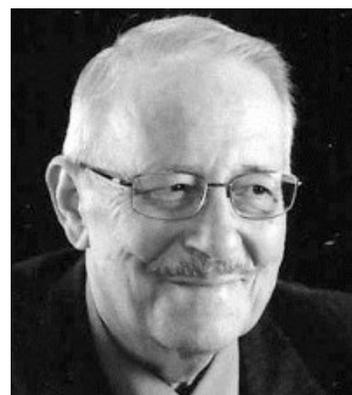
John and I have had this conversation about what he and his gunners at Castle established with the aircrew orientation course. As you read in his article, he still refuses to take any credit, is still so humble and modest for several decades now. That is a true testament to his outstanding gunner character! Very well done John! What a legacy for all enlisted aircrew to this day. John, you MADE THE DIFFERENCE! *Pete*



RICHARD J CIBAK 18 MAY 1938 - 10 JULY 2013

Richard Cibak was born on May 18, 1938 and passed away on Wednesday, July 10, 2013.

Richard was a resident of Roswell, New Mexico.



CLARENCE LARRY FOWLER
INMAN, South Carolina

Clarence Larry Fowler, 72, went home to be with the Lord March 10, 2015 at his home.

A native of Spartanburg County, son of the late Clarence Lee and Tula Westbrook Fowler, he was a U.S. Air Force Veteran, a member of Second Baptist Church, Greer, and a former member of Harvest Baptist Church, Lugoff, SC. He has been a faithful soul winner, deacon, Sunday school teacher, Awana director and held other positions within the churches.

Surviving are his wife, Cleo Atkins Caldwell Fowler of the home; a son, Don Fowler (Angie) of Orangeburg; two daughters, Angie Ray of Lugoff and Annette Hancock (Ken) of Granger, Indiana; a sister, Patricia Campbell of Duncan; eight grandchildren, Asiah Fowler, D.J. Fowler, Charleston Ray, Brady Ray, Garrett Lewis, Alycia Straeter, Jordan Lewis and Austin Lewis; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held 3:30 p.m. Friday at Second Baptist Church, conducted by Pastors Bill Dulaney, Ron Fleming and John Smith. A private burial will be held in Fort Jackson National Cemetery.

FINAL FLY BY



NEAL SIEBENBRUNER 11 MARCH 1925 - 30 OCTOBER 2016

Neal Siebenbruner aged 91 of Mankato, Minnesota passed away Sunday, October 30, 2016 at Hillcrest Health Care Center in Mankato. Memorial services will be held at 11:00 am on Friday November 4, 2016 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Mankato. Visitation was held one hour prior to the services at the church. Private interment was held at Woodland Hills Memorial Park. Memorials are donor's choice.

Neal was born March 11, 1925 to William and Ruth (Deebach) Siebenbruner. He attended Central School and St. Peter High School in St. Peter, MN. He entered the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1943 and served as a B-24 Ball Turret



Gunner. He flew 40 combat missions with the 11th Bombardment Group, bombing Iwo Jima from the Islands of Guam and Saipan. He was discharged as a Staff Sargent from the service in 1945. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 6 Oak Leaf clusters, The Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 3 Battle Stars, the Victory medal and Good Conduct medal.



Two of his proudest moments were having lunch sitting next to President Clinton on the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier and laying a wreath at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. He married Joyce Meeks on June 21, 1947 in St. Peter, MN. He retired from Northland Electric in 1990 and he was an usher at Our Saviors Lutheran Church for many years. He was a life member of the Morson-Ario VFW Post 9713 and was a member of American Legion Post 11 and Air Force Gunners Association. In 1965 he joined the 11th Bombardment Group (H) Association and became president of the group in 1972 and again in 2010. Neal enjoyed spending time with family and friends, dancing to Big Band music, bowling, going on mystery trips and travel.

Survivors include his wife Joyce of 69 years, sons Larry Siebenbruner, Richard and wife Stacie Siebenbruner, granddaughters Amy Siebenbruner, Jill (Siebenbruner) Dumas and husband Dante, Brittany (Siebenbruner) Unruh and husband Brandon, great granddaughter Dakota Unruh, step grandson Michael Wendland and wife Krystal, step granddaughter Jessica (Wendland) Hambly and husband Todd, step great grandchildren Adrianna, Hunter, and Parker Wendland, Eliana, Ethan and Kiera Unruh, Kailyn Dumas, brother LeRoy and wife Fern Siebenbruner, brother in law Gerald Meeks, special sister in law Pat Libaire and husband Milton, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Neal is preceded in death by his parents, one brother, Wayne, and one sister, Donna.



WALTER W. PATTERSON 1 MAY 1921 - 3 DECEMBER 2015

Walter Patterson, May 1, 1924 - December 3, 2015. Walt passed away in Spokane, Washington at the age of 91. Walter was born in Dufur, Oregon and spent a 25-year career in the U.S. Air Force. Walter is survived by his wife of 70 years, Imelda and by their eight children: Vicki Tallman (Vern), Paul (Mary Jane), Grace Cooper, Pat (Julie), Max (Tula), Ann Ferris (Don), Claud (Teresa) and Tom. His survivors also include 15 grandchildren and eight plus great-grandchildren. Inurnment took place at Queen of Peace Catholic Cemetery, 6910 Ben Burr Road, Spokane. Please direct any remembrances in Walter's honor to Gonzaga Preparatory School (1224 East Euclid Ave., Spokane 99207) or to House of Charity (32 West Pacific, P.O. Box 2253, Spokane, WA 99210).

FINAL FLY BY

MYRON K. SLATER 9 FEBRUARY 1930 - 1 NOVEMBER 2016

BOSSIER CITY, LA - Retired US Air Force SMSgt. Myron Kenneth Slater, age 86, died unexpectedly at his home Tuesday November 1, 2016. He was born February 9, 1930 in Independence, KS where he grew up and attended school, graduating in 1947.

He joined the Air Force in 1950 serving as a B-52 Gunner for 28 years before he retired in 1978. He married Della Jane Pierce in 1952 and they were married for 47 years until her death 1999. He was also preceded in death by his son Carl Allen Slater in 2007.

In 1980 he went to work for the FAA at Shreveport Regional Airport until he retired in 1993. He joined the Bossier Sherriff Dept. Posse in 1995 and enjoyed riding around the parish with fellow posse members. He also enjoyed taking long family travel trailer vacations that roamed all around the lower 48 states, as well as all the way to Alaska and back during his retirement.



His survivors include daughter Billie and her husband Troy Pennington: daughter-in-law Sandra Slater: grandchildren Alan Pennington and his wife Ginger, Chase Slater and Mary Slater: great-grandchildren Kaylin Scott, Jessica Pennington, and Dorian Echols: and great-great-granddaughter Rylee Johnson.

Myron donated his body to be used for medical research to LSU Medical Center Shreveport. His family hosted a visitation open house at his Bossier City home Saturday November 12 between 2 & 6 p.m. and invited all friends, neighbors and coworkers to come over to share a time of visiting, fellowship and snacks with them in his memory. (Published in Shreveport Times)

For the Commanders, Carroll R. Michaud
November 10, 2016 | Shreveport, LA
“The Final Salute”

Brothers in Arms, Military men and women down through the centuries, have traditionally exchanged Hand Salutes as a sign of recognition and as a way to render courtesy and respect one to another.

This Hand Salute is the last that we shall render to **Myron Kenneth Slater** our Brother-in-Arms. To his family it symbolizes the love and respect that we have for Myron. And to Myron it is rendered as a symbol of honor and gratitude to thank him for the devoted and selfless service he rendered to his country during the Korean and Vietnam Wars while serving as a B-52 Gunner in the U.S. Air Force. Myron, we commend you for your honorable service. You are a true patriot, who served with honor and distinction. You upheld the finest qualities of an American patriot warrior: courage, commitment, generosity, sacrifice, love and devotion to family and country. You were a true friend. We bid you a sad farewell. You will be dearly missed from among our ranks. Be at Ease. Rest in Peace.

On behalf of the 961 Military Veteran Legionnaires of Lowe-McFarlane Post 14 of The American Legion and the 233 Veterans of VFW Post 2238 in Shreveport, Louisiana, we extend our sympathies and our condolences to Myron's family and loved ones.

Tommy Mills, Commander, American Legion Post 14
5315 South Lakeshore Drive, Shreveport, LA 71109

Charles Livingston, Commander, VFW Post 2238
1245 Gary Street, Shreveport, LA 71101

FINAL FLY BY

From: Robert Matherly
Date: 12/29/16 1:47 PM (GMT-06:00)
Subject: Re: Final Military Honors for Don



One had to know **Don Lepori** to really appreciate this man... having served with him during ARC LIGHT overseas I can truly attest to his love of family and country, proud of servicing his country and especially proud to have served as a B-52 gunner during his time in the U.S. Air Force. Don will always be remembered by all who knew him. He definitely MADE A DIFFERENCE!!! You can bet he will be carrying his "coin" with him on this last trip.

Bob Matherly...

From: Ernie Conner
Date: 12/28/16 11:16 (GMT-08:00)
Subject: Final Military Honors for Don



Dear Robin and Family!

I received a call from Jeremy at Evergreen concerning the Honors for Don at Dixon National Cemetery on January 9th at 1:30 PM. Travis Honor Guard will be there to conduct the three volley honors, taps, and folding of the flag that will be presented by our mutual and wonderful friend, Lt Col Al Osborn (USAF, retired). Al was a B-52 aircraft commander with combat experience in Vietnam as well as Don and I. We both knew him well and I had the honor of serving with him during the last two years at Castle (74-76) as Instructor Gunner on his Instructor Team. I will be honored to lead the spoken part of the service coordinating with Travis and Lt Col Osborn. The wishes of the family are the most important part of the final military honors and we will strive to make this, the last contact we have for our beloved Don Lepori, a gracious, honorable, and memorable experience. I will not be the only gunner in attendance as Scottie Burns and John Stanton have stated their intentions of attending. John Stanton is the current Chaplain of the Air Force Gunners Association. Bob Matherly who lives in the Sacramento area has also intended to be there.

Lt Col Osborn and I will probably be traveling together and intend to arrive by 12:30 to ensure adequate time to coordinate with the Travis Honor Guard.

GOD BLESS OUR TROOPS AND VETERANS AND GOD BLESS AMERICA!

Blessings!

Ernie Conner, MSgt, USAF (retired)
Chaplain, Merced County VFW Honor Guard

Thanks Ernie,

I was talking to Robin, Don's daughter about how many of us knew Don. Flew and worked with him over the years.

I think that would great for Lori and the rest of the family if some of you would share a memory or two. Just give your name and where you knew him from.

E-mail it to Robin at rlconn4@yahoo.com

If you know any who I've missed please (and I know there are many) repost this message.



Thank you,
Peter (Scotty) Burns

FINAL FLY BY



DONALD LEE LEPORI, 26 MAY 1934 - 8 DECEMBER 2016

Donald Lee Lepori passed on December 8, 2016 at his home in Atwater, California at the age of 82.

He is survived by his wife of fifty years, Dolores (Lori) J. Lepori as well as his children, Robin, Don, Sharon, Al, Rebecca, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Donald was born in Santa Rosa, California to Emil and Marceline Lepori on May 26, 1934 where he spent his childhood.

He retired from the Air Force after twenty-nine years which included over two-hundred missions as a B52 Gunner during the Vietnam War before going to work for Lockheed Martin as a flight simulator instructor at Castle AFB.

Don had a passion for everything in life such as music, food and the Air Force but especially for his family and friends. He enjoyed active memberships in various organizations including the Italian-American club (ITALO) and the ROMEO's.



Big "D" Don, you will be greatly missed. Memorial service will be held at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery, 5810 Midway Rd, Dixon, California on January 9th at 1:30 PM.

There will be a lunch following at Mary's Pizza Shack Italian restaurant at 1460 Ary Lane, Dixon, California.



WALTER ROBERT "Bob" HANZ

Walter R. Hanz, 90 of Banning, California past away August 4, 2016. Bob was a retired Master Sergeant aerial gunner in the U.S. Air Force, which he was dedicated to for twenty two years. Enlisting at the age of 18 on July 07, 1944, Bob was a private in the Air Corps branch of the Reserves during World War II. Walter flew and served as a gunner on the B-26, B-29, B-36, and the B-52.

Bob and his wife Loretta lived in Banning the last fifteen years and were members of St. Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Church in Beaumont, California. Bob was also a member of the Knights of Columbus, American Legion, Air Force Sergeants Association, and Air Force Gunners Association.

He was preceded in death by his parents Michael and Connie Hanz. His two brothers Joe Hanz of White City, Oregon and Nick Hanz of Orangevale, California, also a step son Stephen Raymond of Orangevale, California.

Bob leaves behind his wife Loretta and three sons Greg (Karen) Roman, grandsons Aaron Roman and Bryce Roman of Farmington, Missouri. Curtis (Joyce) Hanz, grandson's Nathan Hanz and Evan Hanz of Corona, California. Bob (Hash) Hanz, grandchildren Alex Hanz and Liana Hanz of Fullerton, California. His four nephews Mike Hanz of Chicago, Illinois, Rich Hanz of Albuquerque, New Mexico, Al (Maria) Hanz of Harlingen, Texas and Ron Hanz of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

FINAL FLY BY

PAUL EMERSON, 12 MAY 1940 - 19 DECEMBER 2016



Paul Emerson, 76, of Helotes, Texas died on December 19, 2016 after a long illness.

Paul was born on May 12, 1940 in Evansville, Indiana to Arlys and Monroe Emerson. He and his wife Marty were married in Switzerland in 1982. They resided in Washington DC and moved to Helotes in 1993.

Paul served for 30 years in the US Air Force. He was a member of the Air Force Gunners Association. He flew 360 missions during the Vietnam War.

He also worked for Booz Allen Hamilton and the Department of the Army in Washington DC. He retired in communications at Kelly AFB, Texas in 2007.

Paul is survived by his wife Marty of 34 years, his sister Sarah Emerson, sister in law Ann Hodgson, brother in law Jim Waner, and nephews Steve, Mike, Greg and K.C. Hayes.

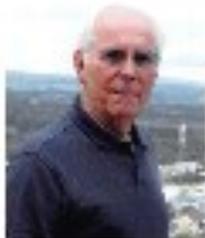
Paul loved dogs and volunteered at numerous rescue groups.

Donations can be made to the Helotes Humane Society.

Published in Express-News on 25 December 2016



DELMAR 'Monty' MONTGOMERY, 2 NOVEMBER 1934 - 27 FEBRUARY 2017



Monty Montgomery went to be with his Lord and savior, on February 27, 2017, with his family by his side.

He was born in Bakersfield, California, to James Delmar and Ione Montgomery on November 2, 1934.

He lived in Fresno, California most of his life.

Monty enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1954, was a B-36 and B-52 gunner retiring after 20 years, then he returned to Fresno.

He then went to work for the State of California Air Resources Board, where he retired in 1994.

He is survived by his wife, Jean, of 59 years; a daughter and son-in-law, Tammy and John Price; grandchildren, Matt Price and Melissa Mc-Quown; five greatgrandchildren; and sister, Joyce Ward of Brawley, California. A Celebration of Life will be held at New Hope Community Church, 4620 Nees Ave., Clovis, California, on Saturday, March 11, 2017, at 12:00 noon.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Foundation of Central California, P.O. Box 3438, Fresno, California 93650; or Department of Veteran Affairs, Veterans Home of California, 2811 W. California Ave., Fresno, California 93706.

Published in the Fresno Bee on 5 March 2017

FINAL FLY BY

JAMES HAROLD "Harry" CREWS, 8 JANUARY 1946 - 5 JANUARY 2017

James Harold "Harry" Crews, age 70, passed away following a heart attack at St. Vincent's Hospital Riverside in Jacksonville, Florida on Thursday, January 5, 2017. He was born on January 8, 1946 in Andalusia, Alabama to Jimmy and Eleanor Crews.

Harry is survived by his wife of 50 years, Linda. Also surviving are his daughter Angie Barker (Matt), five grandchildren: Summer Crews, Michael Crews, Dylan Barker, Logan Barker and Hanna Barker; and one great-grandson, Brayden Crews; his mother, Eleanor Glidewell, and sister Mala Elam (David); niece Elizabeth Elam and nephew Daniel Elam; brother-in-law Gary Bass (Dora) and daughter-in-law Dana Crews. He was preceded in death by his son Michael Crews and his father Jimmy Crews.

Harry retired from 20 years in the USAF in August 1985. He worked for 16 years at Health First Holmes Regional Medical Center retiring in June 2009.

He volunteered at the Patrick AFB Retirees Affairs Office, Valiant Air Command Warbird Air Museum, and was a member of PCARS Ham Radio Club.

A memorial service was held Tuesday, January 10 at 5:00 p.m. at Tomoka Christian - Palm Bay Campus, 344 Emerson Drive NW, Palm Bay, FL 32907.

Cadet 4th Class TIMOTHY BARBER Lt Col (Ret) GREG 'Spank' BARBER

Cadet 4th Class Tim Barber and his father, retired Air Force B-52 and U-2 Pilot Spanky Barber died Saturday, 31 December 2016 when the private aircraft piloted by his father, collided with another airplane in midair near McKinney, Texas.

The pilot of the other aircraft died as well, the Colorado Springs Gazette reported.

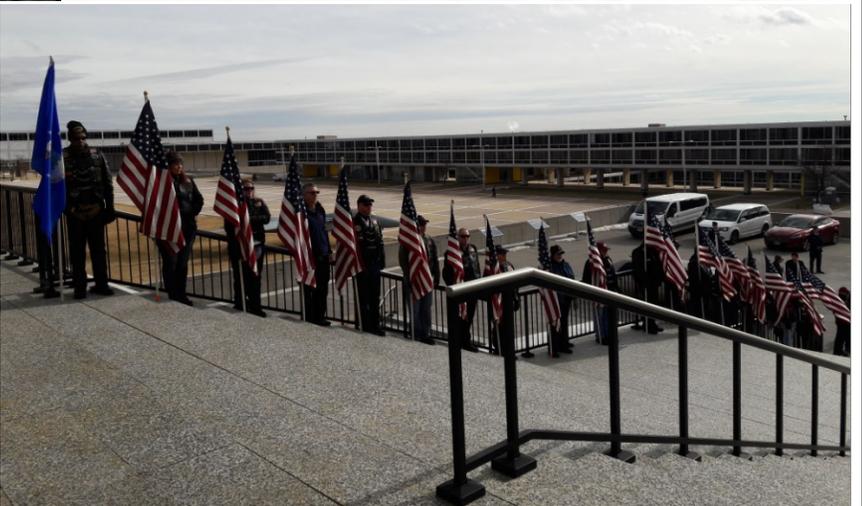
Greg 'Spanky' Barber was a retired Lt Col USAF pilot, loving husband and father. He was an exceptionally accomplished and very experienced pilot. Not only was he an instructor pilot, Cold War Alert and combat pilot, he flew U-2s, B-52s, and T-38s. He was the very last pilot to ever be selected to fly the SR-71 just before the program was cancelled.

Tim Barber, age 18, was on leave from the Air Force Academy spending the Christmas Holidays with his family.

"This is a tragedy for the Barbers' and for those of us in their Air Force family. Our thoughts are with them as well as with their friends and loved ones," said Academy Superintendent Lt Gen Michelle Johnson, in an Academy release. "This is profoundly sad news for all of us at the Air Force Academy. We stand ready to support Cadet Barber's family and also have resources at the ready to help cadets and staff to weather our loss." While the National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the cause of the accident, both aircraft were flying from an uncontrolled VFR airfield near their home at Farmersville, Texas.



FINAL FLY BY



325th Gunners and Spank Barber late '80s partying hard. Spanky Pilot and Wellbaum Gunner holding towel TDY in Hickalulu late '80s. Crew Integrity always maintained. Carlos Cisneros and over two-dozen former 325 BS members in Allen, Texas for Barber Father and Son Memorial Service, 9 January 2017. Patriot Honor Guard Riders on steps of AFA Chapel. Father and son laid to rest at AF Academy Cemetery 12 January 2016.

FINAL FLY BY



JOHN EDWARD WESTON, 1917 - 9 AUGUST 2016,

John Weston passed at the age of 99.

A memorial ceremony was held Wednesday for John E. Weston at Arlington National Cemetery.

Weston, a retired USAF lieutenant colonel who flew 31 missions in a B-17 and served in three wars, died August 9, 2016.

According to the State Department, he trained in the US Army Air Corps' cadet aviation program and was assigned to the 381st Bomber Group in Ridgewell, England, in February of 1944.

He earned a Distinguished Flying Cross flying missions over Germany and occupied France.

After World War II, Weston joined the Air National Guard and was stationed in Japan from 1951-1955, during and after the Korean War.

In 1963 and 1969 Weston served in Vietnam in coordination with the CIA as an Air Force reconnaissance and operations officer. For his service in Vietnam he received the Legion of Merit from the Central Intelligence Agency and Bronze Star from the US Air Force.



An Air Force Association member since 1961, Weston retired from the Air Force in 1973 and continued to work as a civilian with the CIA until 1978. In 1987, he took a job with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security at the State Department as a technical writer.

He remained at State Department for 28 years before retiring, at the age of 98, in 2015.

SMSGT HARRY CREWS

SMSGt Harry Crews passed away on 5 January 2017. He was a B-52 gunner at Blytheville Air Force Base, Arkansas and Carswell Air Force Base, Texas.

His memorial service was held on Tuesday, 10 January 2017 at 5:00 PM at the Palm Bay Christian Church, Palm Bay Florida.



**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 ..**

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 _____

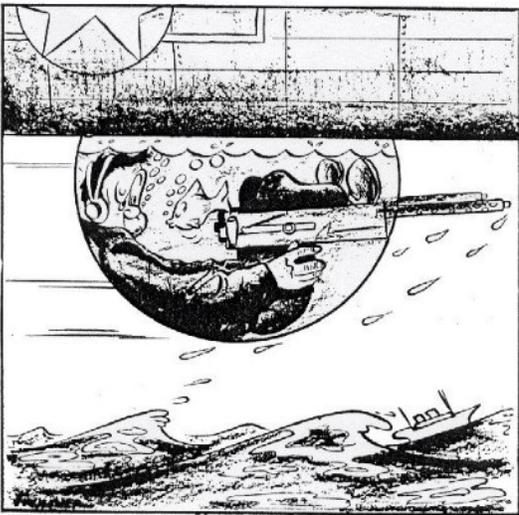
ARE YOU A NEW MEMBER? YES ___ NO ___ IF "NO" - CARD #: _____

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



SEPTEMBER 1944

Dear Fellow AFGA Member,

Would you like to receive a **printed copy of the Short Bursts** in the mail?

If you would like to receive a printed copy of the Short Bursts Magazine, please send your subscription information to the address listed below.

Annual fee for postage and printing is \$15.00 for the three issues a year printed and in the mail in April, August, and December. Please send your mailing address and a check payable to AFGA to:

Chuck Dean
 AFGA Membership Chairman
 473 McMahan Mill Road
 Piedmont, SC 29673-4613

Phone: 864-947-4613
 E-Mail: A710Jammer@aol.com

AFGA BX OFFICER - BOB DICK Jr.

I'd like to thank the few who helped with the BX at our latest reunion in Reno, they helped make my first reunion as the BX officer a little less stressful and smoother running.

I'm hoping the next reunion will have a published schedule of when the BX will be open and be available to make purchases. I'd also like to find some volunteers that would be willing to work the BX for a couple hours here and there so that we can maximize the amount of time the BX can be open as well as the amount of sales achieved. The total deposit from the reunion sales and the donation from Crew Dawg Creations sales totaled: \$1,307.55, total shipping cost to and from Reno: \$633.11, leaving a total of \$674.44 in the black.



I'd like to have some new merchandise in for the Nashville reunion in 2017. If anybody has any ideas of what they'd like to see, please feel free to e-mail me with your ideas. Please keep in mind that most of the merchandise has a minimum to order as well as a set-up fee if it is the type of merchandise that has to be produced. I have had the request to have a "daughter of a gunner patch" produced. If this is of interest to you, please e-mail me and if I get enough responses, I can work on getting one produced. *Bob*

Red/white/blue B-52 cap - \$15 (ck availability with Bob D.) #36

The "Official" **2015 Gunner's Reunion** His & Her personalized coffee mugs are hot off the press. 15oz His mug \$17.99, 11oz Her mug \$14.99.

These can be ordered anytime
WWW.crewdawgcreations.com.



Customized 15oz coffee cup—contact Bob Dick Jr. at crewdawgcreations.com for \$\$\$ and how to order. You can put just about any AF patch, ribbon bar, photo, art that you desire. Seem to be dish washer and micro wave safe (I put mine in both with no issues) #45



Gunner Beer Mug—\$40— Large— price includes shipping #43



Magnetic Bumper Sticker \$9 (a few left yet (3-4) size: 8"X 3 7/8" #68

AFGA EXCHANGE

DESCRIPTION	QTY	PRICE	SHIPPING	TOTAL
Item #21 – Gunner's Bullet Wings.....2.75" Replica of original Gunner's bullet wings.		\$8.75		
Item #21 – Gunner's Patch Emblem Lapel Pin.....1" Gunner's patch emblem lapel pin		\$5.25		
DECALS				
Item #23 – Gunner's Patch Decal w/white background Outside application 8.25"x11" Gunner's patch decal w/white background. Outside application.		\$7.25		
Item #24 – Gunner's patch decal w/clear background Inside application 8.25"x11" Gunner's patch decal w/clear background Inside application		\$7.25		
Item #25 – Gunner's patch decal w/clear background Outside application 8.25"x11" Gunner's patch decal w/clear background outside application		\$7.25		
Item #26 – Gunner's Patch Decal - Clear back Inside 7.25"x8.25" 7.25"x8.25" Gunner's patch clear back decal. Inside application.		\$7.00		
Item #27 – AFGA 7.75" Round Decal Outside Application..... AFGA 7.75" Round Decal, blue with silver wings and lettering. Outside Application		\$7.25		
Item #28 – AFGA 7.75" Round Decal Inside Application..... AFGA 7.75" Round Decal, blue with silver wings and lettering. Inside Application		\$7.25		
Item #29 – Air Force Gunner's Association Lettered Decal..... This 17.25" Air Force Gunner's Association lettered decal is perfect for inside rear window application.		1.25		
Item #30 – "Son of a Gunner" gunner's patch decal – Large..... 6-1/2" Gunner's patch decal features the Large bulldog with the baby bulldog.		\$5.25		
Item #31 – "Son of a Gunner" gunner's patch decal – Small..... 4-1/2" Gunner's patch decal features the Large bulldog with the baby bulldog.		\$3.25		
Item #32 – Gunner's patch decal – 3 per order.....		3/\$1.25		
Item #54 – AFGA Biplane (Round).....		\$1.25		
Item #55 – USAF Enlisted Chevrons Decal (set of 4)..... Msgt, SMSgt, SMSgt - 1 st Sgt available.		\$1.25		
BALL CAPS				
Item #33 – Air Force Gunner's Association - Blue Ball Cap..... Air Force Gunner's Association - Blue Ball Cap w/silver lettering and bullet wings		\$15.25		
Item #34 – Air Force Gunner's Association - White Ball Cap..... (ONE REMAINING) Air Force Gunner's Association White ball cap with silver and blue lettering.		\$15.25		
Item #35 – B-52 Black Silhouette - Blue Hat..... This Blue hat features an embroidered black silhouette of a B-52		\$15.25		
Item #36 – B-52 B-52 Silver Silhouette - Red Hat..... This Red hat features a silver embroidered B-52 silhouette.		\$15.25		
Item #37 - B-52 Silver Silhouette Black Hat..... This black cap features a silver embroidered silhouette of a B-52.		\$15.25		
Item #38 - B-52 Silver Silhouette Blue Hat..... This Blue hat features an embroidered silver B-52 Silhouette.		\$15.25		
Item #39 - B-52 Gunner's patch emblem - C'est La Vie Ball cap..... Gunner's patch emblem sublimated C'est La Vie Ball cap has emblem in the middle, wording B-52 left side & gunner right side. Mesh back.		\$16.25		
Item #40 - Camouflaged B-52 - White Ball Cap.....		\$9.25		
Item #56 – Gunner's Patch Emblem - White Ball Cap..... White Ball Cap featuring the Gunner's Patch Emblem		\$13.25		

AFGA EXCHANGE

DESCRIPTION	QTY	PRICE	SHIPPING	TOTAL
Item #57 – B-52 Gunner - White Ball Cap..... White Ball Cap featuring a blue patch with silver silhouette of a B-52 and yellow lettering – B-52 Gunner		\$13.25		
BELT BUCKLES				
Item #41 – SAC Gunner's Patch Belt Buckle.....		\$12.25		
Item #42 – AFGA w/Biplane image Belt Buckle.....		\$12.25		
DRINKWARE				
Item #43- Gunner's Beer Stein..... 32oz Ceramic Stein w/ SAC emblem one side, Gunner's patch emblem opposite side (Priority Shipping included)		\$40.00	included	
Item #44 – Gunner 2015 Reunion 15oz Coffee Mug..... 15oz ceramic coffee mug featuring all bomber aircraft crewed with gunners throughout history Personalized w/name. Please include name with spelling desired when ordering.		\$17.99		
Item #45 – Gunner 2015 Reunion 11oz Coffee Mug..... 11oz ceramic coffee mug featuring all bomber aircraft crewed with gunners throughout history Personalized w/name. Please include name with spelling desired when ordering.		\$14.99		
CLOTHING				
Item #46 – Windbreaker Jacket – Navy..... Snap front, nylon, AFGA logo left breast XXL, XXXL Only!!!		\$12.25		
Item #47 – Golf Shirts.....AFGA Logo Left Breast				
White, Sizes Available – S, M, L, CLEARANCE		\$12.25		
Light Blue, Sizes Available – XL		\$27.25		
Royal Blue, Sizes Available – M, CLEARANCE		\$15.25		
Navy Blue, Sizes Available – M, XL		\$27.25		
Item #48 – Golf Wind-shirts.....AFGA Logo Left Breast		\$15.25		
Navy Blue, V-neck XL Only CLEARANCE				
Item #49 – Sweat Shirts.....AFGA Logo Left Breast				
Navy Blue, Sizes Available – S, M, XL, XXL, 3XL		\$26.25		
White, Sizes Available – S, M, L, XL, XXL CLEARANCE		\$20.25		
Item #50 – Sweat Shirts.....Camouflaged B-52		\$20.25		
Blue - Sizes Available – L or XL Natural (Tan) - Sizes Available – XL Only				
Item #51 – T-Shirt.....Navy, AFGA Logo Embroidered Left Breast		\$20.25		
Sizes Available – S, M, L, XXL				
Item #52 – Vest.....Navy, Polyester w/AFGA Logo		\$30.25		
Sizes Available – 40L, 42L, 48L, 3XL				
MISCELLANEOUS				
Item #53 – Mouse pad.....AFGA Logo		\$1.25		
Item #58 – Golf Ball/Sleeve.....		\$3.25		
3 Balls per sleeve featuring the AFGA Logo				
Item #58 – Magnet Proud to Have Served.....		\$9.25		
8"x4" Magnetic Car Decal, Full Color featuring the words, "Proud to Have Served, Freedom is Not Free" B-52 D w/SAC emblem B-52 w/SAC emblem B-52 w/Gunner Patch emblem				
Item #59 – SAC Gunner Patch Emblem Banner.....		\$25.25		
20"x24" Vinyl Indoor/Outdoor Full colored banner featuring the Gunner's patch emblem.				

AFGA EXCHANGE

DESCRIPTION	QTY	PRICE	SHIPPING	TOTAL
Item #60 – SAC Gunner Patch Emblem Sign.....		\$25.25		
20"x20", printed on 1/8" backboard w/sculptured edges				
SHIPPING PRICE GUIDELINE				
Jackets, Shirts, Mugs.....		\$11.00		
Each additional add		\$2.00		
Hats.....		\$6.00		
Each additional add		\$2.00		
Small Flat Goods.....		\$3.00		
Each additional add		\$1.00		
Wings, Pins, Patches, Decals, etc)				
Belt Buckles.....		\$6.00		
Each additional add		\$2.00		
"If in doubt for large orders, call or email for an estimate"				

We also have 2 Ft. Worth Memory Books remaining for sale—\$40 each includes the mailing—contact Bob Dick Jr. for info.

1. Please include your phone # and **email address**.
2. Make all checks payable to **AFGA**.
3. Send all correspondence to:

Bob Dick Jr.
 2089 Sardis Rd
 Clarksburg, WV 26301-6581
 304-844-0624
 gunnersbx@gmail.com

EMAIL ADDRESS:

PHONE NUMBER:

Signature

Date

As for ordering the NASHVILLE REUNION COFFEE CUP, members can go to the following link:

<http://crewdawgcreations.com/product-category/drinkware/page/2/>

to order online, placing their first name in customer notes. Please spell name correctly as it will be printed as shown.

Back pages - Inside of Sam Turner's Mig Killer tail as time and the elements take their toll on display at Fairchild Heritage Park, Spokane, Washington.

B-52, B-1 and B-2 flying low level in loose formation all together on Guam last year.



