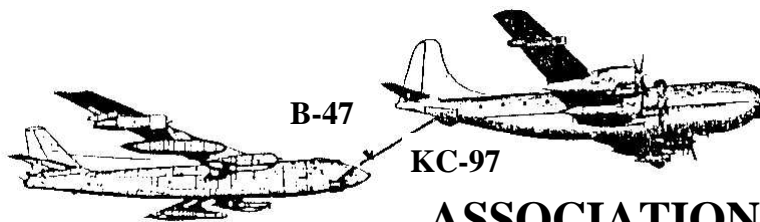
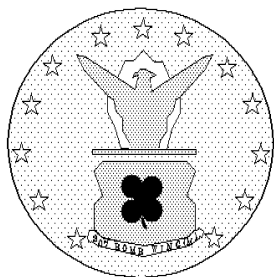


307TH BOMB WING



ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 29

For all former members of the 307th Bomb Wing at Lincoln AFB, Nebraska

NOVEMBER 1999

Change Change Change New Reunion Dates 21 - 25 June 2000!

I hate to tell you this but we must change the dates for our 2000 Reunion. We will meet one week later than we previously announced. **The new dates are 21 -25 June 2000.** There was miscommunication on the number of rooms needed and the hotel, without coordinating with us, contracted another group on top of our dates. Ours had not been fully agreed or signed. Sooooo! Our dates are as you see.

I do apologize, as I'm certain some plans were made and will not be easy to change. We hope you can adjust and still attend. The results of our first survey indicate over 240 are planning to come. We are including the questionnaire again in this newsletter, only the date has changed. Those of you who have not as yet sent in a questionnaire, do so as soon as possible. The sooner sent the better we can plan. Your help is appreciated.

The precise plans and costs are not as yet determined - **a Registration form will be in the March 2000 newsletter.** LOOK FORWARD TO IT. If you have not received your letter by late March - Call Us. One thing we can tell you now is the room rate at the Embassy Suites. Originally it was \$ 94 + taxes. When we had to reschedule, the price was changed to \$ 89 + taxes and as before it includes Breakfast and Cocktails/Hors D'oeuvres each evening. You can start making HOTEL RESERVATIONS AF-

TER 1 DECEMBER 1999. Call 1- 800 - 362 - 2779 telling them you are with the 307th Bomb Wing Reunion in June 2000 in Lincoln. Any problems, let us know.

Logistics will be tricky on Friday when we are doing the Memorial Park, SAC Museum and the Riverboat Casino. All will be by bus and planned in sequence. Once on board, the park and museum are a package. From the museum some will return to the hotel or will by choice continue to the riverboat. The museum is halfway between Lincoln and Omaha. The casino groups will return later Friday night.

Thursday, there will be multiple departure times for the tour planned around town and to the old airbase. We are trying to arrange a KC-135 static display while we are on base. The Nebraska Air National Guard has ten 135's here at Lincoln.

You will be pleased with the Memorial Park in Lincoln. The services are all represented, as are the many wars, people and times. I could give you a list of the many memorials in place but it would take away from your surprise and pleasure at what has been assembled. Truly remarkable. As for the SAC MUSEUM - what can I say - it's wonderful and will be enduring - a place to be visited many times. Anyone traveling I - 80 who doesn't stop to visit will have

missed a treasure. You'll enjoy it.

Elsewhere in this issue are listed those planning to attend. It may be some of you will wish to room together, as the Embassy Suites have a bedroom and a couch/ sleeper in the living room area.

We were asked if we could facilitate single attendees who desired to find another single to room with. So in the previous issue we asked you to let us know if you wanted assistance in this regard. So far, no one has requested assistance, however we see that 14 men and 4 women plan to attend unaccompanied. So, if you need assistance, let us know, and we'll send you a list of names, addresses, etc., of others who desire to pair up. If you need an address, please contact us.

Good Luck With Y2K. Till next time.

Tony Minnick Chairman

Donations

We wish to acknowledge the generosity of those who have recently donated to the Association General Fund.

Russell Heller
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Reflex – 307th Bomb Wing Style - My Memories By Billy S. Lyons

Editor's Note: Assigned to Lincoln AFB from 1959 to 1965, Billy Lyons' 307th BW career as a crewmember spanned virtually all of the Wing's Reflex history. While most of us can't remember what we had for breakfast yesterday, Billy succeeds in recalling a remarkable amount of detail concerning his experiences with Reflex.

Reflex - one of the definitions in the dictionary is "occurring reaction, responsive." Reflex to the members of the 307th Bomb Wing, and many other B-47 wings in the late 1950s and 1960s,

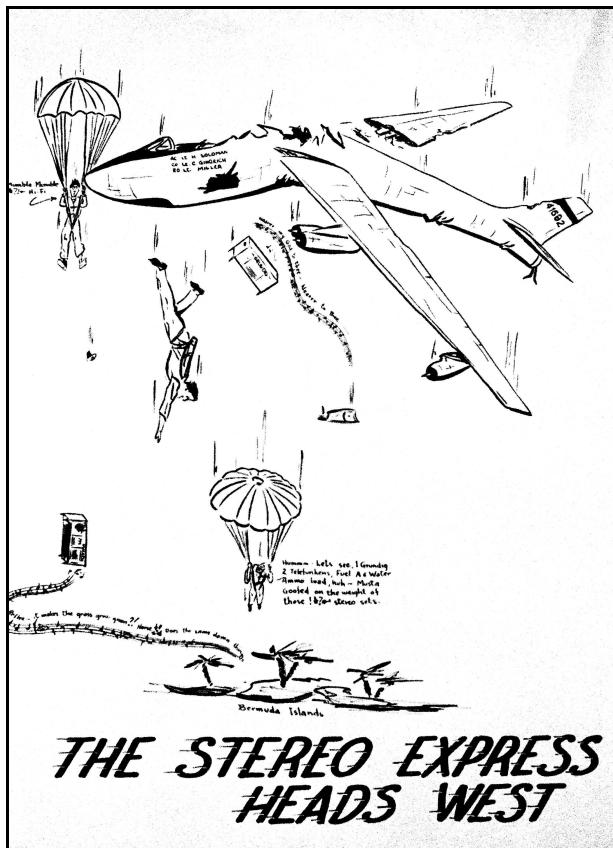
meant a constant, reoccurring rotation to Spain, North Africa, and the United Kingdom for alert duty (assigned to a specific nuclear weapon loaded aircraft and responsible for launching in that aircraft within certain timing criteria). For aircrews in the 307th, the normal schedule (emphasis on normal) at the beginning of our Reflex duty was a twenty-three day tour, basically once each calendar quarter. The

twenty-three day schedule included the flight over, a week on alert, a week off for R and R (rest and relaxation), another week on alert, and then fly home. There were many variables (weather delays, maintenance delays, missed air refuelings) that resulted in numerous changes to the normal rotation schedule. Also,

there were many variable schedules during the five and one half years we were involved in the operation. There were times when we ended up on alert at a Reflex base for up to two weeks until Father SAC said no more than seven days on alert then the mandatory three and a half days off.

I was assigned to the 307th Bomb Wing at Lincoln in July 1959 as a copilot after completing B-47 training at McConnell and Forbes AFBs. Not a very happy camper at that because I was flying the F-100A when drafted for SAC duty. But, I wasn't the only guy in that situation since the B-47 force was growing to help meet the Soviet threat.

The 307th assumed the Reflex alert commitment at Moron AB, Spain from the 384th B-47 Wing at Little Rock AFB in July 1959. After we completed mission ready training and were certified by the wing commander on the alert sortie we would be on in Spain, we prepared for our first Reflex tour, departing in October 1959. The AC on our crew was a former B-47 copilot and the nav was a very experienced individual, but new to the B-47. We would normally



fly in a three-ship cell formation to the air refueling areas in the northeast US or Canada and refuel with either KC-135s or KC-97s. The KC-135 refueling areas were off the East Coast from Boston and near the Island of Bermuda going the southern route. We had a different refueling area for KC-97 refueling when we went the northern route, and usually rendezvoused with them in an area over the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

On this, our first Reflex trip, we had a maintenance delay and couldn't launch with the other two aircraft in our cell. It was a twenty four-hour delay and you normally lost your tanker with a full day delay, but we were able to get a KC-97 refueling despite the twenty four-hour delay. We launched as single ship and approaching the refueling area over the Gulf of St. Lawrence, made contact with our tanker. The tanker pilot advised that they had one sick engine and would have to use higher power settings on the other engines to try to give us the airspeed we needed for refueling with them. We rendezvoused with the tanker and were attempting to hook up at about ten knots below our requested speed.

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The Association is a non-profit Veterans Organization. All contributions to the organization are gratefully received, but are not deductible under IRS Code. The Chairman is elected by majority vote of all members at each business meeting. The Chairman's Committee serves at the pleasure of the Chairman.

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The AC got an initial contact but it was tough going at ten knots below. We got about fifteen hundred pounds of fuel and had a disconnect. As we were getting back to pre-contact position, the supercharger on one of the tanker's good engines blew up. Big ball of blue flame and it sounded like a shotgun blast in the cockpit. The tanker started losing altitude and almost sat down on top of us. We couldn't get out from underneath him. We finally fell off on a wing, lost about five thousand feet and by the time we recovered and were flying straight and level, the tanker was right down beside us. We got the flaps up (had to use about 20 degrees of flaps when refueling with a KC-97), cleaned up the checklist, and headed for Goose Bay AB, Labrador. We spent the night at Goose because we didn't have enough crew duty day left to refuel at Goose, do some replanning, launch and get to Moron. We learned that the tanker recovered safely also. What an introduction to Reflex! But the fun was just beginning.

We launched from Goose Bay the next evening and headed across the North Atlantic. The primary means of navigation was celestial (shooting the stars and planets with the sextant) with some assistance from pressure pattern, ships stationed out in the Atlantic, and dead reckoning. After level off, I put the sextant in the port in the canopy at my station and hooked it up. Something was wrong - no light in the sextant. Seems the circuit breaker for the sextant light kept blowing, so, I had to use my flashlight to shoot the sextant. Not the best way to get to get accurate observations but somehow we made it across the ocean and found the Iberian Peninsula (Portugal and Spain). We coasted in at Averio, Portugal, tuning in to a low frequency radio beacon located there, and headed for Moron AB, located in the south central part of Spain about 35 miles southeast of the city of Seville. Considered ourselves lucky for not coasting in over France or North Africa.

I didn't know exactly what to expect at Moron AB but my initial impression was how bleak the base appeared. Not

a lot of buildings and six B-47s normally plus some base flight aircraft (C-47 Gooney Bird). We went on alert the next day and briefed our sortie to the Base Commander. Although we had not pulled alert at Lincoln before this, our first Reflex tour, we had gone over what each crewmember's duties were. We knew we would probably have an alert soon after we took over our assigned sortie and had hoped for a daytime alert. Not to happen! At two AM the second night we were on alert, the klaxon sounds.

The AC and copilot roomed together and the nav roomed with another nav in the crew alert quarters. The AC and I jumped up at the sound of the klaxon, quickly put on our flight suits and shoes and ran out to our alert vehicle (blue Ford station wagon) and waited for the nav. All the other crews had left the parking lot so I ran back to find the nav. He came running out of the alert quarters mumbling something about getting his \$\$\$@##\$ flying suit on backwards and fell down three times trying to get it on correctly. We made the timing OK, but what a way to have your first Reflex alert and my first alert ever as a SAC crew dog.

First R and R. Had heard a lot about the city of Palma, Majorca in the Balearic Islands off the East Coast of Spain. We blasted off in the Base Flight C-47 and after arrival on Majorca went to the Bahia Palace Hotel - supposedly the best hotel on the island. Our first day there, I go down to the dining room for "supper" about 5:30 PM. I found the dining room locked up tight. After pulling and knocking on the door, one of the waiters came to the door and advised me that the dining room did not open until "half past eight." I told him I would probably be starved to death by that time but somehow I survived. Met some of the other guys on R and R and we went to hotel bar to wait out the opening of the dining room. We finally got seated about 9 PM. I didn't know if I liked the idea of not having dinner until 9 PM but got used to it and later found that the best way was to adjust to the customs of the country we were in.

The prices were very reasonable in Palma in 1959 and you could usually get by for about \$75 for a five day R and R. This included room, food, drink and rental of a motor scooter. More about scooters later. We survived our first R and R and returned to Moron for our last week on alert.

This Reflex tour was supposed to be the normal 23-day tour but our replacement crew had been delayed several days and we were extended for a week. We finally got off, flew across the North Atlantic, refueled with our tankers east of Boston and headed for Lincoln. However, we were advised that the weather at Lincoln was below landing minimums in a blizzard! This was the fifth of November. Nobody has a blizzard in early November! But, it was true, and so we headed for our alternate, Plattsburg AFB, New York, to RON (remain overnight). Got home the next day. Not too many kind words from wife. Left her there with two small boys, no snow tires on the car, and no money for rent, food, gas, etc. I had counted on being home in time to get my check at finance on the first of the month and deposit it in the bank. The old way. That got changed quickly. Luckily, she could borrow some bucks from the AC's wife. We were learning lessons fast about SAC aircrew duty, Reflex operations, the 307th Bomb Wing, and how bad the weather can get in Lincoln in a short period of time.

The Reflex duty came up about every three months. Our next tour came in early 1960, and again to Moron. Went to Rome on R and R. Good experience. Lots of culture. Next R and R went to Palma again - getting springtime - good time to rent scooters, go to the beach, get some sun and drink some beer. One of the copilots had a mishap on his scooter, hitting the median of a divided street and sliding across the brick street on his face. Didn't look too good but he could still pull alert. Then, there was the guy that went over a cliff on his scooter on the way out to the beach. Seems he was looking back at his fellow R and R guys on their scooters as they raced out to the beach. He broke

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his arm and couldn't pull alert. No more scooters on R and R for a while. In the fall of 1960, three of us "bullet proof and invincible" (as we thought) copilots put together an R and R trip to spend time in Madrid, Paris, Copenhagen and back to Madrid. We made it, had a great time in all these cities that were new to us, but got back to the base broke and worn out. I had money from several countries and went to the money exchange window in the airport at Copenhagen and pulled out all my coin currency from these different countries and had a grand total of \$1.85 US money. But we got back to Madrid where we could cash a check at the club and made it back to Moron to pull the last week of alert.

Our first Reflex tour in 1961 was in the January - February time frame. As typical this time of year, the headwinds were so strong on our departure date to return from Spain that we couldn't make our missed air refueling alternate on the East Coast or in Canada. So we sat for a few days waiting for the winds to decrease enough so we could at least get to Goose Bay, Labrador. Launched single ship late in the afternoon. Not much to navigate on except sun shots and that didn't help much (you don't know where you're going but you know how fast you are getting there). About an hour after we coasted out and headed across the North Atlantic, I noticed that the sun was off our left side when it should have been more of less off the nose as we were supposed to be headed in a westerly direction. I took a quick true heading shot with the sextant. We were on an almost northerly heading. Headed for Iceland. Didn't want to go there. I advised the crew and the nav quickly computed a three-body fix using the Sun, Moon and Venus. We were lucky we could see the Moon and Venus. We got a good fix and altered course. Made it to Goose Bay with enough fuel, but it could have been a disaster if we hadn't caught the precessing N-1 compass problem.

I was selected to upgrade to AC locally and started flying with an instructor AC. Got to fly front seat on some of our

crew missions and on the return flight from our next Reflex tour in the spring of 1961. Got checked out as an AC and picked up a crew who had just transferred to the 307th from another B-47 wing. Their AC had been grounded for medical reasons. We got checked out and certified to pull alert in time to go Reflex in early December of 1961 which would result in our being in Spain during the entire Christmas holiday period. We didn't like it but when



307th Reflex troops arrive on R&R at Barajas airport, Madrid, Spain in 1960. Bottom to top: Billy Lyons, Tom Cain, Ted Rutherford, Charlie Watt, and Bob Bowers.

you're the new kid on the block you don't have much choice. Going to Spain, we were scheduled to be number three in a three ship formation going the southern route, coasting out at Jacksonville, Florida, refueling with tankers from an East Coast base in a refueling area near the island of Bermuda, and proceeding across the ocean to Spain. We had three bombers on two tankers (KC-135s) and as number three we would refuel with the second tanker. Before coasting out at Jacksonville, the

lead aircraft discovered that his wing tanks wouldn't feed. They could not continue to Spain in this situation and left the formation to go to their missed air-refueling base on the East Coast. The number two in our formation took over as lead and we proceeded to the air refueling area. Now we were down to a two on two situation with the tankers. As we closed on the tankers during the rendezvous, the lead tanker announced that they couldn't get the boom down.

This meant they couldn't refuel the new lead aircraft in our cell and so lead also headed for the missed air refueling alternate. That left us, the "newbies," three 1st Lts all by themselves, to complete the refueling and find their way across the broad North Atlantic.

After their departure, our tanker started working on an OK from his wing to refuel both the B-47s and divert to Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico. He got the OK to refuel both our aircraft, land at Ramey, refuel and return to his home base. (Good opportunities for the crew to make a cheap booze run since liquor prices at Ramey were much lower than those in the states). Got word to our second aircraft to turn around and re-rendezvous with us and get his fuel, which they did, and we proceeded to Moron.

Spent Christmas on R&R in Palma. Some American people who owned a restaurant there invited the R and R troops to Christmas dinner. Turkey, dressing and all the trimmings.

Very nice of them, but nothing like home. We would rather have been home with family even if it meant fighting the cold and snow. Our tour was extended so some crews wouldn't have to deploy to Moron during the time right after Christmas. Thanks a lot! Got back in early January. Long flight home the southern route (near Lajes in the Azores and on to Bermuda and coast in at Jacksonville, Florida) due to high headwinds going the northern route.

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First refueling with a KC-97 near Lajes. As we moved into precontact position, the crew notified us they had 50,000 pounds of contaminated aviation gas for us. No problem except you don't get as much range from av gas as you do from jet fuel, but at that point we were willing to take whatever they had if it meant we could get back to Lincoln without having to ground stage somewhere. Spent thirty minutes on the boom. Longest contact I ever had with a KC-97. At one point, the copilot advised that we were losing ground - burning more than we were taking on. The tanker had to pump up the last part of our onload from the wing tanks and that was a slow process. Got a KC-135 for the second refueling near Bermuda and that 35,000 pound onload seemed a breeze. Flew thirteen and a half-hours, long enough in the B-47. Snow getting deeper and still coming down at Lincoln. Had another tour in the spring and then after three years at Moron, the 307th Reflex duty moved to Greenham - Common RAFB in the UK. We were basically glad to see Moron in the rearview mirror and looked forward to getting to England and some different scenery and R and R places.

Little did I know that I would be back to Moron not only for a final Reflex tour in late 1964 but also in the B-58 (which was my next assignment at Little Rock AFB after we left Lincoln). The B-58 trip was short and didn't involve any alert. It was land, turn the aircraft over to maintenance to train on, and head for town. After a few days there, we flew up to Torrejon AB for the same drill for maintenance familiarization, then return to home base.

First Reflex trip to England in fall of 1962. Not a bad trip over, shorter than the trip to Moron. We would refuel over Canada, coast out near Goose Bay, Labrador, fly near the southern tip of Greenland and then on to the British Isles. On one trip when we were again single ship, we were assigned a single altitude coasting out and were in thick cirrus clouds at that altitude. Couldn't contact the controlling air traffic agency on the high frequency radio to get a

higher altitude because of the static created by the clouds. Also, we couldn't shoot the sextant for celestial fixes because of the clouds. So, it was dead reckoning and a fix off the southern tip of Greenland. Made it to the British Isles like we knew what we were doing!

Entirely different surroundings in England. The base had been used during WW II but had significant modifications to fit the needs of a B-47 Reflex base. Air traffic was more congested than in Spain but no big difficulty. On our first trip as we were in the landing flare at Greenham-Common, I hit one of the Queen's pheasants. I caught sight of something coming from the right side in the landing flare and heard a thump as the bird hit the aircraft just aft of the nav's compartment. Didn't find any dents in the aircraft during postflight, but I was sure there was one less pheasant in the UK.

During our first week on alert at Greenham one of the guys on alert with us had reflexed to England from another B-47 base before being assigned to Lincoln. He had dealt with the English currency, which could really be confusing. The British pound was worth about \$2.50 US dollars and you didn't want to spend the one pound note like one US dollar. Then, there were shillings, crown, half crowns, farthings and pennies. So, during our first week on alert, he got some English currency and instructed the new guys on the British money.

He also gave some lessons on how to get on the correct subway since that was the way to get around London unless you wanted to take a taxi, which could get expensive. London was a good R and R spot. Had a US Government hotel in town - The Columbia House. Stayed there on London R and Rs. Lots of nice places to eat and good stage shows. Saw "Sound of Music" and "My Fair Lady." The winter of '62 was the winter of the "big snow" in the UK. They put a scraper blade on the front of a dump truck and tried to keep the runways and taxiways cleared with it. Worked pretty good, but we had to keep the outboard engines at idle during taxi because they only cleared a narrow part

of the center of the taxiways. Also, the fog (common to the UK any year) was so thick at times that we would have to practically feel our way out to our aircraft. The visibility would be about ten feet so we would have to drive very slowly down the main alert area taxi stripe, count off the parking spots carefully, turn off at the correct parking spot, and be very careful we didn't run over the close in sentry, who would usually be standing at the nose of the aircraft.

Ever hear of bootlegging a tanker on a Reflex return? We did it on a return trip from Greenham - Common. Lots of questions to be answered but this is how it went. We were to launch with our normal three ships to return from Greenham - Common to Lincoln but we couldn't get an engine started. By the time we got it fixed, we were too late to catch the other two aircraft and would lose our tanker and have to ground stage through Goose Bay. At another UK base, a B-47 Reflex return three ship formation was preparing to launch about an hour after our originally scheduled launch time to return to their stateside base. One of their aircraft could not launch with the formation and they pressed on as a two ship. We launched about an hour and a half after scheduled time. As we coasted out, I heard the crews from the other UK base. They were flying the same route and were about thirty minutes ahead of us. I recognized the voice of the lead AC and asked if we could join their formation, tack on to their altitude reservation flight plan, and share their tankers. We were able to work it out and increased our speed to catch them. As they did a 360-degree turn near the refueling initial point to lose some time and rendezvous with the tankers at the scheduled time, we caught up and joined their formation as number three. Got our onload and stayed with them until near St. Louis. They were from Whiteman AFB near Kansas City. We left the formation and proceeded on to Lincoln, thanking the Whiteman crews again for letting us join them on the return trip. Had some explaining to do after we landed. Seems some people in the wing

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had never heard of bootlegging a tanker on a Reflex return trip. I thought I had killed all the snakes (both ops and maintenance) in debriefing after we landed about this unusual but entirely legal, as far as I was concerned, change of flight plan and opportune air refueling. However, I was still getting calls after I got home and was getting reacquainted with my family.

We had the Greenham - Common Reflex alert duty for one year then it was back to Spain at Zaragoza AB in the northeast part of Spain. Lots of fond memories of R and R in London, the Columbia House, riding the "tube" (subway) around London and trying to get on the correct color line. So, it was adios to Jolly Old England and hello again to Spain.

Zaragoza was much better for pulling alert (my opinion) than Moron and we had some memorable moments during our three or four tours there. I remember the long, parallel taxiway and some guys (not 307th) attempted to land on this taxiway. We were specifically cautioned not to land on the taxiway when we were preparing for our first trip to Zaragoza. There was a golf course on base and as I recall you could play golf on alert. There were klaxons strategically placed on the course so you wouldn't miss an alert but one guy had to keep the alert truck nearby. The city of Zaragoza was fairly large and had some good shopping. My copilot and nav liked to fish and during one R and R got someone on base to take them trout fishing in some nearby streams. The caught some nice fish and had the O Club cook them for us and we had a delicious fish dinner. Thank you very much!

During one R and R we went to Athens, Greece. Flew over on the KC-97 assigned to the numbered air force in Spain. Fairly long trip all the way across the Mediterranean - about six hours as I recall. But, Athens was a nice R and R spot. The language was somewhat of a barrier but we could usually figure out what the signs were saying. On one occasion, about six of us R and

R types went into a nice restaurant for dinner. The menus were, of course, in Greek and we didn't have the foggiest idea of what or how to order. The headwaiter comes over and in English asks "six"? We nodded and without any further conversation, here comes the food. Lots of seafood dishes and then after the obvious dessert they served coffee Nescafe (most Americans drank the Nescafe instant because the European espresso was much too strong) and we knew the meal was over and asked for the check.

On one return trip from Zaragoza to Lincoln we were flying back as passengers in a KC-135. The schedule changed and you didn't always get to fly a B-47 over and back (the preferred way) and sometimes had to ride over and/or back on a tanker. On this particular return trip with 30 to 40 Reflex troops, plus, fortunately, an Air Force flight surgeon. After level off at 28,000 feet, the crew inadvertently dumped cabin pressure while attempting to adjust the pressure. Explosive decompression! Just like being in the altitude chamber. Cargo compartment fills up with vapor. Dust flies and guys grab for their oxygen mask and emergency oxygen bottle. The aircraft crew chief collapsed in the aisle while attempting to get all the people on oxygen. We each had an oxygen mask with an emergency bailout bottle like the ones we used in our parachutes. Some guys activated the emergency oxygen bottles (pulled the green apple) while others didn't even get that far and had to have some help. The guy I was sitting next to passed out almost immediately and I had to activate his emergency bottle and put his mask up to his face. I did not have to activate my emergency oxygen fortunately. The crew declared an emergency and descended to 10,000 feet. One guy had ruptured eardrums from the rapid decompression and the flight surgeon was able to help him some but it was still a painful situation for him. Although there was technically nothing wrong with the aircraft, we didn't have enough fuel to make it to our East Coast base in the States with required reserves, plus about half the passengers had activated their emer-

gency oxygen bottles which would have to be replaced before we headed across the pond. So, we returned to Zaragoza, refueled, robbed the life support shop of some replacement emergency oxygen bottles and tried again.

Most of us made it the second try. The guy with the ruptured eardrums and a couple of others couldn't make it and had to remain there for further evaluation. Made us late getting back to Lincoln because we had a couple of state-side stops to let people off before we got home. Families not too happy. Had to drag the kids out or get a sitter at a late hour, but that's the business.

So much for Zaragoza. After a year there, the 307th picked up a split commitment for Reflex alert at Torrejon AB near Madrid and it was our turn in the barrel again to pull alert at Moron. Torrejon AB was an excellent base for pulling alert or at least I thought so. It was a Numbered Air Force Headquarters and larger than the other Spanish bases where we pulled alert. Nice crew alert quarters next to the O Club where they had good food and entertainment some nights during the week. Nice pool right next to the Club and many nice base facilities. Almost like we were being repaid for the three years we spent at Moron.

Madrid was about a 20-30 minute bus ride from the base and there was a lot to do in the Capitol of Spain. Saw Old Madrid and bought some paintings from a Hungarian painter in that part of town. He used a different type of technique - the knife or spatula technique and really caught the true Old Madrid in his paintings. We heard later that he was murdered in his studio. Sorry to hear about that. Never did see Old Madrid again.

June - July 1964 was first of back to back Reflex tours for me. Had a crew change with promises of bigger and better things, which never materialized. Preparing for return to Lincoln from the first tour on July 3rd leading a two ship. After completion of preflight, the other AC and I were standing out in front of our aircraft stretching our legs before

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getting back in for engine start. We were watching as a company test pilot was demonstrating a NF-5 (fighter version of the T-38) to the Spanish Air Force "heavies" with a Spanish AF general in the back seat. His finale was a loop right over the runway. He apparently entered the loop too low (the field elevation is about 2000 feet) and did not have enough altitude to complete the loop without hitting the ground. They hit along side the runway doing about 350 knots pulling 8 Gs and scattered debris along and on the runway. Unfortunately, both pilots were casualties.

We were about 30 minutes from our scheduled takeoff time and if we were not airborne within 30 minutes after our scheduled takeoff time we would lose our clearance and probably our tankers for a nonstop flight to Lincoln. We really didn't have a lot of hope getting off within these limits and started to mentally map out a backup plan. All our maintenance troops who were going to launch us were picked up to help clear the debris off the runway. Another factor was that a KC-135 tanker that had launched earlier from Torrejon was due to land in a few minutes after giving a maximum offload to an airborne alert B-52 in an air refueling area near the base. The tanker was minimum fuel and would have to land soon. The runway was quickly cleared and we were instructed to start engines and prepare for takeoff as our maintenance troops returned from clearing the runway. We expedited engine start and taxi and made it to the number one position for takeoff with about one minute left for both of us to start takeoff or we would lose our overwater clearance. I told number two to "tuck it in" which he did. Normally, he would have been about a minute behind us but not wanting to be left behind, he was somewhat less than a minute in trail - probably somewhat like the MITO (minimum interval takeoff) we practiced at home base. It was a warm July day and we had a long takeoff from being somewhat heavier than planned and the high field pressure altitude. The water alcohol augmentation that we used to get extra thrust from the engines

for takeoff was expended just after we broke ground and had the gear coming up. Didn't have much climb capability. I could count the prongs on the TV antennas on the apartment buildings in Madrid as we flew over them. Have a Nice Siesta! We got our tankers and made it home without further delay. Had a nice 4th of July and went back to work to find I would be going back on another Reflex tour in less than four weeks with another crew. This was the "good deal" they had for me.

Went back for another tour at Torrejon in August. At least didn't have to go to Moron. Another R and R at Palma. Went to the beach with one of the navs on our scooters. About 5 PM I had had enough sun and headed back to town. The nav decided to stay for a while longer and maybe have another beer. I went back to the hotel, showered and got dressed for going out to dinner. I wondered what happened to the nav I left at the beach. Stopped by his room but no answer. As I stepped out of the front of the hotel this truck stops in the driveway. The nav I had left at the beach gets out of the passenger side and is he a mess. Skinned and scratched knees and elbows, his sunglasses are all dusty and one lens was cracked. The Spanish truck driver goes to the back of the truck and unloads what was left of a Vespa motor scooter. I asked the obvi-

ous "what happened?" The nav said "I only made ten degrees of a ninety degree turn". Seems he ran into a solid rock wall on the winding road from the beach back to town. We took an earlier flight back to Madrid and had two or three days in Madrid doing some shopping and sight seeing. A memorable finish to our tours at Torrejon.

Did a last tour in Moron in late November 1964. Lots of changes since that first tour there in October 1959. More airplanes on alert, weather was lousy, and we had to live in a trailer on the ramp near the airplane, because of the increased number of aircraft on alert. Needless to say, we were glad to be out of there when this last Reflex tour was over. Got back to Lincoln in time for Christmas and right after the first of the year left Lincoln for Little Rock to fly the B-58. We left January 6, 1965, just ahead of a really big snowstorm - 25 inches of snow in 24 hours, so we were told. We headed south just in time to miss the blizzard and so did our moving truck.

This is how I remember it, and about all my brain can recall after some 35 - 40 years. Aided somewhat by the recall of our newsletter editor, there are several additional vignettes to be told ...

- The basic plan was to have one

(Continued on page 8)

Treasurer's Report			
307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association			
Ending Balance from last report May 22, 1999:		\$5,243.56	
<u>General Fund Balance</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	\$5,243.56
Expenses:			
Postage	337.36		
Printing	516.53		
Office Supplies	<u>19.98</u>		
	873.87		- 873.87
			4,369.69
Income:			
Donations		691.00	
Interest on account		<u>35.94</u>	
		726.94	+ 726.94
Ending Balance October 15, 1999			5,096.63
Sue Jacob, Treasurer			

(Continued from page 7)

- Reflex tour each calendar quarter. But it so happened that a SAC Quarter was four months long. I guess this sounded better than a "SAC Third". Or, perhaps, by SAC accounting standards, the year lasted sixteen months - this being somewhat consistent with General LeMay's desire to have a 48-hour day.
- Most bomb bays returning from Reflex were loaded with serious loot. Telefunks, Grundigs, marble, crystal, shotguns, lace mantillas, you name it ...and allegedly, in one case, a sports car.
 - Above the TVOR over Moron, one had a stupendous view to the south: the Rock of Gibraltar, the Straits, and Morocco. From viewing the majesty of the Rock at that distance, you immediately understood why the Brits wanted to hang on to it.
 - The Spanish Air Force had an active base located about a mile west of the SAC facilities, where they had ops buildings and a grass strip. Standing in the alert barracks lobby my first morning at Moron, my attention was drawn by reciprocating engine noise immediately outside the building. Upon looking out, I saw a dirt taxiway immediately beyond the alert force parking lot, and two taxiing ME-109s, of World War II fame. We came to find out the Spanish were still flying a bunch of German hand-me-downs from that era. We also found out the ME-109s were still, in 1959, being manufactured under license in Seville, and were equipped with the best Rolls-Royce Merlin engines.
 - On the concrete flight line at the main base were several old World War II vintage twin engined "German" light bombers. One, a fixed-gear Heinkel something-or-other, had a minimum of instruments on the pilot's instrument panel, and the altimeter was located

on the bulkhead behind the pilot's back. That must have made for a very strenuous instrument scan during an instrument approach!

- We were also told that shortly before the 307th assumed reflex ops at Moron, that the Spanish had been engaged in a war fighting against rebel forces in Spanish Morocco, and that many sorties were flown from and recovered at Moron. The camel and horse mounted rebels were usually chased down in the desert, and it seemed the pilots didn't believe in wasting bullets, as they frequently RTBed with animal parts hanging from their landing gear.
- Our first R&R was to Palma de Majorca, in July 1959. The crews from another squadron, who shall remain nameless, returning from Palma immediately before our departure, told us war stories recounting the wide swath cut by their antics. They also highly recommended the Nixe Palace Hotel, a terraced luxury facility built on the cliffs immediately above the ocean. Upon the nine of us checking in at the front desk in the Nixe Palace, two bystanding British gentlemen were overheard conversing about our arrival: "Lock up your wife Ian, the Yanks are back".
- Several days later, conversing with a sweet elderly British lady in the lobby. "Are the nine of you a baseball team or other kind of sportsmen? You are so much better behaved than the Yanks here last week!"
- Ring of Fire. R&R in Madrid. High atop the city in the penthouse restaurant of the Balboa Hotel, a hotel run for US military personnel. Fantastic view, good food. Waiter approaches from 6 o'clock bearing a flaming dish on his shoulder. Waiter trips! Things fly through the air! A ring of flaming Napalm surrounded me! No escape to 9, 6, or 3 o'clock. Did immediate 12 o'clock ejection over top of the

table. Received profuse apologies, but no one volunteered to clean the dessert off my well-polished shoes...

Although there were some tough times, this was our job and I believe we did it well. The 307th was a valuable part of the deterrent force in those days that told the Soviet Bear to not screw around with us! We can all be very proud of our contributions to the security of our country and the free world.

* * *

Ed: There are many different tales to be told about the Reflex experience, good, bad, and ugly, and in retrospect, mostly humorous. We'd like to hear them so we can publish them for benefit and enjoyment of the entire group. We know that you support troops have some good stories, so let's hear them. We've already told about glider flying at Moron, but what about the airborne dispensing of TP on the runway?



The Last Flight

Joseph L DeJulio, Maitland FL, 2 November 1997.

Dana Desselle, Gainesville FL, 18 September 1999.

Diane Kelly, January 1999.

Lowell Page Nelson, 371st BS, Fairfax Station VA, 26 March 1999.

Franklin "Nick" Nikkell, ARS, California, approximately 1984.

Ray Normandin, ARS, Hot Springs AR, date unknown.

Carl E Phillips, 372nd BS, Kansas City MO, 2 April 1994.

Russell E Rich, Lincoln NE, 1 October 1999.

William E Riggs, 307th Commander, San Antonio TX, 29 March 1999.

The verse on the SAC Chapel Memorial window says it best:

"And God said who shall we send. I answered I am here, send me." Isaiah 6:8

Around the Wing

We kick off this issue with Then and Now photos of 307th ARS Crew J-38, thanks to **Gary McGill** and **Bill Novetzke**. The nearby pictures depict this 1959 Bomb Comp crew in both 1959 and 1999. **Ray Normandin**, the AC, and **Franklin "Nick" Nikkel**, the flight engineer, both departed us for their Last Flight some years ago. This year, the remaining crew, Bill Novetzke, CP, **Larry Kessler**, boomer, and Gary McGill, nav, had a long sought mini-reunion in Minneapolis, and sent us these pix. Unfortunately, of these three fine gentlemen, Larry Kessler has been fighting ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) for over a year and a half. Needless to say, Larry is restricted in what he can do, but he still very much enjoys hearing from old friends. So, all you cronies, send a line to Larry Kessler at 5108 77th Ave, North Minneapolis, MN 55443. We all wish you well, Larry!

In Last Flight for this issue, you'll see that **William Earle Riggs**, our wing commander from 1962 to 1964, recently passed away. His wife Alice, was thoughtful enough to send us a copy of his obituary in which it was noted that he piloted the lead B-29 for the ceremonial flyover during the Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri in 1945. Another 307th link with our great national history.

In the previous July issue we ran a photo of **Robert Mulleins** and others receiving a bowling trophy from Col Read, and the photo included several unidentified 307th troops. Well, Mulleins has identified two of the three others. So, if you haven't thrown the July issue away, here goes: the guy in the rear is **Sgt Minyard**, and the three-striper is **Marvin K Gohl**. Is anyone sharp enough to identify the two-striper? Robert also tells us he plans to see us all at the Lincoln reunion next year.

Harry Krebs recently emailed from his home in the UK that **Fred and Ruth Varn** were imminently due to visit. Wonder if Fred thinks he's still pulling Reflex – seems to be in the UK as much



Crew J-38, Lajes Field, Azores, August 1959
L to R: Ray Normandin, Nick Nikkel, Bill Novetzke, Gary McGill, Larry Kessler. Departing for alert duty at Moron, Spain, then to Palma de Majorca for R&R.

as the CONUS!

Crew chief of venerable old 51-5235, **Don Watts** writes of his intentions to attend the forthcoming Lincoln reunion. Thanks to **Art Williams'** interest in rounding up former offspring to attend, Don's daughter is planning to attend with him.

A new award has been bestowed upon **Betty Hickman**. By virtue of making an overnight 18 wheeler truck run from California to Arizona with her son, Matt, she is now an official "Mother Trucker". Betty cautioned that we spell the title correctly.

"**Jimbo**" **Shumake** writes: At Monroe, LA, there is a deserted Selman Field, a wartime navigator school, from which some 13,000, more or less, navigators left to do their job around the world. Our Association is planning not only a "Roll of Honor" for many of our graduates (for example the Enola Gay B-29 navigator, Van Kirk was an instructor) and he would be one of the alumni that we will honor. Also, some of us would like a Memorial Garden in the city of Monroe. It is quite possible that the 307th BW has an example of what our committee could use for planning and also to remember that you dedicated a bench in Dayton and a plaque in Colorado Springs.... We could use any

suggestions as to the cost and the other ideas that might make our project an attraction for the city of Monroe and a challenge to our membership that is scattered "here and there...." I also have a P.O. Box 54 in Glendale, AZ 85311-0054. Some of the 307th may remember me from the Las Vegas Reunion. I have missed every one since then and cannot attend the Lincoln Reunion next June, unless I "get lucky." Adios from "Jimbo"

From Show Low, Arizona, we heard from **Eugene Gadois**: Of the ten years I spent as a KC-97 flight engineer, the last two were at Selfridge

AFB in Michigan with the 307th Refueling Squadron. In reading the newsletter, most or all of the stories came from Lincoln. The one person I would love to make contact with is Arvid Doucette who was my Aircraft Commander. I originally checked out on KC-97s at Castle AFB while in the 90th ARS, we moved the squadron to Bangor, Maine (Dow AFB) in 1955 and became the 341st ARS. Just after the Cuban crisis I transferred to the 307th in 1962. My proper mailing address is now : 1156 Wilson Road, Show Low, AZ 85901.

Charlie Bird recently reminisced of the wing's early days circa 1954. "We in the maintenance shops started building mock-ups so the aircraft components, and in my case the comm/nav equipment, could be tested and repaired in the shops. There were no commercial mockups, so we built them one wire at a time and made them so they could be shipped on a Reflex mission." *Ed: where would we have been without guys like this?*

It's a small world once again. Seems **Les & Jeannette Walrath** met **Bruce & Melba Mills** quite by accident in Utah this past summer. Les promises to attend the Lincoln reunion (he had to abort en route to the Colorado Springs reunion for medical reasons). Also,

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wonder if there are any more reasons Bruce "never got promoted". Bruce writes that he is now feeling quite good but is up for a double knee replacement. Obviously, Bruce's knees were abused by all the praying done while awaiting promotion! May you regain full mobility, Bruce.

Ed Godec has asked our assistance in announcing that Class 55P is organizing a class reunion to occur next year. If you have an interest, contact Carlos Higgins (CarlosTX@worldnet.att.net) by email. Sorry, we don't have the snail mail address.

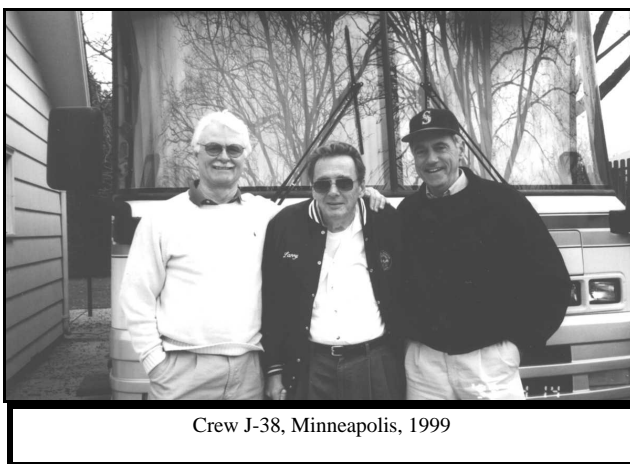
Frequent correspondents by email, **R T & Dru Boykin** say that R T has had some cardiac related complications following his by-pass this spring. He's following doctor's orders and Dru is trying to restrain him from getting too vigorous.

With the ARS from 1956 till 1958, **Rod Clutter** went on with a long intelligence related career as a strategic analyst and lecturer on military and political affairs of the Soviet Union, China India and Pakistan. More recently he has been the mayor of Boonville, Indiana, and Director of Alumni Affairs at the University of Evansville.

In mid September, **Jim & Darlene Lancaster** motored through Ohio during their May to October RV travel through the eastern states. While visiting **Charlie & Peggy Baker** in Franklin, Ohio, a pyramid alert message was passed to 307th-ers in the immediate area to join the Lancaster's and Baker's for a late summer rib barbecue. With **T R & Eunice Taylor** and **Mike & Jan Gingrich** in attendance, many old war stories were told, especially about the early maintenance troop rotations to the UK, and the festivities included the viewing of Charlie's old 1955 Lincoln photographs. Many others were visited by the Lancaster's dur-

ing their travels, including **Billy & Jean Williams**. This happy event was followed within several days by Charlie experiencing a heart attack. The good news is it occurred in the ER, so the docs were able to arrest it in progress. Charlie was then helicopter evacuated to the heart center in Cincinnati where he had first class care. He is now back at work, feeling good, and looking forward to a year end retirement.

Visit the 307th Web page at "<http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Baracks/2747/index.html>". Historian **Robert Loffredo** continues to improve the site. The current working version of 307th Bomb Wing History, compiled by Co-Historian **Ernie Pence**, is now posted on the web site where you can read it or download it.



Crew J-38, Minneapolis, 1999

Historian Loffredo would like you to bring your old photos (crew, group, unit pix) to the Lincoln reunion, so that he can make photo copies for our archives, and then return them to you while you are still at the reunion. Any identifications you can provide with the photos will be greatly appreciated.

As usual, we've heard from other folks alive and kicking over the last four months. These include Bud Flanik, Hank Grogan, Woody Fail (now residing in sumptuous new house on golf course), Laurie Bunten (now building sumptuous new house), Adam Mizinski, Frank Eisenbraun, and Clayton Scott.

Look Who's Coming

Below are the persons who plan to attend the Lincoln 2000 Reunion. If you have not sent us your questionnaire, fill out the one in this issue and send it to us.

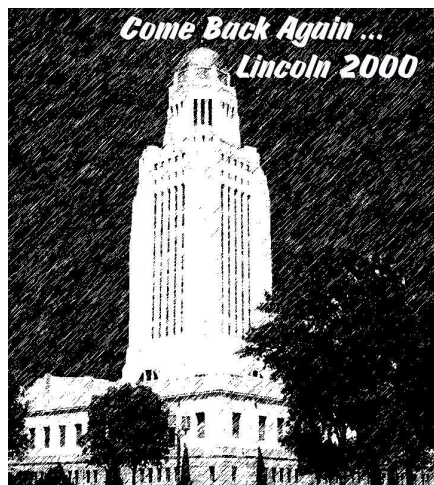
Gene & Betty Aenchbacher, George D & Patricia Adams, Charles & Margaret Akins, Joseph J Anthony, William H Ashby, Mary J Ashton, Sandor & Nancy Babos, Charles & Peggy Baker, Margot Berkovitz, Vern Biaett, Larry & Jan Boggess, R T & Dru Boykin, Cecil & Maureen Braeden, George & Patricia Brannon, Gordy & Helen Brekken, Earl & Ida Buys, William & Grace Carrier, Richard Christensen & Doris Cromwell, Rod & Mary Clutter, Jim & Barbara Cone, Johnny & Joan Clark, Roy E Clark, Neil & Maria Cosentino, Norm & Onalee Cromer, Dallas & Julie Crosby, Charles B Dabbs, George & Rita Davis.

Don, Phyllis & John Daley, James & Shirley Dayley, Mike & Judy DeCarlo, Virgil & Millie Domino, Barbara Ekstrum, James & Jean Evans & Helen McBee, James L Fields, Robert & Sharon Fisher, Karol E Franzyshe, Carl Germundson, Lyle A & Colleen Gesch, Mike & Jan Gingrich, Ed & Diane Godec, Donald L & Marcelle Gosting, Hank Grogan, Merle & Jeanell Hahn, Leo J & Marcy Halpin, Bob & Gwen Hansen, Glen & Lucy Hesler, Billy D & Dorothy Hill, Jerry & Helen Hoffman & Guest, James & Jean Houghtby, George & Alice Iannacito, Jon & Suzette Igelman, Virgil & Sue Jacobs, Don & Virginia Johnson, Earl & Sue Johnson, Bob & Peg Jorgensen, Richard & Beverly Kies, Bob & Shirley King, Jim & Darleen Lancaster, Robert & Betty Loffredo, Marvin R Lundgren, Pappy & Sharon Lynch, Billy & LaRee Lyons, Bernard C Manning & Kathleen Michaud, Wayne & Lois Matthiessen, Richard & Marilyn McKinley, Richard & Marilyn McKenzie, Frank & Dede Medrick, Arthur & Mildred Mercer.

Bob "Red" & Pat Meyer, Roy & Cathy Miller, Bruce & Melba Mills, Tom & Andrea Mills, Tony & Bev Minnick, Wally & Pat Mitchell, Adam Mizinski, James & Evelyn Moon, Harold C & Dorothy Morrison & Guests, Robert Mulleins, LaVern & Virginia Musselman, Peter & Marilyn Myatt, H R & Eleanor Newmaster, George A & Wauneta Nigh, Don & Angie Nigro, Butch & Diane Nollenberg, Bill & Loree Oertel, Albert & Virginia Opitz, M Vernon & Joan Ordiway, Bud & Shelly Ostgaard, Paul & Grace Palmer, Betty Pelletier, Emie & Genelle

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(Continued from page 10)



Pence, Clark & Donnis Peterson, Ralph & Ruth Philbrook, John & Helen Puckett, Shirley Pudwill, Bob & Denise Purdy, Maynard M & Ella Reece, Clay Robson, Clarence H & Barbara Rodgers, Dean & Bonnie Roelle, Lou & Phyllis Roseling, Gerald & Lois Rotter, Charles & Ruth Schisler, Lee & Pearl Schubert, Bob Schultz & Ginny Warrell, Mel & Myma Schultz, W T "Bill" & Jeanette Schwob, Clayton & Rose Scott, Jesse & Arlene Sears.

Peter & Kathryn Shaughnessy, Wm R "Bill" & Jackie Shelley, James H & Judith Shelton, Keith & Eileen Steele, Harold & Dee Struempfer, J B & Marty Taylor, T R & Eunice Taylor, Everett W & Winona Terry, Berry & Mildred Thompson, Pete & Wendy Todd, JoAnn Tuin, Frederick N Ulm, Les & Jan Walrath, Charley & Betty Watkins, Don Watts & Jackie Vest, Wally & Peg Whitehurst, Bill & Jean Williams, Claude & Wanda Williams, Robert & Janice Wise, Merle & Oletta Young.

A Note from the Co-Founder

Enlisted Members! We have a great reunion planned and you certainly don't want to miss it. So, get your "tail" in gear, mark your calendars for June 21 to 25, 2000, and return your questionnaire. We'll see you there!

Billy Williams

Back In Touch

307th members for whom we have obtained addresses since our last newsletter.

Chuck Bailey, 5331 SE Highway 40, Tecumseh KS 66542.

Ronald L Bill, 536 Astor Cook Rd, Blow-

ing Rock, NC 28605.

Ron Curd, 103 Whitestone Ave, Mauldin, SC 29662.

William DeAngelis, RR5, Box 5901, Mohn-ton, PA 19540.

Francis C Greenlee, 46 Edison Ave, York, NE 68467.

Kermit Kramer, 2998 Riley St NE, Orangeburg, SC 29118.

Robert J "Red" Meyer, 7521 Englewood Dr, Lincoln, NE 68510.

Joe Mancuso, Rt 1 Box 167 BB, Pikesville, NC 27863.

Carl Parsons, 3644 Susan St, Sumpter, SC 29154.

Robert Rose, 98 River Forge Rd, Manchester, TN 37355.

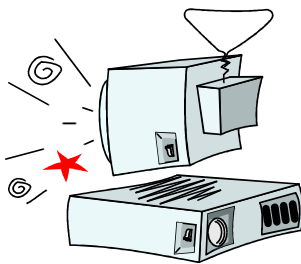
Bill Seay, 238 Waterford Dr, Inman, SC 29349.

Curtis Shatley, 1354 Monterey Ct, Morrow, GA 30260.

Allen Turley, 78 11th St, Wagoner, OK 74467.

Lionel Woods, 416 E Madison, Pittsburg, KS 66762.

Glad to have you with us! Many thanks to Ross Jones for finding seven of the above new members for us.



Email Changes

Since the last issue of the newsletter, there have been several additions to the email list.

Additions

Dick Amenell: rjamen@gateway.net

Eugene Gadbois: egadbois@cybertrails.com

Jim Foster: sandseas@juno.com

Ed Godec: godechill@jvlnet.com

Ross Jones: Rosssh@aol.com

Gary McGill: marionrnc@earthlink.net

Robert Mulleins: mulleins@worldnet.att.net

Gwen Nelson: GwenNelson@aol.com

Bill Novetske: Bnovetske@aol.com

Albert F Opitz: AldermanAL@aol.com

John Puckropp: buff@brainerd.net

Harold Ross: hross@worldnet.att.net

Charles Schisler: schisler@gate.net

G Lee Schubert: SCHUB-LP1@prodigy.net

Don Watts: Dwatts63@aol.com

Changes:

Sigmond F Faber: Sff5329515@aol.com

Mike Gingrich: mikegingri@cs.com

Jim Lancaster: jimdartuc@dakotacom.net

Betty Hickman: MomsMt@aol.com

Ken Mathew: kenmathew@earthlink.net

Pete Shaughnessy:

pete@shaughnessy.com

Stan States: sstates@earthlink.net

Lloyd "Bud" Timmons: nep-

tune@harborside.com

John Yaryan: johny@lvcm.com

If you would like to have a current list of 307th Email addresses emailed to you, drop a note to "mikegingri@cs.com".

Which Military Service is the Best?

A Soldier, a Sailor, an Airman, and a Marine got into an argument about which service is "The Best." The arguing became so heated, that they eventually ended up killing each other. Soon, they found themselves at the Pearly Gates of Heaven. Soon they meet St Peter and decide that only he would be the ultimate source of truth and honesty so they ask him: "St Peter, which branch of the American Armed Forces is the best?"

St. Peter instantly replies: "I can't answer that. But, I will ask God what he thinks the next time I see him.

Some time later the three see St. Peter again and remind him of the question and ask if he was able to find the answer. Suddenly, a sparkling white dove lands on St. Peter's shoulder. In the dove's beak is a note with glistening gold dust.

St. Peter says to the four men, "Your answer from the Boss. Let's see what he says." St Peter opens the note, trumpets blare, gold dust drifts into the air, harps play crescendos and St Peter begins to read it aloud to the four young men:

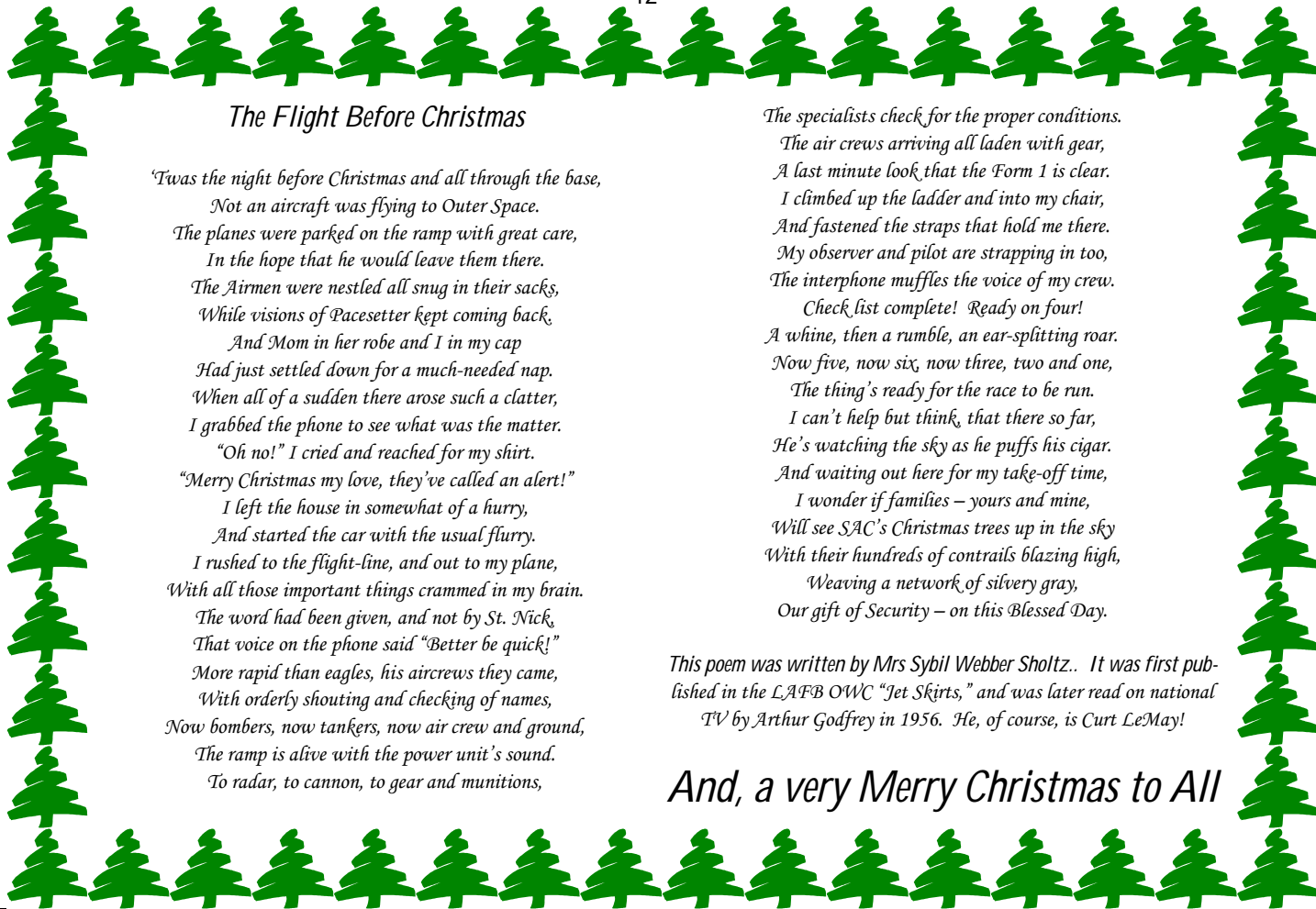
MEMORANDUM TO SOLDIERS, SEAMEN, MARINES, AND AIRMEN
SUBJECT: Which Military Service Is The Best?

"Gentlemen, all the Branches of the Armed Services are 'Honorable and Noble.' Each of you serves your country well and with distinction.

Being a member of the American Armed Forces represents a special calling warranting special respect, tribute, and dedication. Be proud of that."

Very Respectfully,

GOD, USAF (Ret.)



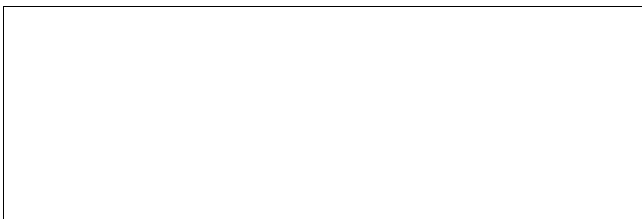
The Flight Before Christmas

*'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the base,
 Not an aircraft was flying to Outer Space.
 The planes were parked on the ramp with great care,
 In the hope that he would leave them there.
 The Airmen were nestled all snug in their sacks,
 While visions of Pacesetter kept coming back,
 And Mom in her robe and I in my cap
 Had just settled down for a much-needed nap.
 When all of a sudden there arose such a clatter,
 I grabbed the phone to see what was the matter.
 "Oh no!" I cried and reached for my shirt.
 "Merry Christmas my love, they've called an alert!"
 I left the house in somewhat of a hurry,
 And started the car with the usual flurry.
 I rushed to the flight-line, and out to my plane,
 With all those important things crammed in my brain.
 The word had been given, and not by St. Nick,
 That voice on the phone said "Better be quick!"
 More rapid than eagles, his aircrews they came,
 With orderly shouting and checking of names,
 Now bombers, now tankers, now air crew and ground,
 The ramp is alive with the power unit's sound.
 To radar, to cannon, to gear and munitions,*

*The specialists check for the proper conditions.
 The air crews arriving all laden with gear,
 A last minute look that the Form 1 is clear.
 I climbed up the ladder and into my chair,
 And fastened the straps that hold me there.
 My observer and pilot are strapping in too,
 The interphone muffles the voice of my crew.
 Check list complete! Ready on four!
 A whine, then a rumble, an ear-splitting roar.
 Now five, now six, now three, two and one,
 The thing's ready for the race to be run.
 I can't help but think that there so far,
 He's watching the sky as he puffs his cigar.
 And waiting out here for my take-off time,
 I wonder if families – yours and mine,
 Will see SAC's Christmas trees up in the sky
 With their hundreds of contrails blazing high,
 Weaving a network of silvery gray,
 Our gift of Security – on this Blessed Day.*

This poem was written by Mrs Sybil Webber Sholtz.. It was first published in the LAFB OWC "Jet Skirts," and was later read on national TV by Arthur Godfrey in 1956. He, of course, is Curt LeMay!

And, a very Merry Christmas to All



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 U.S. POSTAGE
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 Lincoln, NE
 PERMIT NO. 700

307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association
5920 Robin Court
Lincoln, NE 68516
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