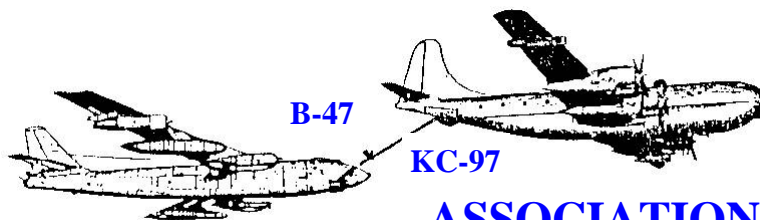


307TH BOMB WING



ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 38

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

NOVEMBER 2002

The Chairman's Column The Beat Goes On

I hope all of you have had a pleasant and relaxing summer. If your house is like mine, the pace of activity will pick up significantly with the approach of the holiday season. Before the Thanksgiving and Christmastime flurries totally consume everyone's attention, I wanted to bring you up to date on progress with a couple of key Association activities.

First, after extensive discussions with Larry and Jan Boggess, Tony Minnick, Vern Biaett, Mike Gingrich and others, I have decided to enlist the assistance of a professional reunion organizer to manage the 2004 Reunion in Las Vegas. I have contacted Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFRI), and will be negotiating an arrangement with them as soon as possible. Here's the guidance I plan to give them.

The consensus among the Chairman's Committee was that we should avoid the hot summer months in Nevada. This will aim the planning for spring or early fall of 2004. There was considerable discussion about the possibility of reducing our hotel costs by avoiding the higher priced weekends for our reunion (maybe something like a Sunday to Thursday model). On the other hand, any room savings could be swallowed up quickly if members flying to the reunion can't schedule the Sacred Saturday Night Layover. I'll charge AFRI

to look at all alternatives with a view toward the greatest economy for the most people.

Vern and others in the Las Vegas area have already done considerable spade-work on possible activities during the reunion, so AFRI will coordinate with them closely in planning the program. Also, I want to be sure we don't overlook any important details in contracting with AFRI. Therefore, it would be helpful if prior reunion Chairmen could send me any checklists they used and/or a list of forget-me-not requirements, large and small (welcome desk, hospitality suite provisions, name tags, etc., etc.). If anybody has other great idea about how to make the 2004 Reunion even better, drop me a note (so I can get it into the contract) or contact Vern Biaett for on-scene investigation.

Second, the 307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association will soon have its own permanent, professionally designed and administered website! I am in contact with a young ex-USAF officer who has started his own website design business. I have seen his sites and he does nice work. Mike Gingrich and I are finalizing the design requirements for the site, which should become the information nerve center for our association.

Eventually, we intend post the current

newsletter on the site (and archive previous ones for reference). These will probably reside in a members-only, password-protected area to ensure your privacy. We may continue to publish and mail a "paper copy" for those who prefer that option, so long as the costs remain manageable. The website will also be the home for our extensive historical archives, written and pictorial. We will either port this material from other locations or maintain a hyperlink connection to other sites. Eventually, if we get really cosmic (and if costs and complexity don't get out of control), we might even be able to do online registration for Reunions. If you have ideas for other features to include (or minefields to avoid), now is the time to tell me about them. After the site is designed and online, it becomes exponentially more difficult and costly to engineer major changes.

Wendy and I wish you and your families all the best of health and happiness throughout the holiday season and in the New Year. Keep well and keep in touch with your ideas how to make **YOUR** association better.

Pete Todd

Back In Touch

A newly joined member of our association:

Robert Merick, HC3 Box 3095, Wappapello, MO 63966.

We're happy to have finally found you!

Donations

We wish to acknowledge the generosity of those who have recently made donations to the Association's General Fund.

James Villa
Clayton Scott
Clark Peterson
Jarvis Latham

Robert Crooks
Phillip Walters
Richard Kies
Robert Merick
J T Odom
Richard Roberts
Suzanne Welnetz for Ken Welnetz
Trudy Barth for Martin Barth



Email Changes

The following changes to the email list have occurred since the last issue of the newsletter. We now number about 280!

Additions

Hugh Reid: air1@ix.netcom.com
Robert Merick: bobm71@netzero.net
Oliver M Hinde: oakadoil@earthlink.net
Hugh B Terrell: hught1@prodigy.net

Changes/Corrections:

Don Fudge: dfudge15@comcast.net
Wally Czewik: Wally-GryC@wmconnect.com
W.T. Haley: jthaley@msn.com
Stan States: swstates@msn.com
Richard Roberts: robm1936@earthlink.net
Bill Schwob: wtschwob@aol.com
Melba Mills: melbababe@juno.com
Laurie Buntten: labuntten@ouraynet.com
Bruce Bradfield: b.bradfield@earthlink.net

Send your email address in and if you would like to have a current list of 307th Email addresses emailed to you, drop a note to "mikegingri@cs.com".

The Last Flight



The verse on the SAC Chapel Memorial Window says it best...

Gerald A Benjamin, 371st BS, North Little Rock AR, 9 September 2002.

Carol Bilek, Casper WY, 7 August 2002.

Gerald B Custer, 98th BW, Colorado Springs CO, June 2002.

James L Fields, AEMS, Mooresville NC, 31 July 2002.

Joseph Giunta, AEMS, Saugus MA, 2 July 1995.

Walter F Johnson, FMS, Oswego NY, 6 August 2002.

Robert C Newman, ARS, Medical Lake WA, 18 June 2002.

Donna Newman, date unknown.

Charles Passante, FMS, Ocala FL, 7 June 2002.

Raymond J Shaw, ARS, Papillion NE, September 2002.

Jack L Schilthroat, ARS, Fairchild CA, 8 September 2002.

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



307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association

Chairman: Pete Todd, 1250 Big Valley Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919-1015. Phone 719-531-5874. Email: petetodd@aol.com.

Chairman's Committee

Secretary: Larry Boggess, 4304 Ridgecrest Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Phone 719-548-8024. Email: larryjan@worldnet.att.net

Membership: Jan Boggess, 4304 Ridgecrest Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Phone 719-548-8024. Email: larryjan@worldnet.att.net

Treasurer: Tony Minnick, 5920 Robin Court, Lincoln, NE 68516. Phone 402-423-6848. Email: tonym@inetnebr.com

Newsletter: Mike Gingrich, 1525 Edenwood Drive, Beavercreek, OH 45434. Phone 937-426-5675. Email: mikegingri@cs.com

Co-Historian: Robert Loffredo, 6004 SW 2nd St, Des Moines, IA 50315. Phone 515-285-3445. Email: mustang51c@mchsi.com

Co-Historian: Ernie Pence, 2001 A St, Schuyler, NE 68661. Phone 402-352-3311. Email: Ernie_Pence@cargill.com

Co-Founder: Billy Williams, PO Box 29223, 5141 N 72nd St, Lincoln, NE 68529-0223. Phone 402-466-9301. Email: wjwbdw@juno.com

Co-Founder: Betty Pelletier, 205 W Palma Drive, Green Valley, AZ 85614. Phone 520-625-2936.

Las Vegas 2002 Reunion Chairman: Vern Biaett, 10201 B West Coggins Dr, Sun City, AZ 85351. Phone 623-972-7328. Email: vbiaett@azwest.net

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.

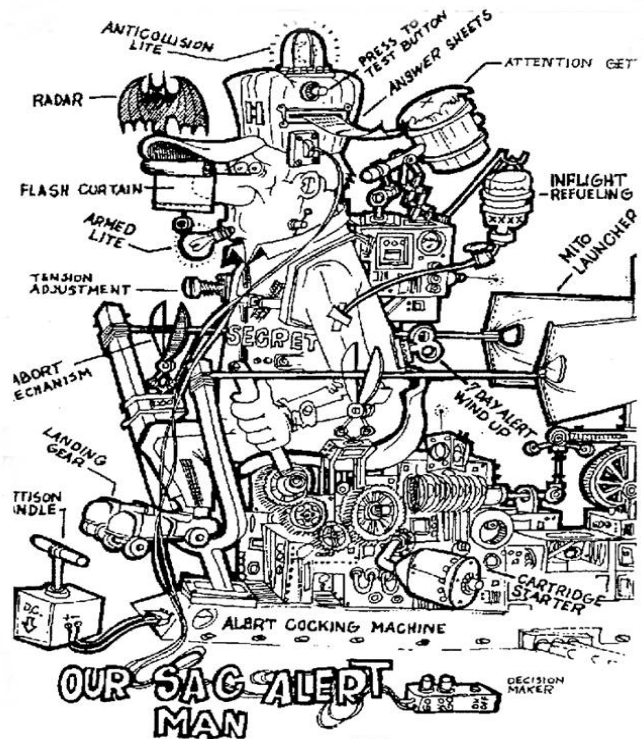
Around the Wing

Our special pic this issue is a cartoon furnished by **Don Luther** of the 551st SMS Association. The cartoon depicts how a SAC Combat Crewmember, was equipped in an era subsequent to ours, but we can all recognize the roots of the humor. The cartoonist, whose name is not discernable, accomplished numerous biting SAC-life cartoons in the 1980s, and is rumored to be the son of one of our 307th members. Anyone know the true scoop?

Many years ago, shortly after our association was formed, it was decided that rather than publish obituaries in the newsletter, we would list all the deceased names in the "Last Flight" column. The reasons for this were various: our newsletter was much smaller than it is now; we received obituary type information on only a few of our deceased; and in an egalitarian sense, we did not wish to make one deceased person seem more important than another. However, perhaps it is time to reconsider our policy in this respect. We currently receive our death notices in multiple ways ...from postal returns, notices in the Air Force Times and other publications, and by email and letter from the families and friends of the deceased. It seems that when someone goes to the trouble to tell us something of a member's life and the departure therefrom, we ought to be able to pass the testimonial on to those who knew and valued the friendship, however longstanding, with the individual. We'll try to do this in the future.

From **Elaine Johnson**. ...I am sending you notice of the death of my husband **Walter F. Johnson**, a member of the 307th. We live in Oswego, NY but Walter was on a trip back to his Nebraska for a visit with family and friends with three of his closest friends. They arrived in Lincoln August 5, that night they had a huge get together. The next day Walt suffered a heart attack and passed away. He was laid to rest in Lincoln. He was very proud of his service time and told me many stories while serving. Walter was on your 307th Roll of Remarkable Records as being the Youngest Individual assigned to Lincoln. He arrived in Lincoln 4 Jan.56, age 17 yrs. 5 mo, 7 days. ...**W T Haley** added that Walter was a member of the 307th FMS and was assigned to the Airframe repair shop from 1955 to 1959.

Richard Amenell wrote: **Jack L. Schilthroat**, 1932 ~ 2002. A great man, a good life...a quiet passing. ...Sometime around August 2001, Jack began having what he assumed was indigestion. In early April, Jack found out he was going to be a grandfather, for the first time, in January--courtesy of his younger daughter Ruth. In early May, Jack was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. He and his doctors opted to try a combination of chemotherapy and radiation to shrink the



tumor... After the two months of treatment, doctors learned in early August that Jack's cancer was extremely aggressive, if not stubborn--the tumor had not shrunk... and it had spread. Jack opted to stop treatment. Not wanting to remain in the hospital or reside in a nursing home, Jack went home to be cared for by his wife, Kazuko, and his eldest daughter, Judy. On September 8, 2002 Jack passed away peacefully in his sleep. Up until the end, Jack never suffered any great pain, only some discomfort. He even managed a couple outings... including trips to Cache Creek Casino (a favorite pastime for Jack and his wife). Besides Kazuko and Judy, Jack was visited by Ruth, who lives with her husband in Seattle, and various friends--most notably, longtime friend Dan Choy. A close friend for many years, through many joys and sadness', Dan was a constant companion to the end. At Jack's request, no formal service or funeral was held. After his passing, Jack was cremated and his ashes were scattered from a plane, near the Golden Gate Bridge.

Responding to **Gary McGill's** question in the 307th July 2002 Newsletter asking if Lincoln AFB was the airfield used by Nebraska Aircraft Company, **Hugh Reid** says - -While stationed at LNK 57-61, I took flying lessons at the Arrow Airport. As I vaguely remember it was east of Lincoln out past 84th St. off of Hwy34. They had a display that said "Arrow Airport, the site of the former Nebraska Aircraft Co and Lindbergh taking flying lessons there". I may be off in the location of Arrow Airport as

(Continued on page 4)

Newsletter Schedule

The 307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association Newsletter is published for the benefit of all former members of the 307th Bomb Wing of Lincoln AFB, Nebraska. It is expected to be published three times a year in March, July, and November. Contributions for publication in the newsletter are encouraged, and are essential for the success of this newsletter.

(Continued from page 3)

it's been a long time, plus it is probably a sub-division now. As for Lindberg soloing, Souther Field a few miles east of Americus, Ga., they have a plaque saying Lindbergh soloed there. In fact the NDB a few miles North of the field has Lindbergh's name as the identifier.

The Search for Father's Friends

Our previous issue presented at length the years long quest of two ladies to find people who might have known their fathers, who perished in the disastrous loss of the C-118 with fifty 307th men aboard on 10 October 1956. As a result of this article and allied efforts, **Morgen Goodroe**, daughter of **Capt Ken Goodroe**, and **Katherine Hepler Ward**, daughter of **A2C Cloyse Hepler**, have had some limited success. Readers who may have known something of their fathers, but who have not yet contacted these ladies, are urged to do so.

Morgen writes ...I got two calls since the newsletter went out. One from a man named **Lee McCrary** who knew my dad a little. He told me what Dad's job title and duties were. He didn't know Dad well but it was good to talk to him about that time. The second call was from **Diane Lally**. Her husband Fred was in Lakenheath and Dad was his boss. Dad bumped him and took his place on the plane. She said Fred couldn't talk on the phone because he was hard of hearing but he had some great things to say about Dad and she relayed them to me. She thanked me for her husband coming home to her. It was really touching and sad. Just hearing from someone who talked to my dad was very moving. (Morgen also was put in contact with **Katy & Rudy Webb** who knew her parents well).

Morgen goes on...the worst thing has happened. Somehow I wrote both my street number and area code wrong on the information I sent you for the July newsletter. I can't imagine what happened to make me type it wrong. I type it many times a day but when it really counted I got it wrong. My correct address is Morgen Goodroe, 2507 Centerville Road, Dallas, TX 75228, phone 214-320-2563 home, 972-840-7044 work. Morgen's email is mgoodroe@nationalspirit.com. Morgen, unfortunately, has been recently hospitalized recuperating from the West Nile virus. We send our best wishes for her quick recovery.

The newsletter article did not bear as much fruit for Katherine Hepler Ward as it did for Morgen. Kat writes... (putting together information about my dad) was emotional. I missed so many things growing up and have so many questions. Thank goodness for your efforts you found at least one person who worked with my dad. What a blessing, I was beginning to give up hope. I wish we could find more of the other children whose dads were lost on that flight also. It has been almost impossible. It is wonderful that I found Morgen, she has been great. ...Next reunion, if I could have permission, I would love to stop by and say "hi" and meet the great men and women of the 307th, who will always hold a special place in my heart. I have recently moved and my new address is Katherine Ward, 2809 Gibson View Way, Antelope, CA

95843. Phone 916-331-0508. My email is KatherineE@webtv.net.

From **Ken Fisher**, President of the 551st Strategic Missile Squadron Association - -

The newsletter really got to me about the articles written by the two ladies who lost their fathers in that plane crash. I don't know if too many people even know of the incident. I was thinking about sending them a copy of my newsletter since it lists various websites that they could leave messages on. Maybe someone might have remembered their dads. I will put something in my next publication since I did have a few guys who came into the 551st from the 307th.

In the previous newsletter, our no-holds-barred correspondent, **Ernie Pence**, wrote of the many contributions **Glen "Pappy" Hesler** has made to his country. It may just have been the most worthwhile piece ever published in this newsletter. Ernie says in follow-up --Got a surprise phone call from Pappy's boy, who lives in West Virginia, Sunday morning. We talked about an hour. He was so pleased someone wrote about his dad. As those with strong southern roots would say, "We done good padnah." Then, --Got a phone call from Pappy last night, what a treat. The guy's thanking me, - - he's got it backwards, it was my privilege to have served with the man. How many people ever have the opportunity to work with someone really special in his or her entire lifetime. Damn few, most just read about them.

Glen Hesler's memoir book, "**The Heart of the Tiger**", was published recently and the front cover is shown nearby. It is a guaranteed good read! Especially his story of escape and evasion in China in World War 2. There is also a picture of Glen on the back cover made the day he retired and became a civilian. Thirty of the remaining copies have been held for 307th BW members. Those interested in buying a copy, can write, phone or e-mail a request to **Lucy Hesler**. The book is 6x9 inches, 133 pages. The books are \$20 plus \$4 shipping. Send a check to the address below and be sure to include your address. Lucy Hesler, glenlucy@cox.net, 1108 Via Trieste, Chula Vista, CA 91911. Phone 619-422-5124.

From **Vicki Binford**, **John Mattioli's** daughter- -My father receives your 307th Bomb Wing Newsletter and always enjoys reading it thoroughly. When he received the most recent issue, he was surprised to see a picture on the back with two dancing ladies on it and a question "who are these dancing girls?" Well, one of them was my mother. She is the blonde on the left. Her name was **Violet Mattioli**. Unfortunately she died in 1978 at the very young age of 56. My father is still alive and healthy and lives in Lake Forest, California. The other woman in the picture was my mother's best friend, Terry Brooks. She was the wife of Lt. Col. **Harold Brooks**, who is also deceased. Anyway, thanks for a blast from the past! ...The aforementioned photo of the Dancing Ladies was furnished to us by **Gene Aenchbacher**. **Ward Allen**, who took the photo, has informed us the individual in the photo who we identified as Sheriff Corbin is actually

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Sheriff Aenchbacher. Sorry Gene, thanks Ward!

From **Jimbo Shumake** - -I was surprised but most happy to see my letter on page 13 (of the July newsletter), with my sincere memories and thoughts, regarding my assignment on Kadena AFB. One thing not mentioned was my duty first with the 19th BW, 93rd Bomb Sqdn, on the other side of the field. I was mostly ignored because my B-29 flight time and Senior Navigator status exceeded all but the senior officers. I was shuffled over to the 307th BW. They gladly welcomed me and I helped **Col. Wilson** and **Bill Holden** with celestial navigation. They, of course, went on into B-47's and knew

more about the duties of their highly qualified navigators....A letter of condolence was sent to Maj. Holden's last address in Florida to his family. I trust they will now know some of the other things he accomplished while on active duty....In closing, best wishes and success in the newsletter in keeping us all informed.

From **Bev Minnick**. In March we received a letter and donation from **Roger M**

Grommesch asking if we had patches for the 307th - we sent him the sheet we made for the back cover of our History Book and told him we didn't have the actual patches. The sheet contained photo reproductions of the wing patch and all the squadron patches. Then, in August Grommesch sent us a set of patches he had made up -eleven including the wing patch -made in silk and they are beautiful! Thank you Roger for a beautiful and thoughtful effort. We intend to frame them - under glass - and carry them to the reunion in Vegas. Grommesch mentioned he had some extras if anyone is interested, contact him on E-mail jorog@frontiernet.net or (952) 435-7105. Roger Grommesch - 409 Summit Lane - Burnsville, MN 55337-4050.

Few of us need to be reminded of the diversity of weather encountered in Lincoln, Nebraska. We all remember minus 15 degree and plus 100 degree days out on the flightline, and windy days when the windsock was replaced by a ball and chain. For the past several years, Lincoln and eastern Nebraska has suffered from a deficit of rain...however, that situation changed drastically in the last

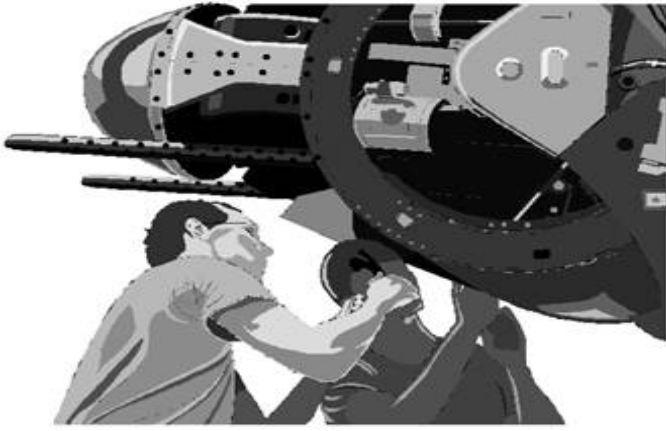


week of August when in one day's time, Lincoln received over eight inches of rain. Wally Whitehurst sent in the nearby photo that was taken of the flood at 48th and R Streets. The experience depicted in the photo most certainly should have qualified the driver to become an Admiral in the Nebraska Navy!

Out there on the Web at www.megspace.com/politics/greenham/index.htm, a very dedicated Brit has lovingly put together an extensive web site devoted to **Greenham-Common AB** in the UK. Those of you who spent any time at Greenham will find it to be of interest, and you may be able to contribute to the site. This site was brought to our attention by **Allen H Goldblatt**, who was a permanent party member at Greenham, working in support of the 307th contingent there. Allen is an associate member of our organization and has contributed numerous photos to the Greenham site. In addition he is active with the Sampson AFB reunion group.

Jarvis "Flip" Latham tells us he will make it to our next reunion in Las Vegas. Others who have been in touch with us recently are Richard Roberts, Laurie Buntun, Bruce Bradfield, Jerry Lanning, Jim White, Bill Schwob, Les Shobe, Stan States, Wally Czewik, and Don Fudge.

Treasurer's Report			
307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association			
Ending Balance from last report May 16, 2002:		\$2,479.79	
General Fund Balance		Expenses	Deposits
			\$2,479.79
Expenses:			
Postage	308.20		
Supplies	17.55		
Admin Expense	31.50		
Printing	700.86		
	1058.11		-1058.11
			1421.68
Income:			
Donations		1071.00	
Ft Worth reunion seed & income		4500.00	
Interest on account		18.58	
		5589.58	+ 5589.58
Ending Balance October 15, 2002			7,011.26
Tony Minnick, Treasurer			



The Chief's Corner

by Ernie Pence
PRESSING ISSUES

One bright sunny day, a Crew Chief was caught up on all of the required duties related to a B-47. This fine day the flight schedule was light, the breeze was light, the work load light, one of those few and far between days of yore.

The only thing on the bird's agenda for the day was a little BNS work to be cleared up. No problem, that's what coffee-drinking specialists were for. There had to be some way to get them to the line from time to time. Our laid back Chief, never one to squander time, set about the simple tasks one saves for the uncluttered days.

Off to the cockpit with clean cloth and a bottle of canopy cleaner. He prepared to do battle with the grease-penciled radio frequencies one always found on the inside of the canopy. These were the byproduct of short memored Copilots, that were either too poor to purchase small notebooks or forgot them in their lockers. They were also the same guys you would see facing port coordinating star shoots with the Navigator, who was shooting the same shot while facing starboard. God we loved celestial nav at night over the ocean! All this risk for the 4 hours required to draw your flight pay!

Having returned the light of day to the backseater, the Chief turned to his other visual enemy, "The 600 MPH Gnat." Low level attacks in the summer months, would see these minuscule insects stretched a foot and a half, a quarter inch wide, adhered to the windscreen and the forward third of the canopy, as if baked on by the eternal fires of hell! Copious amounts of cleaner, a ton of elbow grease, and the judicious application of a non-scratching jackhammer was the order of the day.

The Bird was new to the fleet, a 51 model with a sliding canopy. Damn it, don't get ahead of me here folks. You're right, this chief was less than totally familiar with this model. He unlatches same, moves actuator handle to aft position, canopy proceeds aft as desired. He returns handle to intermediate position; he leans out over the windscreen and sets about his task.

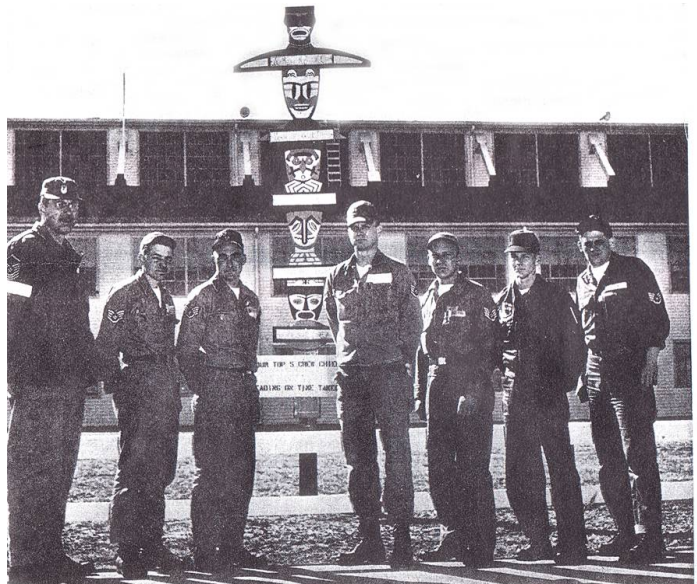
Due to the exigencies of the design flaws in the 51 model of

the B-47E, one must always place the canopy actuator handle in the full open position. Actuators not so positioned, will allow a continual seepage of hydraulic fluid and pressure, to the close canopy side of the system. As our stalwart defender of world peace is diligently pursuing his self-assigned duties, the canopy has now transferred to the sneak and creep mode. Like a VC in elephant grass, it surreptitiously closes the gap between itself and the intended victim.

An innocent nudge in the back is felt; the victim pauses and glances aft. Odd, the canopy that close! Now it is no longer a nudge, but a stealth device that has transformed into a vise! He opens his mouth to call for assistance; in one smooth movement it squeezes the breath of life out of our trapped mate and renders oral pleas inaudible! This device has one upped the vaunted Anaconda!

With all alternatives seemingly beyond the realm of his abilities, our breathless one sees an elbow resting on the stored autopilot, with a hand dangling in a partially open A/C's map drawer at the bottom of the instrument panel. With the power of a drowning man, our astute friend with one final burst of desperation kicks the drawer shut.

An A&E man now is transformed from a casual observer of other tasks, into a raging bull seeking blood, that must divert to the rescue mode. After our hapless Chief recovers, one of the old hands explains that one never ever puts the canopy handle in the neutral position. Of late I have wondered if this dispenser of technical lore, is the guy that shut his own head in a 53 model with the clamshell type canopy. He was so well versed in the canopy designs of Mr. Boeing, one just wonders.



CHIEFS on Lincoln AFB pose by the new totem poles recently erected to honor the crew chief who has the er of on-time take-offs. SMSgt Lewis F. Miller, left, is SSgt. E. Veenstra of the 98th Bomb Wing "C" Section, 8th Bomb Wing "C" Section which has the highest per-time take-offs, 93 per cent. The crew chiefs are, left to T. Wulfkuhl of the 98th Bomb Wing "B" Section, SSgt. Robert L. Huffman of the 98th Bomb Wing "C" Section, SSgt. K. E. Miller, top man on the totem pole, of the 98th Bomb Wing "C" Section, SSgt. E. Veenstra of the 98th Bomb Wing "C" Section, SSgt. H. D. Mosser of the 307th Wing "C" Section and SSgt. Leo D. Finfinger of the 307th Bomb Wing "C" Section. These men truly prove that "Peace Is Our Profession." (ISO Photo by TSgt. James Dunlap)

Crew Chief's Totem Pole – Info Needed

Most of us remember the Totem Pole in front of Base Ops. Its purpose was to display the names of the 98th and 307th Crew Chiefs whose birds had the best launch performance. To have one's name at the Top of

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

the Totem Pole was a mark of superior distinction and recognition of performance.

For several years we have cast for material so we could tell the story of the Totem Pole in our Wing History, but unfortunately, our nets have come up virtually empty. The only thing we found was the nearby picture in the 3 April 1959 Jet Scoop, accompanied by a short article giving the names of the most recent leading crew chiefs as determined by the 818th Division Commander, Col Corbin.

Sooo, if you, the reader, can come up with old photos, articles, or recalled memories, please provide them to us so we can flesh out this important element of our Wing's heritage.

551st Strategic Missile Squadron Association
2890 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx, NY 10465-2231
(718) 792-2360

Email: SMS551@aol.com

Founding Members: Joe Brown, Bob Bunch, Ken Fisher, Bill Jeas, Don Luther, Ron Resh, Ken Smith, Walt Smith

The events of Sept. 11th have left a mark on Americans. There has been a move across our nation to find 'lost' friends. One major communications company for years used the motto "Reach out and touch somebody." And that is exactly what I am trying to do.

Thirty months ago I started reaching out, trying to find former military buddies. Being an Air Force vet I remembered the interesting times I had as a member of a SAC Combat Crew. Yes, as a teen these long tours of duties away from family and friends made you lonely, but then I remembered that I was with my 'new' family, other crewmembers. It was indeed a first class team, something to be proud of. A team that was needed for the hottest time of the Cold War. A team that helped maintained our freedom that we still enjoy today.

Most of you in the 307th will remember the 551st Strategic Missile Squadron. The unit was in existence for only four years, 1961 to 1965, at Lincoln AFB, in Nebraska, and was one of six Atlas "F" ICBM units. These were the first American long range missiles to be housed below ground. The unit in its short time had its share of line of duty fatalities.

Yes, September 11th changed us, but now I need your help to try to find my former buddies. So far over four hundred members have been accounted for, our first reunion is in the planning process as you read this. Since I have retired from the New York City Fire Dept., I have made this my full time assignment. There are not too many more years for some of these guys to live; I know that nearly 80 of the 400 plus members accounted for have passed away. The youngest former member today would be in their late 50's and the oldest could be over 85. Some have moved several times after leaving the service making almost impossible to locate them.

We are now looking forward to our first reunion. The reunion will be held at the Cornhusker Hotel in downtown Lincoln, Nebr. between Wednesday, April 23, 2003 and Saturday, April 26, 2003. Our mailing address is: 551st S.M.S. Association, POB # 158, Bronx, N.Y. 10465.

Ken Fisher
 President

Visit Our Web Site: <http://members.tripod.com/sms551association/index.html>

New Book!

Boeing B-47 Stratojet, True Stories of the Cold War in the Air, by Mark Natola

Author Mark Natola is Secretary of the B-47 Stratojet Association, and is a medical researcher in Hanover, New Hampshire. This book is heartily recommended to anyone with B-47 interest.

"Boeing B-47 Stratojet, True Stories of the Cold War in the Air" is a collection of true, mostly never-before-told, first person stories about some incredible experiences with the radical B-47 airplane, its fascinating roles in perhaps preventing a much-feared World War III and in launching the world into the modern jet transport age.

True Stories is a tribute to the thousands of people in industry and in the Air Force who made the program such an outstanding success. This applies especially to those in the Strategic Air Command and their families who often sacrificed a very great deal to make the B-47 program the awesome powerhouse that it was. This comes into even sharper focus when one "reads" the unspoken words between the lines in many of the stories. We honor and salute those dedicated people.

Fifty-six authors with intimate connections to the B-47 have written 63 individual stories. The authors range from amateurs to professionals; from the experimental test pilots who flew the first flights, to airmen who maintained the airplanes, to combat crewmen who flew the sometimes-dangerous reconnaissance and airborne alert missions, to Air Force Generals who commanded large segments of the huge 2040 airplane B-47 fleet. The authors include engineers who helped design and improve the XB-47 and the many B-47 variants that followed.

The stories in this book range from "by the book" to "by the seat of the pants," from tragic and heart wrenching to hilarious, and from deadly serious to lighthearted. Some have sad and others have happy endings. Some are scary - like being blinded and hit by the flash and shock wave of an exploding nuclear bomb. They are informative, educational, enjoyable, historical - and true. General Curtis LeMay once wrote: "In my opinion, first person accounts are historically more reliable than most historians' accounts." These stories are such first person accounts. At the same time the reader will realize that 40 or more years have passed and memory of some details may be clouded.

Cost for signed copies is \$35 plus \$4 shipping/handling. Checks made payable to Mark Natola can be sent to:
 B-47 Stratojet Book, c/o Mark Natola, 23 Oak Ridge Road, W. Lebanon, NH 03784.

Finally, for anyone interested, author Natola also has a video tape available about the XB-47. Several years ago, he interviewed Bob Robbins and James Fraser, both Boeing experimental test pilots who flew the XB-47. The interview was conducted in a television studio and they discussed the Phase I and III test flights of the XB-47. Run time is approximately 50 minutes. The tapes are available for \$20 plus \$4 shipping/handling.

The Air Force Song **It's History, and it's Verses**

Robert MacArthur Crawford, who wrote this song, was born July 27, 1899, in Dawson City, Alaska, and spent his childhood in Fairbanks. In 1921, he enrolled in Princeton University, N.J., where his main interest was music.

Following graduation in 1925, he studied voice in France and upon returning to the United States, he received a graduate fellowship at New York's prestigious Julliard School of Music. Because of the scope of his travels, Crawford, an accomplished pilot, purchased an airplane to fly to engagements; Time magazine referred to him as the "Flying Baritone."

In 1938, Liberty magazine sponsored a contest for a spirited, enduring composition to become the official Army Air Corps song. Of 757 scores submitted, Crawford's was selected as the winner by a committee of Air Force wives. When General Henry "Hap" Arnold heard the song in July 1939, he hoped that singing this song would "lend energy to tired minds and bodies. The song was officially introduced at the Cleveland Air Races Sept. 2 1939. Fittingly, Crawford sang at its first public performance.



When the United States entered World War II, Crawford became a pilot in the Air Transport Command. In 1946 he reverted to inactive status and returned to music - on March 12, 1961, he passed away in NY City; he was a LTC in the USAF Reserves.

In October 1978, "Crawford Hall" with studio, practice, and administrative facilities became home for the 564th Air Force Band at Langley AFB, Va. The building was dedicated to the memory of Robert M. Crawford to recognize the musical legacy of the Air Force's most famous composer.

The fourth verse, "A Toast to the Host" is a part of the original Air Force Song. -Many times this is sung as a separate piece. This is the verse that commemorates those who have fallen in the name of our service and our great country. This is the reason for the difference in melody and the somber tone. We are recalling those heroes of the past in our forging of the future.

Col. David R. Scott and Lt. Col. James B. Irwin carried the first page of the score, which Crawford submitted to the selection committee in July 1939, to the surface of the Moon July 30, 1971, aboard the Apollo 15 "Falcon" lunar module. Interestingly, at the moment the "Falcon" blasted off the surface of the Moon with Scott and Irwin on board, Maj. Alfred M. Worden broadcast a rendition of the "Air Force

Song" to the world. Worden had a tape recorder aboard the "Endeavor" command module that was in orbit around the Moon. Scott, Irwin and Worden comprised the first and only "All-Air Force" Apollo crew and arranged to take the page of sheet music with them as a tribute to Crawford and the United States Air Force. The song is an important Air Force tradition. When the song was written in 1938, what we know of today as the U.S. Air Force was part of the United States Army. We were a corps of the Army, just like the Infantry, Artillery, and Armor are today. Because of that, the original lyrics of the last line were "... nothing can stop the Army Air Corps."

Official Song of the Air Corps **(The Air Force Song)** **By Robert Crawford**

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the Sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,
At'em boys, give'er the gun (give'er the gun now!)
Down we dive spouting our flame from under
Off with one helluva roar!
We live in fame or go down in flame, hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Minds of men fashioned a crate of thunder,
Sent it high into the blue;
Hands of men blasted the world asunder;
How they lived God only knew!
Souls of men dreaming of skies to conquer
Gave us wings, ever to soar!
With scouts before and bombers galore, hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Off we go into the wild sky yonder,
Hear the wings level and true.
If you'd live to be a gray-haired wonder
keep the nose out of the blue!
Flying men guarding the nation's border,
We'll be there, followed by more!
In echelon we carry on, hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Here's a toast to the host
Of those who love the vastness of the sky,
To a friend we will send a message of his brothermen who fly
We drink to those who gave their all of old,
Then down we roar to score the rainbow's pot of gold
A toast to the host of men we boast, the U.S. Air Force

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the Sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,
At'em boys, give'er the gun (give'er the gun now!)
Down we dive spouting our flame from under
Off with one helluva roar!
We live in fame or go down in flame, hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

First Flight in a B-47

By Lt. Colonel Andy Labosky, USAF (RET)
376th BW

I have noticed that many associated with the B-47 Stratojet, such as crewmembers, groundcrew, relatives, support agencies and bean counters tend to immediately remember negative thoughts or experiences with the aircraft. (The use of the word "aircraft" refers generally to a weight carrying, flying structure for navigation in the air. The word "airplane" refers to a wandering aircraft. So I use "aircraft" when referring to the B-47.) We should remind people that the B-47 was the first large, jet powered, very high performance aircraft design that crewmembers had to learn how to fly. Additionally, the maintenance team had to deal with new technology and surprises, and learn new techniques. The Boeing engineers were continually improving designs and reacting to change requests from the using commands. The commands were pushing the performance of the design to determine the limits. The aircraft was not a "defective" design nor was it difficult to fly. It was just a difficult transition from slow propeller driven aircraft to a high performance, very fast jet powered aircraft. The B-47 was a very high performance aircraft using the state of the art technology at the time and was at the leading edge of aeronautical engineering. Since it was a high performance aircraft, it was not forgiving of inattention or misuse. We all were in a learning phase. We should remind the public that it is a beautiful design, ahead of its time. It was flown by highly trained, very professional crewmembers. It was maintained by very professional and dedicated crewchiefs and groundcrew members. It was designed by very experienced and innovative engineers and a company willing to risk its reputation in building the aircraft. Only politics and lack of funding led to the early retirement of this fine design. As with all new technology and designs, the progress of this design had growing pains. So when we write stories or speak of the B-47, we should sort our thoughts and refine our comments about this aircraft. We were probably all pleased to be a part of aviation history and the Boeing B-47 Stratojet.

I would like to share my impressions of my first flight in the B-47E at McConnell AFB, Kansas. When I was in High School I first noticed the B-47 in the *Flying* and *Air Trails* magazines and I immediately liked the looks of the aircraft. I began collecting articles about the B-47. After Aviation Cadet training at Harlingen AFB in Texas and advanced Navigator

training at Mather AFB in California, I was able to choose my assignment, and I chose the B-47E. I arrived at McConnell AFB in May 1960 and started the Combat Crew Training (CCT) course. During advanced Navigator training at Mather AFB, we were training on the actual bombing/navigation equipment that we would be using in the B-47. At the CCT school, we were trained in the systems of the B-47 and were teamed with a pilot and copilot.

The big day arrived when we were to fly our first mission as a crew. The pilots had already flown transition flights. Enroute to our assigned aircraft, we were treated to a tour of rows and rows of B-47s quietly baking in the Kansas sunlight. All were neatly lined up in parking slots, some waiting for the student crews and their instructors. We found our assigned aircraft and unloaded our baggage, briefcases, lunches and parachutes and placed them in a neat line in front of the wing. The B-47 was impressive and sleek but much larger than I had expected.



B-47E No. 53-6244, before the 307th BW donated it to the Air Force Museum. Photo by James Villa.

This was the time of the three hour long preflights. During the preflight, the crew opened up most of the panels and hatches and checked everything possible. This was in Kansas at 105 degrees on 20 July 1960.

The aircraft was a wonder of electrical wires, hydraulics and fuel lines. During the preflight, I noticed that there were fuel leaks from the belly of the aircraft and I advised the crew chief (the real-regular one) that I observed fuel leaks. He stated that the leaks were normal and so many drops per hour were normal. I then noticed cracks in

the aluminum skin on the wings. I also noted that holes were drilled into the cracks. Again the crew chief stated that the cracks were normal and the holes were drilled to stop the spread of the cracks. I noted the wrinkled skin in the tail section and decided to ask about that later.

The crew consisted of Captain Redderson, Lt. Moen and Lt. Labosky. The Instructor Pilot was Captain Watson and the Instructor Navigator was Captain Copner. Captain Lewis was an additional pilot. The aircraft was 51-7080 and the callsign was Softy 42.

Loading the baggage, flight lunches, coffee and water bottles and briefcases was a backbreaking task. Navigator bags usually weighed over thirty pounds. When I crawled forward to the navigator seat, I noted that there was no toilet paper installed at the relief can located under the pilot station. Preflighting the navigator equipment was a very precise task but the item that irritated me the most was having to bend over the ejection seat

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upside down and look through a small plastic window on the hatch to view a pin inserted and eighth of an inch into a cam that kept the ejection hatch secured to the aircraft. The window was usually covered with grime.

While I was upside down, I checked to ensure that two quart size paper containers (burp cups) were installed under the navigator side table. The containers were important since they were used for airsick purposes and also to store urine. The Pilot and copilot had relief tubes but the navigator did not have one at his station. The Instructor Navigator sat on a step in the crawlway to the left of the navigator. Using the paper container for relief was difficult because of being strapped in a parachute, attached to an ejection seat and someone was usually sitting beside you. The filled paper containers were placed on the cork covering of the hatch, near your feet, and you hoped that you did not accidentally kick them over. One other item that I noticed during preflight was an ashtray welded onto the large curved refueling pipe located over my right knee. One technique during preflight was to place certain canned food items (IF-10) between amplifiers on my left side bombing system electronics rack. The amplifiers were full of hot vacuum tubes that generated a lot of heat. (This was before transistorized units. Most everything was analog/mechanical.)

The interior had a special odor consisting of a mixture of old sweat, JP-4 fuel, oil, paint, urine, bits of flight lunches, hot electronics and tobacco smoke.

The crawlway located to the left and below the pilots had sling positions for three persons to occupy during takeoff and landings. An Instructor Pilot could sit on a step beside and below the copilot during flight. Also stored in the crawlway was all of the baggage, briefcases and flight lunches. Changing crew positions during flight was an acrobatic exercise. There is a lot of truth to the saying that the people on the crews were close knit. Unknown to a lot of civilians was the fact that the outer crew entry hatch was one of two hatches. Within the cockpit section was a sliding pressure door on the floor that also had to be shut and locked before taxi.

The takeoff was exciting. The pilot advanced the throttles to 100 percent power and the navigator would count down the seconds to brake release. The pilot initiated the water/alcohol injection and the engines would seem to double the decibel output. After turning on a few switches and performing timing, I watched the altimeter to indicate that we were more than 200 feet above the terrain. The downward ejection seat and parachute needed at least 200 feet of terrain clearance and at least 120 knots of airspeed to work.

The climb startled me because of the high rate of ascent. I was pleased that the BNS was performing in flight better than I had expected. I was also pleased that it was relatively quiet in the nose area. Also happy that we were now at altitude and the air system was cooling us to a reasonable temperature. The

helmet was already feeling heavy and the oxygen mask exhalation valve was sticking because of the sweat that had collected in the mask.

We were scheduled to perform a radar navigation leg to the Lake Superior area, conduct air refueling with a KC-97 student crew, do three radar bomb scoring runs on Hastings bomb plot, and then back to McConnell AFB for seven instrument approaches. The flight lasted six hours.

In order to rendezvous with the tanker, we would be cruising at Flight Level 310 and the tanker would be traveling toward the Air Refueling Control Point (ARCP) at 15000 feet, and be at maximum power. We would track towards the radar beacon of the tanker at 430 knots true air speed and would start to descend and slow to the tanker speed. We would start a speed slow down schedule a few miles behind the tanker and about 1000 feet below.

Air refueling with a KC-97 was not a comfortable experience. The first up front view of the tail and boom of the KC-97 was interesting until the boomer waved the boom a few inches directly above my overhead window and made me flinch. The pilot made a few connects and disconnects while feeling for the best refueling position. I made my instructor nervous by practicing the movements required for the ejection sequence. We started to take on fuel for about fifteen minutes.

The KC-97 was at max power and we were near a stall. As we took on fuel for about fifteen minutes, we were getting heavier and closer to stall speed. We requested the tanker to "toboggan" so we could gain a few knots while descending. (Later missions, when refueling with a KC-135, it was difficult to keep up with the fast tanker.)

The bomb runs went as planned with good scores.

Over McConnell AFB, I was surprised at the fast descent during the penetration and approach. We made seven instrument approaches and touch and gos in the heat of Kansas and I contemplated the value of the burp cups.

After landing, we went to debriefing and critique. Then I had time to consume my flight lunch.



The Dog Ate My Homework!

Well sort of...but not quite...we've all heard that excuse...I had it all worked out in my head, but I never got it wrote down...etc, etc.

Well, it seems that the article planned for this space, and inscribed only in this writer's mind several months ago, has plum disappeared! Perhaps the fact that the raw notes, loaned to a defrocked Alaskan bush pilot for vetting, fell victim to the overly active appetite of his renegade lead sled dog, had something to do with it. In any event, the original aviation related article scheduled for this space is being supplanted by more educational and pedagogical material designed to increase the aeronautical awareness of all...

Stuff Pilots Need to Know

Airspeed - Speed of an airplane. Deduct 25% when listening to a Navy pilot.

Angle of Attack - Pick-up lines that pilots use.

Bank - The folks who hold the lien on most pilots' cars.

Barrel Roll - Sport enjoyed at squadron picnics, usually after the barrels are empty.

Carburetor Icing - A phenomenon happening to aero club pilots at exactly the same time they run out of gas.

Cone of Confusion - An area about the size of New Jersey located near the final approach beacon at an airport.

Crab - The squadron Ops Officer.

Dead Reckoning - You reckon correctly, or you are.

Engine Failure - A condition which occurs when all fuel tanks become filled with air.

Firewall - Section of the aircraft specially designed to let heat and smoke enter the cockpit.

Glide Distance - Half the distance from an airplane to the nearest emergency landing field.

Hydroplane - An airplane designed to land on a wet runway, 20,000 feet long.

IFR - A method of flying by needle and ripcord.

Lean Mixture - Non-alcoholic beer.

Nanosecond - Time delay built into the stall warning sys-

tem.

Parasitic Drag - A pilot who bums a ride back and complains about the service.

Range - Usually about 30 miles beyond the point where all fuel tanks fill with air.

Rich Mixture - What you order at the other guy's promotion party.

Roger - Used when you're not sure what else to say.

Roll - The first design priority for a fully loaded KC-135A.

Service Ceiling - Altitude at which cabin crews can serve drinks.

Spoilers - The Federal Aviation Administration.



Stall - Technique used to explain to the bank why your car payment is late.

Steep Bank - Banks that charge pilots more than 10% interest.

Tactics - What a clock sounds like when it needs fixing.

Tail Wind - Results from eating beans, often causing Oxygen deficiency in the immediate vicinity.

Turn & Bank Indicator - An instrument highly ignored by pilots.

Useful Load - Volumetric capacity of the aircraft, disregarding weight of cargo.

VOR - Radio navigation aid, named after the VORtex effect of pilots trying to home in on it.

Yankee - Any pilot that asks Houston tower to "Say again".

Zero - Style and artistry points earned for a gear-up landing.

Safety Tips

The following safety tips from Daedalian Foundation are excerpts from a Royal Flying Corps monthly safety report of December 1917. The report was signed "C. St. John-Culbertson, Royal Flying Corps Colonel" and was dated 21 December 1917.

Avoidable Accidents

A B.E. 2 stalled and crashed during an artillery exercise. The pilot had been struck on the head by the semaphore of his observer who was signaling to the gunners.

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While low flying in a Shorthorn the pilot crashed into the top deck of a horse drawn bus near Stonehenge.

Accident Brief

No. 847 Squadron , 19 December 1917
Aircraft type - Spotter Balloon J17983,
Total solo - 107.00
Pilot - Capt. * * * , Solo in type - 32.10

Captain * * * of the Hussars, a balloon observer, unfortunately allowed the spike of his full-dress helmet to impinge against the envelope of his balloon. There was a violent explosion and the balloon carried out a series of fantastic and uncontrollable maneuvers, while rapidly emptying itself of gas. The pilot was thrown clear and escaped injury as he was lucky enough to land on his head.

Remarks - This pilot was flying in full-dress uniform because he was the Officer of the Day. In consequence it has been recommended that pilots will not

fly during periods of duty as Officer of the Day.

Captain * * * has requested an exchange posting to the Patroville 'Alps, a well known mule unit of the Basques.

Flying Safety Tips

To take a turn the pilot should always remember to sit upright, otherwise he will increase the banking of the aeroplane. He should NEVER lean over.

Every pilot should understand the serious consequences of trying to turn with the engine off. It is much safer to crash into a house when going forward than to sideslip or stall a machine with engine troubles.

Passengers should always use safety belts, as the pilot may start stunting without warning. Never release the belt while in the air, or when nosed down to land.

Upon the detection of a knock, grind, rattle or squeak, the engine should be at once stopped. Knocking or grinding

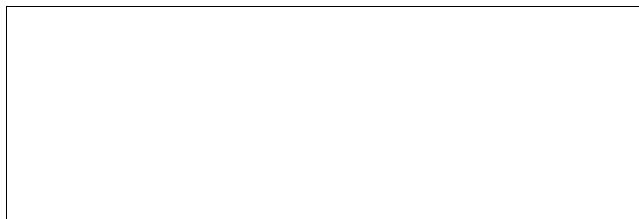
accompanied by a squeak indicates binding and a lack of lubricant.

Watch That First Step

"It was conceded by all that the pilot had accomplished a brilliant piece of work in landing his disabled machine without damage under the circumstances. It is not with intent to reflect less credit upon his airmanship, but it must be noted that he is a well experienced aviator with over 40 total hours in the air, embracing a wide variety of machines, and this was his seventh forced landing due to complete failure of the engine."

"It was doubly unfortunate that upon alighting from his machine he missed the catwalk on the lower airfoil and plunged both legs through the fabric, straddling a rib, from which he received a grievous personal injury."

"Some thought should be devoted to a means of identifying wing-traversing catwalks to assist aviators in disembarking from their various machines."



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