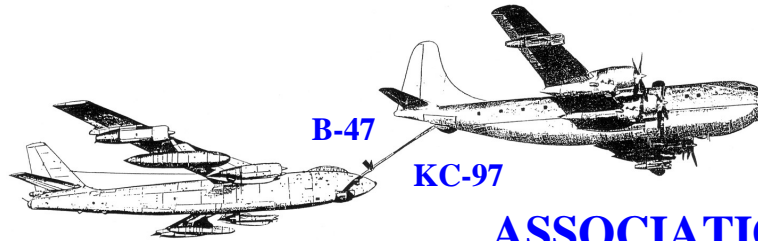


# 307TH BOMB WING



## ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 40

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

JULY 2003

## The Chairman's Column What I Did This Summer

...or, more accurately, what YOU will do this summer (I hope). In between your forays to visit grandchildren, old friends, America's sights, or foreign shores, I hope you'll take a few moments to reflect on the following and give us your thoughts on one or more of them.

1. **The Reunion.** Some wag once observed, "Flexibility is the key to airpower and indecision is the key to flexibility." While I know you're all airpower enthusiasts, I don't think of you as indecisive. But Vern Biaett, our esteemed 2004 Reunion Chairman, has received, at last tally, responses from only 39, count them, 39 members expressing an intent to attend next year's reunion in Las Vegas (3-7 May). We're not collecting registration fees yet and it might be too early for some to make a firm commitment, but a nonbinding statement of intent? How hard can that be? Las Vegas. Mild weather season. Right in the heart of the Strip. Shows. Tours. Possible jackpots. Camaraderie with old friends. What's not to like? See Vern's article in this newsletter for more details and PLEASE let him know if you're planning to attend, by telephone, mail, e-mail or carrier pigeon. The better fix we have on probable attendees, the better can the committee plan YOUR reunion.

2. **The Website.** Members' comments on our website have been uniformly positive, which means we're off to a good start. We want to continue to grow and tweak the site to meet YOUR needs, so we need YOUR ideas. Many of you have experience with other websites and some of you might even run your own. What features of other sites would enhance the value of ours? For example, we carved out and funded a page called "Bulletin" with the idea that, down the line, we might develop some distributed or even interactive information exchange capabilities. What should that look like? Straight Bulletin Board? ListServ? Moderated or unmoderated? There are lots of options and lots of models. Some are cheap and easy. Some are pricey and may require more time and resources than we have available. Please give us your thoughts. Send your suggestions to me (petetodd@aol.com), Mike Gingrich (mikegingri@cs.com), and/or RT and Dru Boykin (rtb832@msn.com).

3. **Future Reunion.** Those who attended the Fort Worth Reunion will recall that Las Vegas won out very narrowly over a cruise option for the 2004 Reunion. My own unscientific

view of the reason for that outcome is that Las Vegas is a specific, recognized place, while the cruise was an undefined and potentially expensive process. Even at that, it was a close vote. Based on those results, it's obvious that a lot of members would favor a cruise (while we're still able to walk up the gangplank). Without prejudging a decision at our next business meeting, I believe we ought to present our members a specific, well-articulated option (or options) for a cruise as one of the candidates for the 2006 Reunion. There's a lot of information out there and a lot of cruise lines, destinations and accommodations. Therefore, I'm soliciting volunteers to serve on an ad hoc committee to study costs, options, pros and cons, good deals, etc., and to come up with a proposal to present to the membership in May of 2004. Which of you advocates who argued so passionately for a cruise will step up and put a compelling story together for our next business meeting?

That's your summer homework, kiddies. None of it should take too much of your time and some of it can actually be fun. Best of all, it will contribute to the welfare of the association and the enjoyment of its members. Wendy and I wish you a safe and enjoyable summer.

Pete Todd

[www.307bwassoc.org](http://www.307bwassoc.org)

## Donations

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

Clark Peterson  
Joseph Herman  
Ruth Grimwood  
Royal Schrubbe  
James Villa  
Donald B Ralph

## 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@att.net

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

## Las Vegas Reunion, May 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004 The Ninth Standup

IN THE BEGINNING – the spring of 1987- Betty Pelletier started spreading the word the ex-307th Bomb Wing guys and gals living in Arizona should get together in Green Valley, Arizona. Next thing I heard was that Charlie Ness was coming from Seattle, the Shulgins were coming from Florida and Bob Crooks was going to drive his Jeep across 25 miles of treacherous dirt mountain roads from Sierra Vista. About 50 of us showed up. They came from everywhere. What a blast!



At that get together we heard that Billy Williams had a group in Nebraska and that the tanker people had a group in Michigan. Talk, more talk, and lo and behold!... In April of 1988 about 400 of us were at a reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada. There, the idea of the 307TH BOMB WING B-47/KC-97 ASSOCIATION was conceived and born shortly thereafter with IRS approval as an official non-profit association.

At the 1988 reunion General Randolph in his Banquet speech talked about how the world is changing and read a list from 'Dear Abby' of items we use in our everyday life and can't live without that did not exist 20 years ago. Believe me, Las Vegas has made many very significant upgrades in the past 15 years. At our first reunion the only planned activities were the banquet and the business meeting. People found plenty to occupy their time within walking distance, and we were at the last hotel, the now deconstructed Hacienda, on the south end of the strip.

Our reunion hotel, the Imperial Palace, is very near the center of the strip with more things to do than you can imagine within walking distance, as you can see from the nearby map of the strip. From the low end (my opinion) to shopping at the famous Fashion Show Mall to the Roller Coaster ride on top of the high rise Stratosphere Hotel (not me) to the circus acts at the Circus Circus Hotel. Don't forget the Fremont Street, two block long, overhead light show in downtown Las Vegas.

Since 1988, my wife and I have had enjoyed many short vacations in Las Vegas including the Air Force 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion. We usually see one of the hotel shows on each vacation. At strip hotels we have seen the White Stallions from Austria, the Follies at the Tropicana, Liberace, Barbara Mandell, Michael Crawford, plus many lounge shows. We did not have previous reservations. We got our tickets from our hotel Booking Office. The Imperial Place has a Booking Office to serve you.

At this reunion I'm going to do something I have not done before in Las Vegas. I'm going to put a quarter in a slot machine!

We are still working the agenda for the reunion, and plan to give you a complete rundown in the forthcoming November issue of this newsletter. Then, in mid-February, the last newsletter issue before the reunion, will contain registration forms and all the info you'll need to join us for The Ninth Standup in Las Vegas. Those of you with computers can look to the website at 307bwassoc.org for breaking news on our reunion plans.

Following this article is information on our hotel and several of the tours under consideration for our participation. You can really help us with our planning by

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(Continued from page 2)

completing and mailing the Reunion Questionnaire found in this issue, or you can also find the form on the website. Or, you can email me at [vbiaett@azwest.net](mailto:vbiaett@azwest.net). We need to know your druthers! This reunion will be something you will always remember.

Vern Biaett  
Reunion Chairman

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**The Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino.** You can go to [www.imperialpalace.com](http://www.imperialpalace.com) on the web and find out all you ever wanted to know about his magnificent facility, but here's a snapshot anyway. The Imperial Palace has 2,600 guestrooms, and is right in the heart of the Strip, within walking distance of the Caesar's Palace Forum Shops, The Mirage, Treasure Island, Hilton Flamingo, and The Venetian. Each room comes equipped with a remote controlled color TV, iron/ironing boards, and a hairdryer. The hotel offers a full menu of amenities and virtually every service you can imagine, with a casino, Olympic pool, different entertainment's, and many restaurants, to boot. Slot players will be in seventh heaven with machines running from a penny to twenty-five bucks a pop. The entertainment front features Legends in Concert, an extravaganza featuring look alike and sound alike performers portraying superstars of yesterday and today...including Elvis! Then there's the Pool Side Luau and Polynesian Revue on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Auto Buffs will enjoy the History on Wheels museum on premises. Dining wise, *Embers*, is open for dinner Wednesday through Sunday. *Seahouse*, is open for dinner Friday through Tuesday. *Pizza Palace*, is open daily for lunch, dinner, and late night meals. *Rib House*, is open for dinner Tuesday through Sunday. *Ming Terrace*, is open daily for dinner and late night meals. Handicapped accessible and non-smoking rooms are subject to availability. Parking is complimentary for overnight guests of the hotel. However, there is no parking at the hotel for RVs, but Circus Circus Hotel & Casino offers a full hookup RV Park on the Strip.

It's virtually guaranteed the Imperial Palace will have something for everyone!

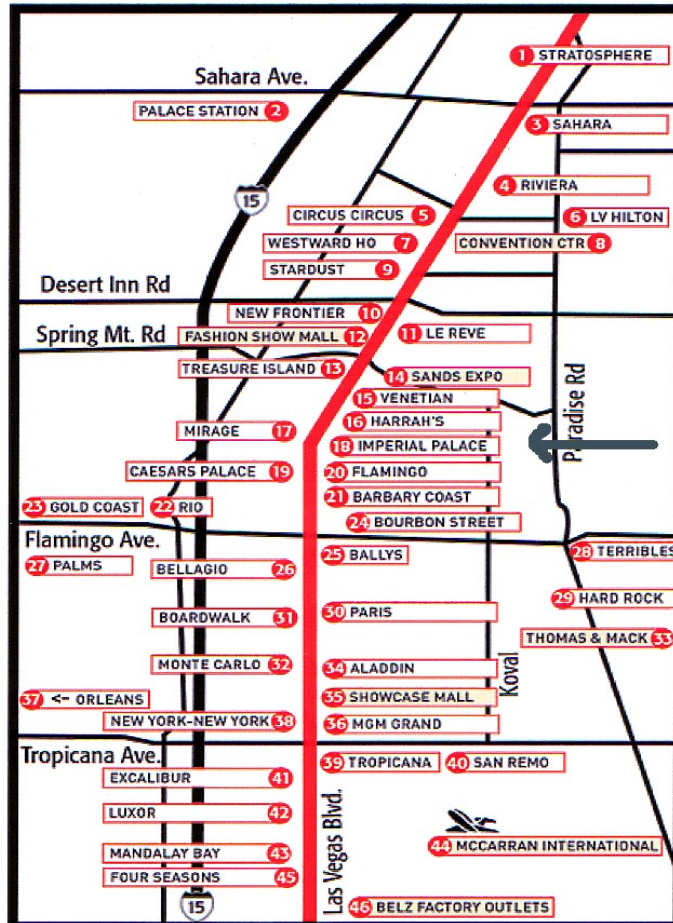
**Hoover Dam Tour.** One of the seven modern wonders of the world. On the way, your guide will entertain you with the history of Hoover Dam. Arrive at the Dam, the Western Hemisphere's highest concrete dam, rising 726 feet above bedrock and 660 feet wide at its base. Enjoy an orientation film on the history of Hoover Dam. The Dam was built to control the sometimes violent flooding of the Colorado River and aided parts of Nevada by offering an inexpensive source of electricity.

**Red Rock Canyon Tour.** A scenic drive through the Red Rocks where you can view the Canyon. Time may be allowed for taking pictures of the beautiful scenery along the way. Enjoy the drive through the 13-mile scenic Red Rock

Loop. See an area once inhabited by Indians and still home to herds of wild horses, burros, and big horn sheep. Enjoy a short stop at the Visitor's Center, where you can take a nature walk on the grounds surrounding the Center. At Old Nevada, see a vivid replica of an old western town. Watch the old-fashioned melodrama in the saloon, followed by the hanging outside. You will also have access to all of the exhibits, a Wax Museum where you will hear Abe Lincoln speak, a Historical Museum, and an Opera House. Enjoy lunch consisting of BBQ Chicken, baked beans, cole slaw, biscuits, and a drink. Time permitting, visit some of the shops.

**City Tour.** First stop in Henderson to visit the Ethel M. Chocolate Factory and Cactus Gardens. Once you've seen how these candies are handcrafted, sample your favorites and bring some home from the gift shop. Then take a quick stroll through the Cactus Garden, blossoming with rare and exotic cacti. Drive by the homes of Wayne Newton and Liberace before you arrive at the Liberace Museum. Tour the museum and see his personal jewel collection, exquisite wardrobe, classic automobiles, custom-made pianos, and other Liberace memorabilia. Take a ride down the Las Vegas Strip into Glitter Gulch, downtown Las Vegas, and hear how Las Vegas came to be what it is today.

Webheads can find absolutely everything that's going on in Las Vegas at [www.lv101.com](http://www.lv101.com).





## Around the Wing

Nothing like starting off this issue with a humble correction! The excellent photo of **Virgil Buie** published in the last issue was wrongly attributed to **Flip Latham**. The photographer in actuality was **Bert Vorchheimer**. Father Vorchheimer has instructed the editor to do penance by saying ten "Hail LeMays", and performing five touch and gos!

From **Gerald Berger**, former member of the 307<sup>th</sup> ARS. After arriving at Lincoln in the summer of 1955, one of two duties were immediately available to a brand new KC-97 Co-Pilot. One was Refueling or Pit Officer, the other was Airdrome Officer (AO to the uninformed). One of my first times as AO revealed this interesting occurrence. A brand new B-52, on the way to who knows where, was cleared to land at Lincoln. Before it landed, all hell broke loose as several staff cars and air police vehicles arrived on the ramp. As the B-52 landed and parked next to base ops, the airplane was surrounded. The hatch opened and the first person off, was a small and familiar figure. That is when I was only one of few Americans who ever saw The Shah of Iran up close. *Fascinating, but what in the world was he doing in a B-52?*

From a retired Air Force patch collector via the 307<sup>th</sup> web-site...I entered the Air Force in 1968 and retired in 1989. I was in POL my whole career and stationed at eleven bases. My last assignment was Eielson AFB Alaska and when we retired we moved to the Charleston area. I started collecting patches in the early 90s but open-heart surgery and a series of strokes slowed me down so I didn't collect for a few years. I only started back into collecting in 1998 and it is difficult to find patches and that was the reason I logged on your website. Jim Perry, MSgt,USAF,Ret, 5028 Hidden Forest Lane, Charleston, South Carolina 29420, Phone 843-207-8739, email MARDWA@msn.com

**Tim Arnold**, son of "**Hap**" **Arnold** of the 372<sup>nd</sup> BS wrote shortly after the death of his father ...Thank you for letting me access your web site, it is quite a wealth of information and a map down memory lane for this 46 year old. Some of the links had old photos of the base and the environs. Wow! The history section of the site was quite interesting too. I scrolled down the dates and saw a ton of names that I remember well. One crash that occurred, on June 18, 1961 was a flight my dad was supposed to be on. Dad was in operations one day, happened to run into Al Mattson and switched trips with Al. You know what happened to that B-47.... Dad felt bad for years about the trade....I heard him talk about it about thirty times over the years. There was also a description of Major Meeks' crash. N.V. Meeks was a great friend of my dad's. I saw Meeks' crash live from our living room at 4303 Carswell Road. I was on split session at General Arnold school and happened to be home, looking toward the flight line at the time from the east side of our house. I saw the plane lift off, it departed 36 and was engulfed in flames and smoke aft of the trailing edge of the wing. A day or so later, dad took my brother and me down to the crash site and looked at the ruins.

It was quite sobering for a first grader--charred bulkheads and stringers...that was all.

I too was a military pilot. I flew F-4Js for the Navy from 1979 to 1982. By the way, I saw a photo marked Grogan, at one of your reunions. Is that Hank Grogan? When I was three and lived in town, I painted our yellow station wagon and our tan brick house with red paint and Captain Grogan ran over and helped my mother clean it all off. Luckily, Dad was on reflex to Upper Heyford at the time and never new what happened!

When I was going through my dad's house I found bombing tables, instrument books, alert checklists, approach plates, high altitude charts with notes and comments about when to start ECM, when to tank and everything. The patch for the 372nd was designed by my dad supposedly; there are lots of those too. He even had formation and tanking photos. I even found a "Horn Button" from the yoke of a B-47. *You can reach Tim Arnold at timothyarnold@msn.com*

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The face of Lincoln AFB as we knew it will soon be almost completely lost from view. Rob Branting, the webmaster of the Lincoln AFB Historical Guide website at [www. Geocities.com/bigrob685/](http://www.Geocities.com/bigrob685/) has informed us of the impending demolition this summer of a number of familiar LAFB buildings. Most of the buildings on the demo list were the cinderblock structures of the 307<sup>th</sup> built in the 1954-56 period. Seems somewhat surprising as these were among the most substantial buildings on base and most in recent years were in productive use. The list includes: Building 1028 – 370<sup>th</sup> BS; 1033 – OMS; 1034 – 372<sup>nd</sup>/424<sup>th</sup>/DCM; 1380 – Dental Clinic; and buildings 1152, 1136, 2270 and 2760. Visit the website given above to see some good pictures and further info on these buildings.

While you are doing your web crawling, visit the Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation at [www.spiritof freedom.org](http://www.spiritof freedom.org). The Foundation soon will take off once again in a reborn Boeing C-97G, as a "Flying Museum of COLD WAR History". They now fly a C-54 Skymaster as a Museum & History of the Berlin Airlift. Only 2 such C-97G's are still airworthy in the world today! Her new name is "ANGEL OF DELIVERANCE" and she now rests in the big historical hangar "B" in Brooklyn NYC at old Floyd Bennett Field. This project is now underway with our all volunteer workforce. Help and support is always welcomed in any way to bring this great vintage prop transport once again back to the skies! To see & hear those 4 P&W 4360's turning in unison once again will be an awesome site to behold!

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**Betty Pelletier** wrote from Green Valley, Arizona to inform us of the death of **Helen Ecelbarger's** son Dick, who was 59, a Navy veteran and a retired computer consultant. His mother, Helen, strongly assisted Betty Pelletier in putting together our first reunion in Las Vegas in 1988, and went on to be the founder and first editor of this newsletter. The Association sends its

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

condolences to Helen and her family.

Those of you around the bomb squadrons in the late 1950s remember **Andy Matyas**, an aircraft commander in the 372<sup>nd</sup> BS. Andy, who spoke Russian fluently, was called upon several times to ride shotgun in Soviet diplomatic flights as they entered the United States. Andy was felled in Vietnam in a rocket attack and you can see a fitting memorial to him at <http://www.virtualwall.org/dm/MatyasAx01a.htm>

Nancy Read Kraft wrote to inform us of the death of her mother, **Wanda Read** in San Antonio on 18 October 2002. Wanda, age 82, passed away of a heart attack while recuperating from successful cancer surgery. She was the widow of Colonel Elkins "Pete" Read, the beloved former commander of the 307<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing, who passed away in 1989. We were fortunate to have Pete and Wanda attend our first reunion in Las Vegas, where Pete regaled his "Shepherders" with tales about the 307<sup>th</sup>'s flexible tail numbering system, and other anecdotes of 307<sup>th</sup> life. Wanda was pleased to note that Pete is interred at Ft Sam Houston, overlooking the golf course, in site number **1307**. You can contact daughter Nancy at 118 Charm Drive, New Braunfels, TX 78132.

**James W "Jimbo" Shumake, Jr.** Glendale AZ, 13 March 2003. Jimbo, age 79, was a member of the 307th on Okinawa and returned with the wing for a brief assignment at Lincoln. He was a frequent contributor to our newsletter, providing old photos and historical information and tales. Old cars and dancing with friend Jackie were his avocations. Several years ago, his son, James W "Tripp" Shumake III, a racing driver, was killed by a hit and run driver. Jimbo did not rest until the perpetrator was caught, tried and convicted a year ago. He led an active life even as he passed away peacefully while watching TV. His daughter, Olivia Templeton, says his membership in our association was very important to him, and she wishes to extend her appreciation to the mem-

bers for the meaningful part they played in his life. The photo below of Jimbo was provided by Olivia, who can be contacted at 21675 N 53<sup>rd</sup> Drive, Glendale, AZ 85308.



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In a more whimsical direction, ...from our file of emails that normally would never see the light of day!

Subj: 307th Reunion Site  
From: Bud Flanik  
To: Mike Gingrich, Hank Grogan,  
Wally Whitehurst

I would like to make a proposal for a future 307th BW Reunion location. Lest you think my proposal is totally frivolous and without merit, be it known that I have taken an informal poll... somewhat limited in scope, and there is total, unanimous concurrence with my suggestion. I would offer we all convene at Palma de Mallorca. Hotels are open to proposals but we would hold mandatory daily formations at Mam's. 1000 Hrs. Promptly for greasy eggs and whatever.

Hank and Wally (my informal poll) gave resounding AYE's to this suggestion. Bet we could get a lot of the old drunks, er, gang to attend one held there. The only problem might be when the wives tried to accompany us. :=)

Ah, well....maybe a note in the next newsletter asking for favorite Mallorca stories. I would submit "deleted" blotting out his face on all of my colored slides of him sitting (innocently) next to a most buxom English woman on a tour boat. He was worried that his wife might someday see the picture. Of course, she would never have recognized his body, swim trunks or camera hanging from his neck!

Then there was Simons...

(Continued on page 6)

<b>Treasurer's Report</b>			
<b>307<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association</b>			
<b>Ending Balance from last report February 15, 2003:</b>		<b>\$6,881.09</b>	
	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	
<b><u>General Fund Balance</u></b>			<b>\$6,881.09</b>
Expenses:			
Postage	268.35		
Supplies	23.50		
Website	577.20		
Printing	514.00		
	<b>1383.05</b>		<b>-1383.05</b>
			<b>5498.04</b>
Income:			
Donations		90.00	
Interest on account		6.40	
		<b>96.40</b>	<b>+ 96.40</b>
<b>Ending Balance June 20, 2003</b>			<b>5594.44</b>
<b>Tony Minnick, Treasurer</b>			

(Continued from page 5)

Subj: Re: 307th Reunion Site  
From: Hank Grogan  
To: Bud Flanik, Mike Gingrich, Wally Whitehurst

I just might find a picture of Flanik, lying on the side of the road, next to his damaged, Vespa. Enroute to the Beach from the California Hotel, he had a few too many glasses of brandy for breakfast at Mam's and ended up with skinned knees and elbows. Ya'll think this is "deleted", I'll call George Smith in California for confirmation!!

My vote will be for Palma too.

Subject: Re: 307th Reunion Site  
From: Wally Whitehurst  
To: Hank Grogan, Bud Flanik, Mike Gingrich, Cec Braeden

I think I remember THAT one too...much like the time Cec Braeden and John Parks were strolling back to The California from Mam's and the pick & shovel road crew had not put enough kerosene in the smudge pot to warn of the pit they left open in the road....pitch dark & no street lights. Cec sez that John was walking along beside him and suddenly disappeared from view... and Cec missed him after a few paces, went back to see wha' happen, and helped John out of the pit. (Ain't that right, Cec?)

I vote again for Palma...(don't I get TWO votes?)  
May the saga of Palma continue...

Subj: Re: 307th Reunion Site  
From: Cec Braeden  
To: Wally Whitehurst, Hank Grogan, Bud Flanik, Mike Gingrich

I don't know what the hell you guys are talking about!! Sounds like you are both suffering from too much of something...sun, booze or whatever!

Subj: Re: 307th Reunion Site  
From: Hank Grogan  
To: Cec Braeden, Wally Whitehurst, Bud Flanik, Mike Gingrich

come on Cec, we all know that's where Bud, Wally, Mike and even Don Simons "deleted deleted"...

You and I were "Standing in the Shadow of the Cross" back in those days, pure as the driven snow.

How well I remember that ditch on the right side of the California Hotel, near Mams. On one of my trips, ran the Vespa down into the ditch and bent the "deleted" out of the machine----I had to pay for it. Sund was right behind me and saw the whole accident.

*Editor's Note: If the Palma hoteliers have long memories, we may find the number of hotels available to us somewhat restricted. One remembers that the Nixe Palace Hotel cordially invited us not to return. Perhaps this was precipitated by the Brit who remarked at the check-in desk, "Best lock up your wife again Ian, the Yanks are back!" ALL IN FAVOR OF PALMA, SAY AYE.*

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Many folks have been in touch over the past few months, including Wally Whitehurst, Hank Grogan, Richard Amenel, Bert Vorchheimer, Jim Lentz, Jim Adams, Art Williams, John Ogren, Dean Cook, Bud Timmons, Jerry Kilgore, Sam Martin, Ivan McKinney, Bud Martin, Jim Kingsley, Howard Sheldon, Jesse Sears, Max Marsh, and Bob Weidner.

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#### Quotes to Remember

If you think the problem is bad now, just wait until we've solved it.

-- Kassepe

Logic is a systematic method of coming to the wrong conclusion with confidence.

-- Manly's Maxim

#### 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.



#### The Last Flight

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

**Henry G "Hap" Arnold**, 372<sup>nd</sup> BS, Albuquerque NM, 5 May 2003.

**Ronald W McCartan**, 372<sup>nd</sup>, Austin TX, 17 April 2003.

**William L Oertel**, 372<sup>nd</sup>, 424<sup>th</sup> BS, Salem OR, February 2003.

**Wanda Read**, San Antonio TX, 18 October 2002.

**John B Shiffert**, 372<sup>nd</sup> BS, Jacksonville FL.

**James W "Jimbo" Shumake Jr.**, Glendale AZ, 13 March 2003.

**Leona Tiede**, Tucson AZ, 2 November 2002.

**Charles R Watt**, 424<sup>th</sup> BS, Oklahoma City, November 1982.

**Richard G "Bud" Westermann**, ARS, Novato CA, 13 May 2003.

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

#### Back in Touch

**Robert E Purcell**, 707 Lavinia Place, St Louis, MO 63122.

**Charles W Samples**, 204 Milligan Hwy, Johnson City, TN 37601.

We're happy to have you with us!





## Association CyberNews

The Association's website at [www.307bwassoc.org](http://www.307bwassoc.org) is off to a flying start since it first opened in mid March. So far about 150 of you have obtained and used personal passwords to access the password-restricted areas of the site, and many more have visited the non-restricted areas. The site is currently averaging about 650 visits per week and we have found that the most popular download is the Wing History.

We're still in the learning mode on how to add to and modify the site (without royally screwing up the excellent layout done by our professional web designer) in order to bring more varied and relevant content to you. Your participation and comments are earnestly sought, and you can easily reach us through the Contact Us button on the Home Page, or through the individual email links to the Association Officials which are also found on the Home Page. Please send us your news, anecdotes, historical notes and photos.

As stated in the last issue, the newsletter no longer will publish email address updates, instead you'll now find the complete latest and greatest list on the web site as a download on the Newsletter Page. Most folks with email capability will be able to retrieve it from there almost instantly. The medium of the website has brought forth a number of members with email addresses never before reported to us, and as a result our email list has rapidly grown from about 295 to 330 people. The bad news is that for 40 of these folks we lack presently lack valid email addresses. Sooo, if your address changes, please let us know...this will help your buddy who still owes you five bucks to find you and pay you back!

The folks from whom we need email address updates are: Arundel, Bachner, Baran, Britt, Christians, Cosentino, Daley, Dayley, Fabritz, Jim Foster, Frise, Grammes, Herdt, Hibdon, Jenks, Wm Johnson, Leonard, Matthiessen, Don McCall, James McKee, McMillin, Millwood, Mulleins, Pat Patterson, Randolph, John Reeves, Hugh Reid, Don Robbins, Salmonson, Schisler, Schubert, Setterberg, Symanek, Lila Timmons, Noble Timmons, Westervelt, Charles Williams, and Zeigler.

Send your changes to [mikeingri@cs.com](mailto:mikeingri@cs.com).

## A FATHER'S SACRIFICE



Photo by Ken Blackbird, Lincoln Journal Star  
Elizabeth Meeks-Smith (left) and sister Terry Showalter are seen with a room full of memorabilia their father, N.V. Meeks Jr., collected from all over the world while he was in the Air Force.

**N.V. Meeks flew 92 combat missions in WWII, but perhaps nothing he did in war surpassed his heroism on the day he died - near a one-room schoolhouse northwest of Lincoln.**

**By CINDY LANGE-KUBICK**  
Courtesy of the Lincoln Journal Star  
Sunday June 15, 2003

His plane didn't crash. He was just on another trip across the ocean searching for gifts for his two best girls.

*Wasn't he?*

For months, the sisters searched the sky for their father as they played in the back yard of their red brick house on Bruce Drive.

Every time a plane passed overhead they chased it, waving until it turned into a glimmer of silver in the distance.

*Daddy! Daddy! Here we are, Daddy!*

Years later, the older sister, the saucy, stubborn one, started searching on earth. She looked in passing cars. On street corners. At military bases.

She looked everywhere for a strong Air Force pilot, handsome and freckled with red hair and a tattoo on each shoulder.

Eventually, she gave up.

Elizabeth was 2 when the accident happened. Terry not quite 4.

They clung to the memories of others, the stories the old photographs and newspaper clippings told.

And to what they knew for certain.

That they'd once had a father.

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That his name was N.V. Meeks Jr.  
That he was a hero.

In those days planes flew over the Flader place so often the noise of the engines overhead was like the Nebraska wind whistling through a shelterbelt.

So much a piece of the landscape - as much a part of life as cornfields and blue sky - they just didn't hear it anymore.

Robert Flader and his family lived three miles north of the Lincoln Air Force Base. If the kids looked up when the big bombers passed by they'd see the wheels slide down as the jets came home.

Kathy Flader was at school on March 7, 1963. She remembers a plane, louder than it should have been. All the children rushing to the window and the flaming, smoking jet streaming up the valley, right over the school house roof.

Her father was at home, busy with chores. When a man floated into the yard, Robert ran across the snow-dusted grass to help.

He took the dark-haired co-pilot inside.

Elizabeth and Terry's dad, Capt. N.V. Meeks Jr., had ordered the crew to bail out, Arthur Ingle told Flader.

Meeks was going to stay with the plane, try to make sure it didn't hit anything, anyone on the ground.

Two more parachutes drifted down between the air base and the school.

Capt. Larry Talovich... Capt. Clifford Cork...

A few weeks later Robert Flader sent a letter, from Rural Route 5 to an address on Bruce Drive.

*I am a farmer living north of the base with my wife and four small children on whose farm Capt. Ingles (sic) parachuted to safety and on which Major Meeks met his death.*

*My family and I believe that our lives and the lives of 21 children in a county school who were directly in the aircraft's path were saved by the heroism of your beloved husband and father.*

*Yours truly...*

The military promoted their father to major after he died.

Paul Harvey told his story on the radio.

JFK sent a letter of condolence.

The Air Force brass presented their mother, Ruth, his last medal: the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Elizabeth Meeks-Smith and her older sister, Terry Showalter, keep some memories in boxes and on shelves. The dolls he brought them from trips overseas. The Western Union telegrams. His green flight jacket.

Letters to their mother.

*I think we have two of the best girls in the world and you have two good boys...*

*I already miss everyone, including those loud-mouthed girls...*

*Give Terry and Liz a big kiss for me and don't let them forget me...*

Those loud-mouthed girls are past 40 now, older than their father was when he died.

Their mother never re-married. By the time she was ready to

listen to Paul Harvey eulogize her husband, years had passed and the tape had disintegrated.

She had children to raise then. Father's Days passed. Jim's birthdays.

It was just too hard to talk about.

Elizabeth was a teen-ager when she found a black wallet in her mother's dresser drawer.

They opened it together. A driver's license. A fishing license. A military I.D.

And picture after picture of two strawberry-blonde girls.

Her mother cried.

"That was the best thing about him," she told her daughter.

"He loved his little girls."

Elizabeth remembers his feet, the way he walked with his toes in the air.

No, says Terry, older by 18 months. You don't remember. You remember because I told you so.

It's hard having second-hand memories.

"More than anything you grow up with what people have told you," says Terry.

One of the stories their mother told them was this one:

At the Royal Grove, the bar out on Cornhusker Highway where the Air Force pilots gathered to unwind at the end of the day, their dad jumped on top of a table.

He started to speak, orating like a preacher on Sunday morning.

*Awake! For morning in the bowl of night has flown the stone that puts the stars to flight: And lo! The hunter of the east has caught the sultan's turret in a noose of light.*

He'd memorized the words of the Rubaiyat, a poem by a 12th century Persian philosopher.

He didn't recite verse from the Rubaiyat just that once. It was his trademark.

*And when thyself with shining foot shall pass among the guests, star scattered on the grass, and in joyous errand reach the spot where I made one - turn down an empty glass!*

He recited to Ruth when they were courting.

*Here with a loaf of bread beneath the bough, a flask of wine, a book of verse and thou...*

After the accident, she retrieved a small leather-bound volume from the pocket of his green flight jacket.

"The Rubaiyat by Omar Khayyam."

He carried it with him whenever he flew.

His widow carried it in her purse, until she died too, in 1995.

Elizabeth keeps it in her jewelry box now. She memorized it. *Every word.*

N.V. Meeks Jr. never had a first name, or a middle one, but nearly everyone called him Jim.

Jim or "Old Soldier," the nickname bestowed on him by his Air Force buddies.

He was born poor in Logan, N.M., in 1923, say his daughters.

As a boy he hunted rabbits, shooting them through the eye so they'd fetch more money from the butcher. He gave the money to his folks.

That's the story they heard, anyway.

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He joined the service when he was 16 and became a pilot. He flew 92 combat missions in World War II.

By the time he met Ruth Cowel he'd been around some. Seen the world. Married, then divorced.

Ruth was divorced, too, and she had a pair of boys to raise on a school teacher's salary.

The couple she rented her apartment from in north Lincoln knew an Air Force captain. They thought he and Ruth might make a nice couple.

One night the captain phoned.

Would she like to go out? He'd come get her.

No, Ruth told him. This wasn't a good night. She was tired.

She'd had onions for dinner.

Later that evening someone knocked at her door and pushed it open. An arm stretched through the crack.

N.V. Meeks Jr. held out his hand. A stick of chewing gum in his palm.

Elizabeth laughs when she tells the story.

"He swept my mother off her feet."

The red-headed pilot flew a B-47. A jet-powered bomber with swept wings. It looked like a silver hawk gliding in the sky.

Big and beautiful.

He flew with the 307th bomber wing from the Lincoln Air Force Base.

Eleven B-47s from the base had crashed since 1953; 29 men dead.

In January 1963, a B-47 with a Lincoln crew went down. Two more crashed in February, taking six men with them.

All told, the U.S. Air Force lost 201 B-47s in training accidents between 1951 and 1965, the year they retired the bombers.

They had a saying at the base in Tampa: "A plane a day at Tampa Bay."

That's how bad it was, remembers Larry Talovich.

Larry is 67 now. Over the phone from California his voice sounds old. He retired years ago, the father of three sons and now a grandfather.

He wouldn't have his youngest son if it wasn't for N.V. Meeks, he says. He wouldn't have grown old, seen his only grandchild.

He sat beside Meeks as he piloted the B-47 that crashed near the Flader farm in '63. Art Ingle was the second co-pilot. Clifford Cork sat up in the nose, in the navigator's seat.

They were on a routine training mission, practicing a rocket-assisted take-off.

The Cold War raged.

Meeks and Talovich and the others were ready to take off at a moment's notice, a nuclear bomb on board, if the call came.

Terry remembers the time her father called her mother. She loaded them in the car and headed west.

The Russians were coming.

She's not sure how far they got.

North Platte, says half-brother Kent Cowel, one of two sons from their mom's first marriage.

It was 1962, he says. The Cuban Missile Crisis.

"He called my mother and told her to head for the mountains," says Kent.

This memory belongs to both daughters:

Sitting on the picnic tables at the air base, at the end of the runway with their mother. Watching their father take off.

Waving.

*Good-bye Daddy! Good-bye!*

Watching their father land.

Waving.

*Daddy's home! Daddy's home!*

The plane was on fire before they left the runway, Larry Talovich says.

An investigation after the crash determined fumes from the fuel vent ignited, setting ablaze 18,000 pounds of jet fuel.

Total flight time: One minute, 23 seconds.

Capt. Meeks gave the order to bail out. They did.

"I never even lost a pencil out of my pocket," says Talovich.

N.V. Meeks was a character, says the former co-pilot. If you met him once, you'd remember him always.

And he was a hell of a pilot.

That morning the red-headed pilot "zoomed" the plane to gain enough altitude to save the crew.

"It was just quite an airmanship task to control the airplane as long as he did. He was the only guy who could have gotten all of us out."

N.V. Meeks ejected too. But his lap belt didn't release.

"The helicopter picked us up," remembers Talovich. "We hovered over him. He was just sitting in the seat. He rode the seat in."

It's been 40 years.

It feels like two weeks.

Cork is dead. Ingle too, as far as Talovich knows.

"People should remember people like N.V.,," he says. "The contributions they made for their country."

Their father loved horses.

He loved horses and Crown Royal whiskey; flying and hunting; his two best girls.

He was ready to retire from the Air Force. He had a plan. Move to Arizona and open a tavern.

Of his two girls, Terry was always the strong one. The tough one. Like her dad.

She owns horses. She loves to fly.

All her life when she heard the story of the saved crew, the children at the school unharmed by the silver airplane, she knew her father was a hero.

She used that.

"I grew up absolutely believing sacrifice is commendable and everyone should do everything they can to help others."

Elizabeth tried to please her mother, protect her. She wrapped little presents at Christmas. To: Ruth. From: Jim.

Today she buys presents early for her daughter and husband,

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but she can't wait for Christmas to give them.

"There's always a sense of urgency... that fear that someone might disappear."

She hates to fly.

But she loves the Rubaiyat, its message of living life to its fullest.

She memorized it. Like her dad.

When the town was asked to help name the new Lincoln high schools, she sent in a nomination.

*N.V. Meeks Jr... A local hero from 1963... how wonderful to have had such a man living in our town...*

Larry Talovich tells a story.

Back in his World War II days, the Old Soldier had some leave coming. So he bought a ticket to Karachi, India (the city is now part of Pakistan).

Halfway through the flight the pilot reported a dust storm on the ground. Jim went to the cockpit to learn more.

"The pilots were talking about flying underneath the storm. So he got into the tail end and piled up parachutes all around him," says Talovich.

"The plane crashed and killed everyone... but him."

Elizabeth and Terry have never heard that story.

*Was it true?*

Talovich swears it was.

It makes the grown-up girls smile. It sounds like something their father would do.

It sounds like their dad.

At least from the stories they've heard.

#### Old Classmates

While waiting for my first appointment in the reception room of a new dentist, I noticed his certificate, which bore his full name. Suddenly, I remembered that a tall, handsome boy with the same name had been in my high school class some 40 years ago. Upon seeing him, however, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, gray-haired man with the deeply lined face was too old to have been my classmate.

After he had examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended the local high school.

"Yes," he replied.

"When did you graduate?" I asked.

He answered, "In 1957."

"Why, you were in my class!" I exclaimed.

He looked at me closely and then asked, "What did you teach?"



## The Chief's Corner

### The Short Colonel

By Ernie Pence

All members of the "Elite Squadron, 370th Bomb Squadron," remember when Col. Raleigh D. Smith was promoted to Command Post. The replacement was a relief to me, we finally got a squadron commander I could look in the eye. Not being of large stature or discernable height, (skinny & short, I have recently recovered from the skinny thing) I had to step back or get a crook in my neck when addressing Col. Smith. Col. Thompson was as diminutive as colonel's go.

What the man lacked in height, he made up for in presence. Col. Thompson was, I believe, a West Point Graduate. He came to us about the same time "Superman," the dreaded 1st shirt from an Air Police Squadron arrived. His sense of humor was a refreshing breeze after dealing with Superman. He understood the gallows humor all enlisted people develop while learning to live on starvation wages, as you work all the overtime you want for nothing.

Col. Thompson was the catcher on our squadron softball team. This was no easy task for a man his size. We had a pitcher that threw nothing but smoke. When Larry Powers launched a ball from the mound it looked 3 feet long coming over the plate. If he was on, it was 9 pitches per inning. When he was not, the ball went over the backstop and left the base. Col. Thompson used to put a sponge in his glove to catch Larry. Sponge and all, he would finish the game with a bright red hand, how he stood up to those hot ones no one knows.

The Colonel showed up at the gym one night when Sgt. Stubbs was there. One has to understand that Stubbs had a tendency to run off at the mouth on occasion, occasion being every damn day! Sgt. Stubbs was bouncing around bobbing, weaving, ducking and spouting off about his days in Golden Gloves. Col. Thompson took an interest in that statement, he told Stubbs he had done a little boxing, he would appreciate it if Stubbs would do him the honor of about 3 rounds to brush up on his timing. Now, Stubbs's alligator mouth begins to overload his hummingbird butt. "On no, it wouldn't do for a Sergeant to beat up on a Colonel," and on and on add-nausea. After about 4 minutes of what would now pass for "Rap," the Colonel told Stubbs to get his butt in the ring.

The bell rings and the 2 men meet in the middle of the ring, the Colonel looking short and determined, but smiling, Stubbs doing more animated bobbing, weaving and show boating than any of us had ever seen before. Col. Thompson called this to a halt by simply stepping in and punching Stubbs's lights out. He beat poor old Stubbs into bad health. It was a beautiful thing to watch. After the first volley

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Stubbs tried everything he knew to defend himself or retaliate, to no avail. It was 3 rounds of total "Butt Kick," it seems the good Colonel had boxed on the academy team. Obviously he had been well taught.

I recall the time when four of us (through no fault of our own, grin) were arrested in the old south alert area and hauled to jail, something about a password, you all know how Air Police are. I missed a pass, the ball rolled onto the ramp under my plane, everything went down hill from there. Col. Thompson had to come bail us out...on a Sunday afternoon. He took it pretty well until he stopped about 100 meters from the A/P access to the alert area. He asked us the password, total silence, we knew, but what the hey, maybe we didn't, we're trying to protect unsullied reputations here folks. Col. Thompson reached around and said, "Pence, give me your hand," wrote the password and number in my palm and said, "Don't wash it until the word changes!"

I also remember when Jim Lancaster was promoted to Staff Sergeant. Through no fault of his own, or his stalwart companions, he was ensconced in the Lincoln Jail. Some minor incident on a Friday night, nothing of consequence, because the Colonel had his picture taken handing Lancaster his stripes through the bars at the Lincoln P.D. Years later Lancaster ran into a short Bird Colonel in England, the Colonel turned, took another look and said, "Sergeant, don't I know you?" He cracked up and shook Lancaster's hand and said, "Oh yeah, you're the guy I promoted in jail." The Colonel also was blessed with a good memory.

For you officers that are out there starting to cluck your tongues, forget it! I could write you a volume about a major who tried to drive his crew, and the jeep they were in, into the BOQ in England while trying to evade the Air Police. Nuff said!

## 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.

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# 307<sup>TH</sup> BOMB WING 2004 REUNION

## Imperial Palace Hotel

### LAS VEGAS, NV

### May 3-7, 2004

Do you plan to attend: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No. If yes, how many in your party \_\_\_\_\_  
Days You plan to attend \_\_\_\_\_

Activities which you would attend:

1. Las Vegas City tour \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Hoover Dam tour \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Liberace Museum tour \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Thursday night banquet \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Thunderbird Hanger tour at Nellis AFB \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Ideas for other activities \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Will you be staying at the reunion hotel? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Mail to: Vern Biaett <vbiaett@azwest.net>  
13618F North 98<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Sun City, AZ 85351

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_



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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 system.

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.

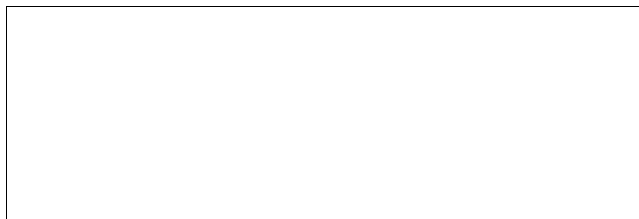
Turn & Bank Indicator - An instrument highly ignored by pilots.

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.



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