

## ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 44

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

NOVEMBER 2004

## Steady Progress

### President's Column

By the time most of you get this newsletter, our country will have concluded one of the most pivotal and contentious national elections in recent history. It is said that democracies get the kind of government that they deserve. Let us all pray that the majority of our countrymen have elected a President who can lead with integrity and determination in the protracted conflict that our enemies have thrust upon us.

In 2004, the Association has reaped the benefits of a lot of hard work by key members. The Las Vegas reunion was a resounding success due to **Vern Bi-aett's** leadership in the face of tragedy in his personal life. Our website continues to mature as a nerve center for information exchange and as a means to preserve our heritage. If you haven't logged on recently, you should take a look at the job **Mike Gingrich** did with the Las Vegas reunion photos. The smoothness of the layout belies the enormous amount of effort and frustration he invested in the project throughout the summer. He's too modest to take credit for it, but you should drop him a line of thanks.

As the website has grown, so has our members' skill in using it. We continue to receive requests to receive the newsletter online (up to fifty now),

each one helping to reduce the drain on our treasury. We have 411 members on our e-mail list and we've developed a means to send a blanket message to everyone on that list if we need to get critical information out quickly. We've made arrangements to purchase incrementally more storage space on the server as our site grows.

I've begun the slow and tedious process of applying for a change in the Association's nonprofit status with the IRS so that your contributions can be tax-deductible. I hope to have this completed before Congress decides to change the tax laws to *eliminate* deductions to charitable organizations!

**Flip Latham**, our Charleston reunion chairman, has already done considerable research on our 2006 options. In addition, the Association officers have decided to continue our relationship with AFRI, our professional reunion coordinator. I think we're all a lot smarter about "the art of the possible" in reunion planning than we were before Las Vegas and will be in a position to provide closer oversight of the contract that will be negotiated. Flip and **Dallas Crosby** will continue to explore the prospects of linking an optional cruise to the Charleston "main event."

As we go to press, Flip tells us the dates

for the Charleston Reunion have been set from **Sunday 2 April through Thursday 6 April 2006**. More details when they develop...watch the website for the latest.

All in all, a satisfying year for the Association. Wendy and I wish you and your families a great Thanksgiving and a healthy, happy holiday season.

Pete Todd

### Donations

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

John S Allison  
Robert Boulware  
Albert J Cinnimon  
Dallas Crosby  
George E Davis  
Rolland L England  
Larry F Garrett  
Hank Grogan  
Joseph Herman  
Anne King  
Frank Kisner  
Thomas J Mills  
Wally Mitchell  
John W Puckett  
Hugh Reid  
Ronald Resh  
Pamela Robertson  
Richard E Scharf  
Clayton P Scott  
Andrew P Sorrells  
Robert L Tysinger  
James Villa  
Mary Volheim

## Back in Touch

**Rolland L England**, 5433 W Edgemont, Phoenix, AZ 85035-1808.

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

#### Officers of the Association:

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

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Billy Williams, 5546 Enterprise Drive, Lincoln, NE 68521. Phone 402-438-6061. Email: wjwbdw@juno.com

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

**The Association is strongly reliant upon key members who have volunteered their time and effort to keep the wheels running smoothly. They are:**

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

**Membership:** Bev Minnick, 5920 Robin Court, Lincoln, NE 68516. Phone 402-423-6848. Email: tonym@inetnebr.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

**Charleston 2006 Reunion Chairman:** Jarvis "Flip" Latham, 1424 Woodlawn Ave, Columbia, SC 29209-1433. Phone 803-766-4294. Email: K4JHL@earthlink.net.

The Association is a non-profit Veterans Organization. All contributions to the organization are gratefully received, but presently are not deductible under IRS Code. The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are elected by majority vote of all members at each business meeting.

## Around the Wing

On 28 July 1956, Captain Russell Bowling and his B-47 crew lost their lives as a result of a landing accident at Lakenheath RAFB in the United Kingdom. It was the 307<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing's second fatal B-47 accident. Later, in 1958, LAFB personnel, with the strong backing of General Perry Hoisington, the 818<sup>th</sup> Air Division Commander, constructed a recreational lake in the northwest corner of the



base. This lake was named Bowling Lake in honor of Captain Bowling, and was dedicated with grand opening ceremonies that summer. A feature of the lake was a recreational lodge, known as Bowling Lodge, on the northwest shore. The lake was heavily used thereafter for water skiing and pleasure boating, and its Northern Pike population attracted many fishermen.

After base closure and turnover to the city of Lincoln, the lake area deteriorated, and the lodge burnt down. Current rumors are that the lake will be demolished.

Russ Bowling's wife, Mary Bowling Ashton, has maintained contact with a number of Association members and is herself a member of the Association. Several months ago, using a link from the website, Mary's niece, Nancy Jacobson, informed us she had lost contact with Mary, and raised an intriguing question as well. As a small child, she had been told that there was a sculpture of Captain Bowling somewhere at LAFB, and she wondered if we could tell her anything about it.

The first order of business was to put Nancy in contact with Mary, and then we started scratching our heads. Most of us could remember nothing of a sculpture of Russ. Tony Minnick, did not give up so easily, as he had a vague memory that Lou Webber, of the 371<sup>st</sup> BS, had talked about sculpting a bust of Russ, but could remember no further than that. Tony took the bull by the horns and contacted Lou. Lou responded that he had sculpted a full size statue of Russ, and that it had been unveiled at the lake lodge, with Andy Devine in attendance, and he had a photo to prove it!

The photo above shows the just unveiled statue, with Andy Devine standing to the left, an unidentified Colonel at the right, and two children directly in front of Andy. Although the children are not identified, presumably they are Russ's kids. The presence of Andy Devine at the ceremony indicates that this probably occurred at

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

the time of the Lake opening and dedication, as Andy is known to have figured prominently in these ceremonies.

We do not know what subsequently happened to the statue of Russ, or its present location or condition. It is an important part of our historical legacy.

Your memories of this are important and will help us in tracking down the rest of the story. Please let us know.

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#### 6244 Finally at the AF Museum

Back in 1965, Pete Todd and several others flew B-47E #53-6244 to Wright-Patterson where it was donated to the AF Museum. It was the last bird to have rolled off the Boeing production line. For reasons that are still controversial, it never made it to the premises of today's Museum. It met an ignominious fate as it was burned up by the fire department for practice. Not surprisingly, the 307<sup>th</sup> people involved with its preparation and donation are bitter about its fate.

At the Museum, on 24 September 2004, the B-47 Stratojet Association unveiled a large memorial dedicated to the B-47 and all the people and families ever involved with its support. Every involved Wing is identified on the monument. At the top of the monument is a beautiful rendition of a B-47E which bears the tail number **53-6244!** It may be a bit late, but 6244 finally arrived at the museum.

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**Tony Minnick** writes that often we have learned of the passing of our 307<sup>th</sup> members years after their death. He asks that if you should hear of someone's death to notify him at 5920 Robin Court, Lincoln, NE 68516, or email him at "tonym@inetnebr.com".

In our previous issue, **Paul Koski** noted that Sgt Atwood had been General LeMay's copilot at one point in WW2. Unfortunately, our association records have no info on the good sergeant. This brought several comments from members **Pete Shaughnessy** and **James Powell**.

Pete Shaughnessy emailed: "It was noted in our latest newsletter that we have no information about Sgt. Atwood so let me submit my short recollection of him. He was a Master Sergeant and the Maintenance NCO with the Field Maintenance Squadron around 1955-1957 time frame. I think he may have transferred in from one of the Bomb Squadrons. He was a big, imposing man, especially to us enlisted without a rocker on our sleeve. Regardless, we still referred to him as "Little A" but generally not in his presence. "Big A" of course was our CO, Col. Gene Aenchbacher. One occasion that I remember of the Sergeant involved a gear retraction test on a KC-97. One of the main gears would not extend normally; it had to be cranked down. (For some reason, after nearly 50 years, I can't remem-



Frontside of the B-47 Monument



Backside of B-47 monument 2004

ber whether it was the left or right. Time does take its toll.) The usual repair for this problem at the Field level was to replace the retraction mechanism, a long, labor intensive job that we dreaded. We were probably on some kind of "alert"

(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)*

which made the aircraft's return to service that more imperative. I told Sgt. Atwood that I thought I could fix the problem in 15 minutes but it might be out of our area of authority. (In a former life, a Boeing tech rep had shown me how to make some Depot adjustments when necessary.) Sgt. Atwood said if I could do it, get it done and he would take care of the "authority" factor. I did, he did, and the KC-97 went on its merry way to fly many more missions. For me, Sgt. Atwood was one of the straight-shooting good guys."

James Powell got in touch by phone from his home in Fort Knox, Kentucky. He denied all rumors that he's in charge of the gold reserves there! He talked of working on the KC-97 and a tour of duty in job control. His memory of Sgt Atwood is from the 372<sup>nd</sup> BS, where he was known as "Big A", although physically, he was a "short gorilla". He also recalls a **Lt Brown**, who he believed was the Air Force's oldest lieutenant, and **Cyrus V Jones**, neither of whom the association has any knowledge.

Paul Koski provided a tale centered around Sgt Atwood: Our first maintenance area was the abandoned Pacific Aero-motive shop and test cells. The test cells were used to store our equipment and the control room and offices were used for our maintenance offices. The test cells where they ran aircraft engines were dirty and smelled like fuel and oil. The offices weren't much better, it was like being in a meat locker, it was so cold.

M/SGT Atwood, was our line chief. He was a big burley man and when he talked in a normal voice the windows rattled. He was a stickler for paper work and when he reviewed your 781 forms, which he did once a month, and there was something wrong, you wish you hadn't been born.

He walked with a limp and someone questioned what happened to him, we were told that he had flown with Gen. LeMay in WW2 as a copilot. He had received flack wounds on one mission and would never fly again. It was said that he was a Lt. Col. and would have been discharged under medical reasons but he elected to stay in at a reduced rank.

I don't know if this story is true, but we had been working twelve-hour shifts, seven days a week to get the squadron combat ready. This had been going on for over a month and everyone was worn out and we were making little mistakes. Sgt. Atwood told the maintenance officer that the people needed a three-day pass, that the people's morale was as low as he had ever seen it and all the other verbiage that goes with it.

The maintenance officer said he couldn't do it, the mission came first and all the other arguments that go with it. Atwood asked if he could use the phone, which he did according to the clerk. He said, "Hi Curtis this is Atwood", and after some small talk told the General that he had a morale problem and all the details and his men needed a

three day pass and why he couldn't get them one. He gave the phone to the maintenance officer and after a few minutes hung up. That weekend we had a three-day pass.

From **Jim Kurtz** in Omaha:

I was pleasantly surprised to read the note from **James D. Rusher** regarding his experiences in the 307th OMS. My tenure at Lincoln began as an A3C in late 1962 and ended by getting sent to Offutt in Omaha (Bellevue) in January 1966 as an A1C. I was honorably discharged in May 1966. I spent most of my time in Lincoln in "Servicing" due to my not wanting to go TDY and my reluctance to fly. I lived in southern Illinois at that time and remember on one occasion catching a ride with Airman Rusher to his home where my family picked me up for the remainder of the trip. I currently live in Council Bluffs (just across the river from Omaha, Nebraska). We recently took our grandchildren to the SAC Museum just west of Omaha and I purchased a B-47 model. It sat on my shelf at home for a few months. I finally got it down and put it together a couple of weeks ago. I was filled with nostalgic memories of my tour of duty at Lincoln. Many thanks to all who work so hard to keep the association going.

Perhaps the most enthusiastic attendee at the Las Vegas Reunion was **Dale R Osburn**, a former member of the 98<sup>th</sup> FMS, and current residence of Las Vegas. He looked forward to his first contact with Lincoln people since his discharge and assisted and sometimes took over our registration function, making sure to greet all arrivals: He writes: Greeting's to all! I wish to thank the 307th for the pleasure that I had in greeting and talking to everyone here in Las Vegas. The various discussion's, the exhibit's, were something that brought back lot's of fond memories for which I am thankful. As a member of the 98th FMS, the friendship's of Lincoln AFB that continues on to this day, are priceless. Again THANKS for the memories. Dale R. Osburn Sr., Las Vegas, Nv.

Many of us at Las Vegas were deeply concerned about the medical difficulties suddenly encountered there by **John Daley**, son of **Phyllis and Don Daley**. Don & Phyllis spent several days in the ER with John, who was hospitalized for the remainder of the reunion. Shortly after our previous issue went to press, the Daley's informed us the John had completely recovered and was back to his regular lifestyle. Although this is somewhat old news, we thought you'd like to know.

**Neil Cosentino** recently asked if the Association's archives had the Reflex R&R briefing books. Our reaction to his question was "Huh?" Neil then went on to explain - "In regard to the R&R books - I guess they are lost - they were jewels of information ...I am sure many would remember about writing about our post R&R intel reports... about the bars, the women bar tenders names, the telephone numbers to call, the restaurants, the out of the way hotels and the good deals - the friends and families we would meet and also where not to go and what to lookout for ...and would read them before each R&R. These

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

were the "briefing books" I speak of". What can you tell us about these books?

**Dick Scharf**, the former 818<sup>th</sup> Division Navigator, recently "writ by hand" to Tony Minnick from Rancho Cordova. "Just read your newsletter, and enjoyed it as usual. Even tho I was never in the 307<sup>th</sup>, I always enjoyed my contacts with you people, if anything, just a bit more than with the 98<sup>th</sup>. As you know, Marge and I have never been able to make the reunions, and since we are now into our 80s, we would not be able to make it, but always enjoy the newsletters. I'm 86, doing better than I have a right to expect, but not nearly as good as I would like. ...a big Thank You to all of you for a periodic dose of nostalgia." Dick goes on to say that with McClellan and Mather AFBs closed, they now drive to Beale for medications, and since Mather was his "alma mater" he feels he should wear a black armband! Marge and Dick try to attend the monthly MOAA dinner dances and frequently have the pleasure of seeing the Delaneys and Jones' there.

After ten years of research, Sig Alexander has completed his book, "*The B-47 Stratojet Centurion of the Cold War*". It is the most thoroughly researched book on the B-47, with emphasis on the role of the B-47 in the Cold War and the people who played such an important role in its development and operation. This book will make you feel proud of being part of the B-47 team and will answer the question: "Grandpa, What did you do in the Cold War?" Sig is past president of the B-47 Stratojet Association. The book is self published and is available for \$30 including shipping and handling from Sigmund Alexander, 12110 Los Cerdos Drive, San Antonio, TX 78233-5953.

From **Wally Whitehurst**:

I now have a replacement for my B-52 2000 Hour pin that fell away somewhere long ago.

I have a distant relative who is married to L/C Bill Rutledge who was at Castle AFB as CO or Ops Off. of the B-52 Replacement Training Unit that so many of us attended years ago. She emailed me that Bill had lost his B-52 5000 Hour pin and asked me for help in getting him a replacement. I contacted my good friend, **Cec Braeden**, who had a second career with Boeing at Seattle, and asked for his help. Fortunately, his daughter, Cecilia, works for Boeing and did the necessary research for us. Bill now has his replacement pin.

There may be others in our Association, and others you know, who have lost their pins and would like to get a replacement. They may send an Email to:

[linda.m.dunker@boeing.com](mailto:linda.m.dunker@boeing.com)

with their request, or contact her at the address or phone numbers below.

All she requires is name and address, and she ships out the replacement pin immediately.

Linda M. Dunker, Customer Relations Representative, P.O. Box 7730 MCF K82-62, Wichita, KS 67277-7730. Ph. 316-526-5618, Cellular 316-253-3804.

I emailed Linda with my request a few days ago, and received my replacement today. It now resides on my 307th Bomb Wing cap along with many other reminders of my 20-year career.

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If you wish to forgo postal delivery of the 307<sup>th</sup> BW Association newsletter in favor of downloading it from the website at [www.307bwassoc.org](http://www.307bwassoc.org), you can now do so. You may terminate your postal delivery by sending an email to Jan Boggess at [larryjan@att.net](mailto:larryjan@att.net), providing your name and using the subject line "web delivery". This will save the Association postal mailing costs and will go into effect with the next newsletter.

The newsletter downloads as an Adobe PDF file: with a broadband connection the download takes but a few seconds; with a dial up connection it may take three to five minutes.

**Bud Flanik** sent us some good advice on computer security:

Once again, hoaxes and viruses are rampant and going thru emails like wild fire. Any time you receive email that is questionable and/or has been forwarded 40 gizillion times, know that it is probably a hoax.

Red Flag: "Forward to everyone you know" "Amy is missing" .. stuff like that.

People are deleting important files from their computer because of getting hoax emails Please check these out at [truthorfiction.com](http://truthorfiction.com), or [www.snopes2.com](http://www.snopes2.com), [antivirus.about.com](http://antivirus.about.com), [urbanlegends.tqn.com](http://urbanlegends.tqn.com), where you can do a search easily. They also have newsletters that keep us updated.

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Finally, the Memory Book for the recent Las Vegas Reunion has been published and delivered to all those who ordered it. You can see photos from the reunion on the website at [www.307bwassoc.org](http://www.307bwassoc.org).

A number of others have rung our chimes the past few months, including Dick Amenell, William Johnson, Larry Irwin, Al Masserini, Anne King, James McKee, Richard Roberts, Bob Hansen, and Earl Hill.

### How Fast Can You Say This?

Betty Botter had some butter,  
 But, she said, "this butter's bitter.  
 If I bake this bitter butter, it would make my batter bitter.  
 But a bit of better butter that would make my batter better.  
 So she bought a bit of butter,  
 better than her bitter butter,  
 And she baked it in her batter,  
 and the batter was not bitter.  
 So 'twas better Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter.

# World War I Pilot Served with 307th at Lincoln

## Riding High

### Veteran pilot pioneered air service in Arizona

*The Arizona Republic, Sunday, August 14, 1983*

*By Sam Negri*

*Republic Staff*

*(Reprinted with permission)*

TUCSON -Shortly after World War II, Ralph Vaughan crash-landed a B-29 at an airfield in Wichita, Kansas, where he had been testing airplanes for the U.S. Air Force.



Col Ralph G Vaughan retired in 1958 at age 60. He was Director of Materiel for the 307th Bomb Wing.

A general, who saw the plume of black smoke billowing from the wreckage promptly called Vaughan's wife Ruth. "Ruth was at a bridge party, and he called her and said, 'You can set one less plate at the dinner table tonight, I just saw Ralph come down in a wreck,'" said Vaughan, 85. "Wasn't that an awful thing to say?" said Ruth Vaughan, also 85. "I finished the play before I left because I said, 'There's nothing wrong with him' ... I'd been through too

many of those things with him."

Vaughan, now a Tucson resident, learned to fly in military service during World War I, before the Air Force was a separate branch of the military establishment. Between 1919, when he completed his flight training, and 1958, when he retired, Vaughan estimates that he crashed about 12 times. "When that general called Ruth, it was old hat to her," he said.

By the time he retired as a reserve colonel, Vaughan's career had spanned aviation history from the British-built "Jennys" of World War I to the Jet Age as it existed in 1958. It encompassed a time, he said, when an airfield in Arizona consisted of a dirt clearing with a lantern at either end to mark its borders. "We used lanterns instead of electric lights so as not to confuse the landing area with a space between two houses" he said.

Vaughan came to Tucson immediately after World War I, married, and then left for California. In 1928, he launched his

first commercial venture, a pilot-training school and passenger service at Ontario, Calif., near San Bernardino. A year later, Vaughan was back in Arizona and launched what is believed to be the state's first commuter airline -- Apache Airlines -- with daily service between Miami and Phoenix. At the same time, he developed the Midland City Airport in the section of Miami that today is Miami Gardens, a subdivision.

The inauguration of flights between the copper mining towns of Gila County and Phoenix was reported on Nov. 21, 1929, by former Arizona Republic reporter Ben Avery:

"A dream came true at the Midland City Airport at noon today when Lt. R.G. Vaughan came flying over the hills from Phoenix -and landed the new trimotor Kreutzer monocoach of the Apache Airline Inc. before hundreds of residents of this district who rushed the field to congratulate the big ship's pilot." At a cruising speed of 100 mph, the craft made the trip in 45 minutes.

Two weeks later, Globe-Miami's Midland City Airport was formally dedicated in a ceremony that included a speech by then Gov. John C. Phillips and an appearance by Apache Chief Talkalaih. The chief, who was believed to be 108 years old at the time, "christened" the airport with a bottle containing water from Roosevelt and Coolidge lakes.

Vaughan says that in order to understand the significance of the Globe-Miami airport, one must realize that in 1929 the only airports in Arizona were in Phoenix, Tucson and Douglas.

Of course, there were other places to land. Vaughan talked about some of these unofficial landings. One was made on Route 8 between Casa Grande and Gila Bend -except that the

PACIFIC-WESTERN AIRWAYS  
GIVES YOU  
**Another Opportunity**  
to  
**FLY**  
**OVER TUCSON**  
in a  
TRI-MOTOR CABIN PLANE  
FOR ONLY  
**50c Children**  
**ADULTS 75c**  
FRI., SAT., SUN., FEBRUARY 4-5-6  
Pilot, LT. R. G. VAUGHAN,  
World War Flier with 21 Years Experience



Col. Ralph Vaughan, above, learned to fly in World War I. Fliers, left, drummed up business for him in the '20s.

highway did not yet exist. "When they started that road they started in the middle, between those two towns, and worked outward," he said. However, one day when he developed engine trouble, he found that enough of the new road had been

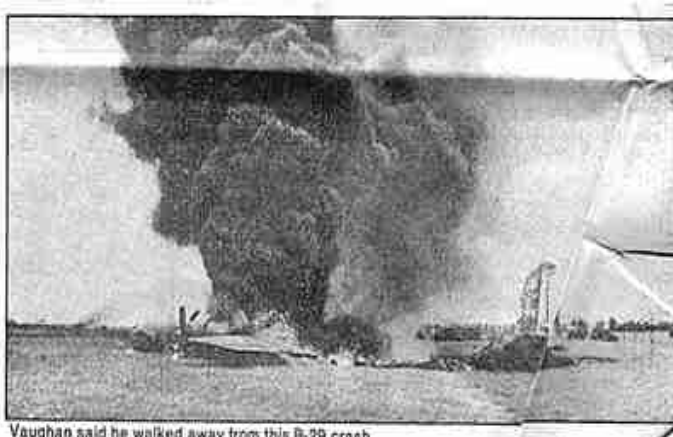
*(Continued on page 7)*

(Continued from page 6)

cleared to accommodate an emergency landing.

On another occasion, he ran out of gas about 20 miles from the airfield he had developed at Monument Valley. "I found a dry stream bed and I could see a trading post in the distance, so I put it down in the stream bed, about 50 feet from the trading post, walked up and got 10, gallons of car gas, and went on to Monument Valley,' he said.

Vaughan said he had flown 30,702 hours by the time he retired, and that he is still alive because he was seldom ruffled by unexpected events. It is also true, he said, that he has a fundamental belief in the safety of air travel over other forms of transportation. "The reason most of the younger pilots were killed is that they were showing off," Vaughan said. "Generally, you're safer in a plane than you are in a car. In a car you're always 2 feet from getting killed; it happens every day. In a plane, you've got lots of time. There's no hurry." To dramatize the point, he, related this:



Vaughan said he walked away from this B-29 crash

"Once, in 1954 or '53, I was flying a B-25 into Albuquerque, (N.M.), just me and my engineer and one of the engines caught fire. So the cabin filled up with smoke, and I couldn't see my instruments. I let down the landing gear and when that compartment was open it pulled the smoke right through. Well, my engineer, he was a young guy, he started to go out the wheel compartment, he was going to bail out. We were only 500 feet up, and at that altitude, 500 isn't enough for your parachute to open, hardly. He would have hit the ground terrible hard. I grabbed him and pulled him back in and slammed him into the seat and said 'Sit there!' He was a kid, see?"

During his early flights, he said, his planes were equipped with an altimeter, "a compass if you were lucky, and an instrument to give you your rpms.

However, Vaughan operated on certain principles: "If you keep your nose on the horizon that will keep the plane level; if your plane lands at 100 mph or less, you don't have to get hurt, you fly your plane until it quits on the ground."

Also, you keep your eyes open. As he put it: "I memorized every bald spot between Tucson and Los Angeles -just in case."

(Ed note: According to Social Security records, Ralph was born 26 May 1898 in Arizona, and died 24 May 1989 in Arizona. His wife was born 13 April 1898 and died 30 January 1995 in Arizona.)

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**14 August 2004**

**From: Rolland England**

**To: The 307th Bomb Wing Association**

Thank you for the Newsletter, I enjoyed it very much. While I'm at it: Thank you for everything I might forget to thank you for. I'm closing in on 80 and I firmly believe I could use a complete overhaul on my memory banks, And the beat goes on.

I joined the 370th BS in May of 1958. Glen "Andy" Anderson and his wife Gerry greeted my family and I when we arrived at LAFB. They were both extremely helpful in getting us "settled" in.

I do not remember the name of the CO of the 370th but I do remember working side by side with him in water knee-deep on a Saturday morning after we "VOLUNTEERED" to help build Bowling Lake.

After we were reorganized and became the 307th OMS, I worked the swing shift in "N" section driving the METRO and coordinating our flightline maintenance through job control.

Master Sergeant George Hammer was my boss when I worked the swing shift. He was NCOIC of "A" Launch Section, day shift. One night while working the south end of the parking ramp the mosquitoes got to be such a great number that my crew could hardly work for fighting them off. The windshield of my METRO became so "messed" up from smashed mosquitoes that I had difficulty seeing through it.

I called for a smoke truck. Right across the fence south of us was a fair sized swamp. Finally, after pleading, begging, and finally threatening to pull my crew off of the flightline, a Captain came out from somewhere. He looked around awhile then made a smoke truck available. He did not confer with me. It could have happened three hours earlier but it did not. And the beat goes on.

On another occasion it was storming so bad that my troops were working in knee-deep water with lightning flashing all around. Lightning nipped at my guys several times. It was extremely hazardous to be on a maintenance stand. There were 15 tornadoes in various stages of development within a 15 mile radius of the maintenance control tower. I asked permission to seek shelter for my crew and myself. I was refused permission. After the third refusal I took my crew to a shelter for about 45 minutes. Job control knew where I was and had contact with me

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

by landline. No action was taken against me, thank God.

One other time one of the maintenance (OMS) field grade officers came out



SMsgt England receives a medal from Col Clifford J Moore Jr. upon the occasion of his retirement.

to ride around with me for awhile. I think he had a nip or two before he came to see me. Anyway he informed me that I should transfer to the day shift in order to have a better shot at E-8. I did. I made E-8 the next go-around. A few days before the promotion list came out I was told that my name had been submitted in the number three position behind M/Sgt George and M/Sgt

Ussery. I thought "aw hell". We all three made it. And the beat goes on.

Sometime after making E-8, I was transferred into the ALERT AREA as NCOIC of aircraft maintenance for the 307th Bomb Wing. Major Brady Keene (later Lt Col) was my last 307th OMS commander.

There are so many things that I remember, I just cannot write about all of them.

For instance, Little League Baseball. I received a letter of appreciation from the Little League Officials after I had been retired for a month or so for helping out with the teams. I am very proud of that letter.

Colonel Clifford J Moore Jr presented me with my retirement certificate and a commendation medal. He was Airbase Commander. I am aware that Colonel Moore is now deceased. I only met him that one time and he seemed like a great man 'to me.

Time marches on

After retiring from the Air Force I went to work for Lockheed Aircraft Service Company at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. We furnished flightline and field maintenance for the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) training on their F-104 Starfighter.

When the project first started a group of American civilians

protested the fact that German aircraft were flying over American soil. The solution was to repaint the aircraft with USAF markings. AH SO! I worked there 18 years until the project ended.

Lockheed offered me a job and I accepted it at Edwards Air Force Base in California. We furnished aircraft maintenance for NASA's F-104 Starfighters.

I was there when the Challenger went in on liftoff. Oh, what a sad day that was at NASA.

In the year 2001, January 16th my wife Margarete (Greta) died. I was holding her hand. She had told me a day earlier that she would wait for me after she died,---that she would not be far away and then we would be together for ever and ever.

Sedge Hill is a man of MERCY, one time I was in the base hospital for 12 days. Sedge made sure my wife had transport to visit me when she could.

I worked with Bob Conway on the night shift in "A" section until Bob finagled a transfer out of SAC. He became a flight crewmember on the C-130. Bob's airplane crashed on takeoff out of Orly Field, Paris, France. There were no survivors. Sedge took up a collection for him and delivered it to Bob's widow at his funeral stateside. I wanted to go to Bob's funeral

very much but just couldn't swing it. SEDGE DID! Sedgefield Hill has a place waiting for him in heaven. Most of us will never know about all the help he gives people. He's ACES.



Rolland England after a successful parachute jump.

I remember Billy (Willy) Williams very well. When I worked the "swing shift" he worked the "graveyard shift". We always briefed and debriefed each other in the middle of the night on "A" section Metro until the powers that were at the

time decided Willy should be a crew chief. Willy became a crew chief and a damn good one, I might add. Willy can tell you about the storms I have described. HE WAS THERE. Right Willy?

Richard St. Louis was from the state of Maine and he did not wear coats or jackets while working. I could get tired just

(Continued on page 9)



*(Continued from page 8)*

watching him get with it. He was great!

It has been a long, long road from a yellow frame farmhouse near Commerce, Oklahoma where I was born to the present time, but I've enjoyed at least ninety per cent of it.

Grete stood side by side with me through the Air Force, unemployment, Lockheed, sickness and good times. We sure had a bunch of good times. We had 52 years of real living.

I am proud to have been (still am) an original member of the United States Air Force. I was stationed outside of Munich, Germany when the Army Air Corps became the United States Air Force. I was stationed at Neubiberg Air Base.

During the seven years we were stationed at Lincoln AFB Nebraska in the 307th Bomb Wing we met many, many great people. We also met a tiny minority of people who were not so great, but we tried to deal around them.

My wife Grete and I really had a great life in the United States of America Air Force.

Jim Villa and Bobbi stopped overnight in a motel in Phoenix on their way home from Vegas. Jim decided to check the phone book to see if he could find me. We had drifted our separate ways some years before.

I had changed my telephone directory service from unlisted to listed just recently. I had been unlisted for at least twenty-five years. Jim called, I answered, they drove by, we visited, he set me up with the Association and contacted some old 307th troops.

Richard Finke called me. We had a great conversation (REMEMBERING).

Jim Rusher called me. After my memory kicked in we had a real good visit. His memory is better than mine.

I wrote the locator service trying to find Jack Fuller, then I wrote Sedgfield and among other things I asked about Jack. The service notified me on a Friday that Jack had died. Sedge got my letter the next day and called me. I told him of the news I had received about Jack. He had lost contact with Jack. Then Sedge brought me up to speed, on the past 39 years of happenings. Sedge contacted Ernie Pence and Ernie called me. We might still be talking except I believe we both sort of run out of breath. Ernie, I'm glad I know you.

I hope Jim Sine is OK. I think he is tops.

Blue skies to anyone and everyone who might read this. I am certainly glad to be back in touch, after 39 years. (WOWEEE)

Rolland England

## **307<sup>th</sup> Memories DVD Production**

R. T. Boykin, Jr. has volunteered to assemble and make a 307<sup>th</sup> memories DVD. He needs copies of photos, videos, audios etc. taken during the time 307<sup>th</sup> was based at Lincoln. He is looking for any and all activities – photos taken at work, play, unit functions, reflex, and alert, anything that will help tell the total story of the 307<sup>th</sup> at Lincoln.

The DVD will be a combination of video clips and photos. With each photo and video please include information in writing or on cassette audio that explains the situation and include information such as date, unit, names of people & places.

Please send anything that you think will help make the DVD entertaining and interesting. Should you send something you want returned, please so state, and it will be copied and returned.

We have official histories of the 307<sup>th</sup>. This DVD is to reveal the human and humorous side while stationed at Lincoln. A photo or video taken at work, the club, Parker's Steak House, Gold's, downtown main street, your neighborhood, base housing block party, Halloween, Christmas, Little League, etc., etc.

You can send your contributions via US Postal mail or that new fandangled email.

Postal to: R. T. Boykin, Jr.; 832 Shady Glen Ln.; Bedford, TX 76021-4335 or email at [dru\\_rt92@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dru_rt92@sbcglobal.net).

## **A Story That Needs To Be Told By Ernie Pence**

It is now the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War 2, and many of our comrades in arms were veterans of that war. I happened to have had the pleasure of working with many of those fine people. One was Tech. Sgt. Robert Conway. He had so many medals it was embarrassing to stand next to him in formation. His aircraft had been shot down 3 times, it flew round robins for 24 hours on D-Day before the maintenance officer grounded it, saying, "That thing will fall apart in the air if it goes up again, too much damage." Sgt. Conway was a tail gunner on an A-26.

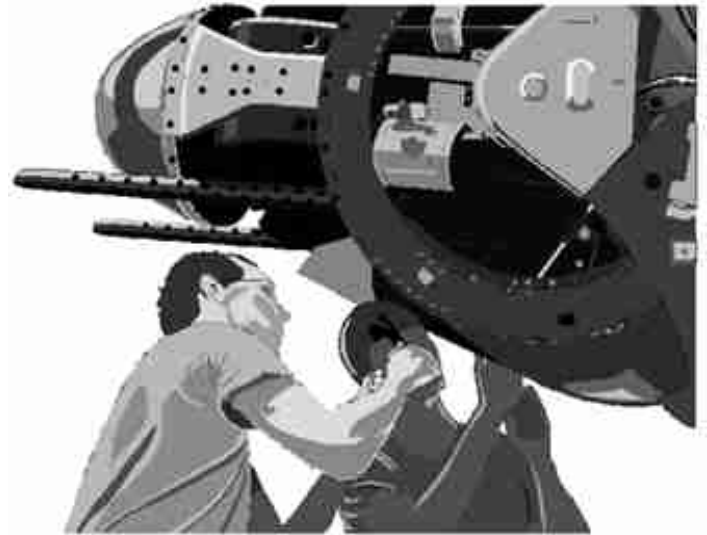
His recollections of those desperate days were spell binding for those of us that had the opportunity to hear them. He told of hedgehopping in France on D-Day to avoid flack. In one incident he recalled popping over a hedge row, the navigator spotted a German crew unloading a 60 ton Tiger Tank from a flat car on a rail siding, the navigator called, "Power, power, power, climb!" He toggled a bomb that went off right under the tank. As tail gunner, he marveled at the sight of the big tank raising up in the air and tumbling with the crew around it doing the same.

*(Continued on page 10)*

(Continued from page 9)

The story that also gave me chills was the crew's close call with a ME-109. They were returning from a mission over France before the invasion. The plane was about halfway across the channel, the crew started to relax a little. Conway got up on his knees from his cramped position, leaned over, and was attempting to retrieve a cigarette from a pocket inside his flight suit. When he glanced out he saw a Messerschmitt boring up at them in their blind spot. He could see the muzzle flashes from the 20 mm canon and the machine guns. Then they begin to feel the thump of cannon rounds going off in the bomb bay. He called for the A/C to get the nose up, some one else was hollering for the AC to get the nose down. The A/C said, "Somebody shoot that SOB!" The nose went up and Conway went to work. He said the ME-109 was boring straight in and hammering away, he put the sights on it, and just laid on the triggers, no short bursts. He said he knew he was dead on because he could see tracers pass by the cockpit on both sides, chunks of stack, cowling, and bits of propeller were flying off of the fighter, and still he came in. He got so close he could see oil streaming over the windscreen. The fighter peeled off smoking heavily, losing altitude and heading back to France. Bob said, "You know I think the SOB might have made it."

Bob Conway still had the itch to be back on a crew and wrangled a transfer into C-130's as a flight engineer. He was killed with his crew when the Hercules blew up after take off in France. Word came down that an ops plane would transport those that wanted to attend his funeral at Arlington National Cemetery. Someone at HQ killed the flight. We owe a lot to those fine brave men. He did back to back tours of 25 missions with out a break in-between, a hell of a man. God Bless Them All, Sergeant England, Petites, Inman, all of the fine enlisted and officers that sacrificed so much for us, and our country. Twenty years later they were working, training, and preparing the next generation for what might come. We are all better men because of them.



## The Chief's Corner By Ernie Pence

### Command Decisions

Alert area, about February of 1961. Airmen First Class Pence drops by the alert area office, he has peeked outside and Nebraska's hawk is about to arrive. Experience has taught him to read the signs, prepare for the worst and hope for the best. The folks there tell him a severe ice storm is on the way, he nods and walks away to look for the crew chief of the other bird that shares his hard-stand.

Fran is engrossed in a serious 9-Ball game, not that any money ever changed hands in that facility. Pence calls him to one side and tells him the news. Fran Mercier wrinkles his brow and replies, "So, what the hell can we do about it." Pence recounts that not ninety days ago, he was sent to a special class for

people that will be operators of the new De-Icing vehicle that has been purchased. The beast is the only one on the base, and guess what? It is parked right outside the alert shack, next to the spare fire extinguishers and MD-3's, therefore it must be there to insure the readiness of the alert birds! It doesn't get any better than this, bombers loaded and cocked, with no ice, hot to trot! Our two heroes doff their cold weather gear and head for the truck.

They arrive at their hardstand, give the password and an explanation to the sentry and set to work. It is already starting to sleet as Pence finishes his bird, they reposition the mobile de-icer to Fran's plane and are about half way done when help arrives. Head lights flashing, horn honking, out steps a Lt. Colonel that should

(Continued on page 11)

<b>Treasurer's Report</b>			
<b>307<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association</b>			
<b>Ending Balance from last report June 10, 2004:</b>		<b>\$4,497.00</b>	
	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	
<b>General Fund Balance</b>			<b>\$4497.00</b>
Expenses:			
Reunion Photography	1118.75		
Admin/Equip/Supplies	26.92		
Website	54.01		
Postage	267.12		
Printing	<u>617.52</u>		
	<b>2084.32</b>		<b>-2084.32</b>
			<b>2412.68</b>
Income:			
Reunion refund from AFRI		1648.37	
Donations		1426.00	
Interest on account		<u>5.31</u>	
		<b>3079.68</b>	<b>+ 3079.68</b>
<b>Ending Balance October 21, 2004</b>			<b>5492.36</b>
<b>Tony Minnick, Treasurer</b>			



## The Last Flight

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

**Arnold Austin**, 424<sup>th</sup> BS, Albuquerque NM, 26 September 2003.

**Cecil L Davis**, 372<sup>nd</sup> BS, Clackamas OR, 17 July 2004.

**Pamela Davis**, Clackamas OR, 25 April 2004.

**Hilmere J Deines**, 370<sup>th</sup> BS, Ft Worth TX, 9 January 2004.

**Jack Fuller**, OMS, Phoenix AZ, date unknown.

**Earl J Higgins**, FMS, Medical Lake WA, date unk.

**Kenneth W McGee**, OMS, House Springs MO, 11 October 1996.

**Holger "Pete" Petersen**, ARS, Colorado Springs CO, 6 October 2004.

**Wesley L Robertson III**, 370<sup>th</sup> BS, Carlsbad CA, 20 June 1997.

**Phyllis Roseling**, Riverside CA, 5 October 2004.

**Jeanette Schwob**, San Antonio TX, 6 July 2004.

**Billy D Staton**, FMS, Wichita Falls TX, 5 February 2003.

**Jack A Wert**, AEMS, Tucson AZ, 31 March 2002.

**Mary Wert**, Tucson AZ, 17 September 1999.

**Richard S Wodziak**, FMS, ARS, Columbia Heights MN, 8 November 2003.

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

*(Continued from page 10)*

have been home with his wife and children, but prowling the flight line late at night may help him accumulate enough points to get over the top for his eagle. Yeah, when cows fly, there has to be some serious politics involved, plus a squeaky clean record with excellent ER's for that to take place, not to mention beaucoup brownie points. The gentleman is in a serious huff! "What the hell do you people think you are doing?" Humm, seems like an odd question to Pence, here we have the only De-Isopropyl Truck on the entire base, the pads are extended and down, the boom is up, copious amounts of hot fluid is being expelled from the application nozzle, which for all intents and purposes appear to be well aimed. Having decided not to make a career of the Air Force, Pence sees this as an opportunity to engage in some spirited debate!

Good evening Colonel, how are you on a night dripping obnoxious weather upon our alert area? Not to be put off the Colonel pursues, "What the hell do you people think you are doing?" Pence retorts, "I would think it is quite obvious Colonel, we are de-icing our aircraft to ensure their ability to answer any alert SAC feels fit to call tonight or tomorrow." Who authorized this? The Colonel's voice has risen two octaves now. "I did sir," replies Pence in a non-plused manner, "You see sir, I am responsible to ensure the airworthiness of this aircraft at all times, that responsibility is even more important given the fact that this aircraft may be called upon to fly a retaliatory strike against an enemy at any time." The Colonel is not prepared to respond to mission requirements of the bird, but attacks along budgetary lines. "Do you know how much de-icing fluid cost?" Pence replies, "Not nearly as much as 50 incinerated birds that were grounded because of ice laden wings!" The Colonel is not about to accept this argument, especially when delivered by a lowly airmen. He launches into a long tirade about the cost of the precious fluid, and quotes from various reports that state the import of maintaining budgetary integrity. Pence replies that

if the fluid was that costly why in hell did they buy the truck in the first place, was it to make the Russians believe that we had a de-icing capability, therefore it was folly to attack in winter? The Colonel replies, "You are being insubordinate Airman!" Pence retorts, "That's a catch all crutch Colonel, my argument is better than yours, and you don't want to admit it!" The Colonel was prepared for this answer, "Cease operations, return the De-Icing Truck to it's parking place right now, that is an order!" Pence salutes smartly, replies, "Yes sir, cheap shot victory though." They train command post guys to handle any problem with great panache.

You guessed it, the next day 49 out of 50 alert aircraft are declared uncocked. To add insult to injury, some brilliant ass comes up with a phenomenal solution, all crew chiefs with be issued a 2 foot length of garden hose with which to beat the ice off of the wings of a valuable high tech bomber. As Airman Pence dutifully helps Fran beat hell out of his airplane, he keeps a sharp eye out for his friend from command post. Alas, the late night hours or the ego will not stand the light of day.

\*\*\*\*\*

### In Memory of Major N V Meeks By James Villa

March 7, 1963 would be another regular duty day for me; I would report in on the day shift for flight line duty. There would be other people who would have maintenance preflighted and launched the airplanes that would be flying that day.

The morning was cool but I wouldn't need the cold weather parka or other heavy clothing. There had been snow but there was just a light sprinkling of snow and small snow patches. As I can remember, the sky was mostly clear.

Since I was the only man reporting in for day shift, my flight chief, Halan Tordoff told me, "lets get a coffee", We went over to the Base Ops snack bar and joined in with the "other morning bunch". "T" and I had just left Base Ops and were on the way back to the "A" section maintenance trailer when a B-47 started his takeoff roll from the south end of the runway.

*(Continued on page 12)*

(Continued from page 11)

When I was on the flight line, I would stop what I was doing whenever I could, to watch the airplanes takeoff and land. It was a sight I treasured, I still do. This day, when the B-47 started his takeoff roll, we became aware that this takeoff was an ATO (assisted takeoff) when the pilot fired the rockets. I had never seen an ATO type takeoff.

It wasn't but a few seconds and we could see flame trailing the airplane from the right side of the fuselage. Horror struck very quickly; the airplane was on fire.

By the time the B-47 got directly across from the flightline parking area, flame was trailing a great distance behind the airplane. For the first time in my life, I felt so helpless.

There wasn't much could be done for an airplane in this situation. It also "hit home", the B-47 was 53-4226 (assigned to A section, C flight), that was my flight. This was the very same 4226 that I had alert crewed while at Greenham Common AFB, England when the Cuban crisis started.

I'm sure when the control tower alerted the

pilot, the airplane was on fire, the pilot knew what he had to do instantly. If he stopped, the airplane would most likely blowup before any of the crew could get out. He had to get the airplane airborne and high enough that the entire crew could safely bail out. Also he would be taking the airplane away from the crowded flight line and also the fully uploaded alert aircraft.

"T" and I watched the airplane climb very rapidly and clear the north end of the base. Other than the long flame coming from the right side of the fuselage, the airplane was flying perfectly. We saw one parachute -then two more chutes. We breathed a sigh of relief. When we got to the "A" trailer and looked at the 60-9 flying schedule, we found there had been four people on 4226, Captain Meeks was the pilot.

Years later, I would read that Captain Meeks had told the rest of the crew he would stay with the airplane and try to take the airplane where it would not hurt anyone or do great damage. I would also learn that when he ejected, his seat belt didn't open (due to a faulty explosive unit on the seat belt harness). Captain Meeks rode the seat in.

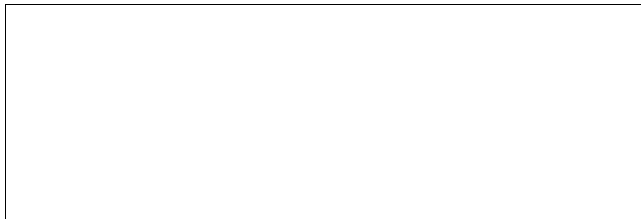
Captain Meeks gave his life in considera-

tion of others, 4226 barely missed a school with children present that day.

I would read, many years later, it was determined that fuel was coming out of one of the airplane's fuel tank vents. Since 4226 had an ATO rack installed, the airplane most likely had been on Alert. Sitting on alert for a long period of time, the level of fuel in the fuel tank may have been less than full. With the winter weather conditions, moisture may have gotten into the fuel vent valve; the moisture may have frozen and stuck the fuel vent valve in the open position. But this is only my thoughts.

Forty -two years later, I can still see-4226 climbing into the sky with flame trailing. But I remember Captain Meeks another way.

I was assisting another crew chief launch Captain Meeks on a regular training mission. This would be a night launch and the weather was very cold. When Captain Meeks and crew arrived at the airplane, he was wearing his GI pile cap with the earflaps pulled down. I can still see the captain standing in the forward wheel well with his two crew members while they reviewed the airplane's 781's. He was in a very jolly mood. This is what I like to remember best about him. It was a honor and great privilege to know Major Meeks.



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