

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 46

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

JULY 2005

How Time Flies!

President's Column

What? No, it can't be! You've got to be kidding me. FORTY YEARS since the 307th cased its colors? Why, most of us weren't forty years old when that event happened. Over half the population of the world has been born since Lincoln AFB shut down as an active SAC base. And yet, during the brief eleven years that the wing was based at Lincoln, bonds of friendship and camaraderie were forged that have enabled this group of noble warriors to remain linked across those intervening years, especially after the formation of our 307th Bomb Wing Association.

The centerpiece of this extraordinary linkage is the biennial reunion that we and our families enjoy. Unfortunately, tomorrow is promised to no one; there's no way of knowing how much longer our members will be able to form a reunion "quorum." (Some 307th BW Association reunion in the distant future might be held in a phone booth ... but even then, with the same affection and nostalgia that have energized all the previous ones!).

I offer these somber reflections because each passing month seems inexorably to deplete our numbers. For me, as for most of you, the main motivation to attend our reunions is the pleasure of mingling with comrades and friends. But a minor chord of that motivation is

the impulse to grasp every possible chance to spend time with people who are important to me, because it may be my **last** chance. (I'm not talking about my own demise, of course. I intend to outlive ALL of you!) The punch line? Please plan on joining us in Charleston next year, for my sake, your sake and the sake of all your friends.

As with the last reunion, I'm assigning a little homework for next April. I'd like all of you to give some thought to the possible locations for the 2008 Reunion. Most of us have gotten used to varying the destination every two years and we can continue in that mode if you wish. On the other hand, some thoughtful members have pointed out the relentless march of time (see above) and have broached the idea that it may be easier for a greater number of people to attend if we settled on a single, permanent, more centrally located destination. Lincoln is a logical choice, but not the only one. Please give this matter some thought, talk it over with your spouses and friends, send me your ideas and be prepared to discuss the pros and cons of various approaches (and destinations) at our business meeting.

Wendy and I hope you all enjoy a relaxing and healthy summer and look forward to seeing you next year.

Pete Todd

Where We've Gone Before

To add to Pete's remarks about selection of future reunion site(s), here's a reminder of where we've already been and when, and how many of us attended each reunion. Do you have a favorite place? Let us know.

1988 - Las Vegas - 315

1990 - Lincoln - 429

1992 - Orlando - 209

1994 - Seattle - 187

1996 - Dayton - 243

1998 - Colorado Springs - 213

2000 - Lincoln - 324

2002 - Fort Worth - 147

2004 - Las Vegas - 149

Donations

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

Ronald W Betts
Rolland England
Donald Brent Horn
Donald Nigro
Clark Peterson
Bill Rogers
Robert Schultz
William R Shelley

Back in Touch

George W Lewis, 1648 Taylor Rd
#155, Port Orange, FL 32127
Willard R Rollins, 265 Birchwood Est,
Exeter, PA 18643-1472

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

Officers of the Association:

President: Pete Todd, 1250 Big Valley Dr,
Colorado Springs, CO 80919-1015. Phone
719-531-5874. Email: pete-
todd@adelphia.net.

Vice President/Newsletter: Mike Gingrich,
1525 Edenwood Drive, Beaver Creek, OH
45434. Phone 937-426-5675.
Email: mikegingri@cs.com

Secretary: Larry 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

Association Founders:

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

Betty C Pelletier, deceased 29 November
2004.

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

Membership: Jan Boggess, 4304 Ridge-
crest Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80918.
Phone 719-548-8024. Email: larry-
jan@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
803-776-4294. Email: K4JHL@earthlink.net.

The Association is a non-profit Veterans
Organization. All contributions to the organi-
zation 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

Trying to remember what was where around Lincoln Airplane Camp? The nearby satellite view might help you wipe some of the cobwebs from your memory. Today, more and more overhead photography can now be seen on the Internet. Most recently, Google Maps has put a fantastic capability on the web that allows you to switch between recent overhead photographs and very detailed maps of the same area. The maps are printable but the photos are not. Also, local government real estate record sites frequently allow you or anyone to see and print aerial views of your property, so perhaps you need to be careful about your garb while sunbathing in the back yard!

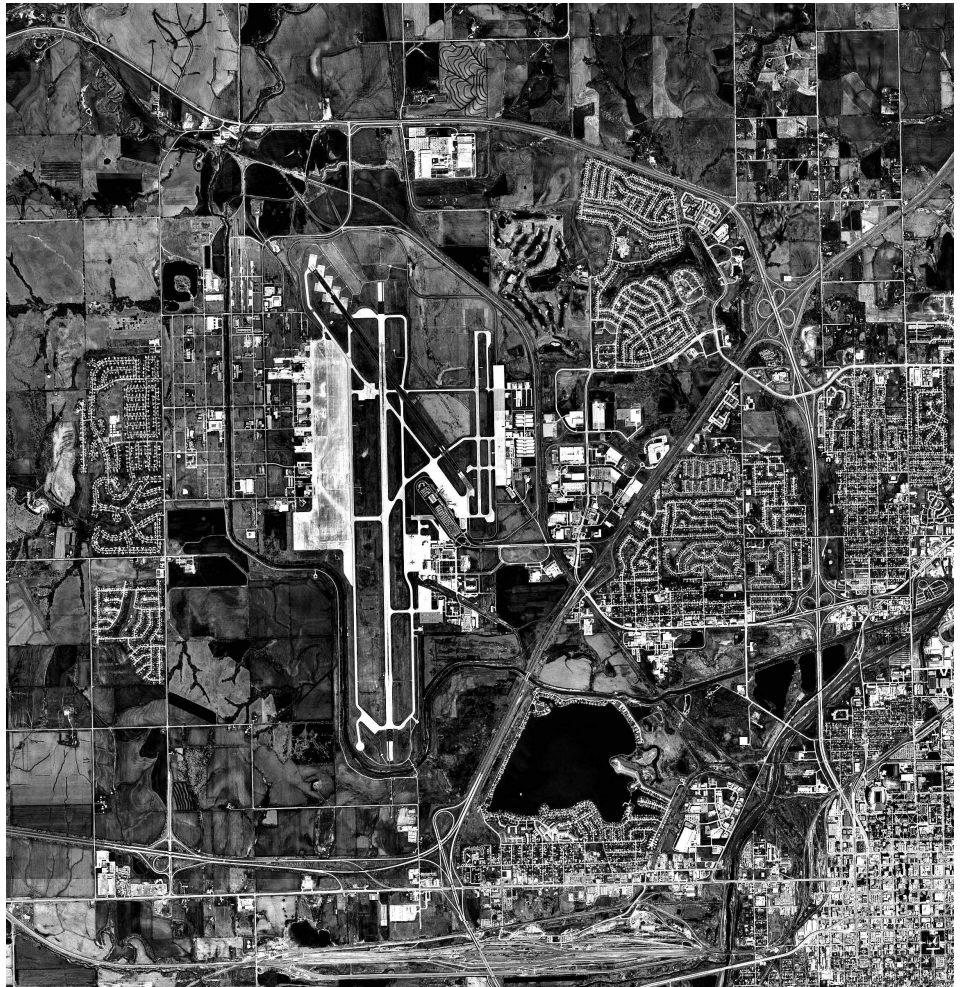
The 307th B-47/KC-97 Experience DVD Project

Thanks to all of you that have contributed photos and video clips to our DVD project. **R T. Boykin** is in the process of scanning , arranging, the videos and photos for the DVD.

"Tall Tales" are needed for The 307th B-47/KC-97 Experience DVD Project:

Everyone that served in our military has a favorite memory of their tour of duty, some serious and others humorous. Those of us that served in the 307th has at least one favorite "Tall Tale" of their 307th experience. Sharing our "Tall Tales" at reunions is one of the things we do. These individual stories should be preserved and what better place than on our 307th DVD?

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(Continued from page 2)

You can use a VHS video camcorder, digital video camera, audio cassette, or paper and pen to record your "Tall Tale". Please record your favorite 307th memory and send or email a copy to R T Boykin Jr; 832 Shady Glen LN; Bedford, TX 76021-4335; email: dru_rt92@sbcglobal.net. Phone: 817-595- 6507.

WWII at LAFB and B-29s- from Rolland England

(Ex-gunner & just about ex-everything else.)

In January or February of 1945 I was assigned to Lincoln Army Air Base, Lincoln, Nebraska for a couple of weeks for the purpose of becoming a crew member on a B-25 Billy Mitchell aircraft.

My pilot was Major Frank Bailey, he was from Arkansas. The co-pilot was a first lieutenant from Michigan. The bombardier/navigator was a first lieutenant from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The tailgunner a Staff Sergeant with 30 combat missions under his belt over Germany as a B-17 Flying Fortress tailgunner. The radioman/gunner was from Los Angeles, California. The tailgunner's home was Raton, New Mexico. I, Rolland England, was the top turret engineer gunner from Fairland, Oklahoma.

We became a crew, on paper, at Lincoln Army Air Base, Lincoln, Nebraska. From there we were sent to Greenville Army Air Base, Greenville, South Carolina for our combat training. After three months of training we were a well-coordinated flight crew and we were pronounced COMBAT READY.

Some of England's B-29 Super Fortress Experiences

In February of 1946 I was assigned to Clovis Army Air Base, Clovis, New Mexico. The name of the airbase was later changed to Cannon Army Air Base, in honor of a four star general named Cannon. I was an ex-gunner with a gunner's MOS. There were two more ex-gunners, one was also an POW in the European Theater of Operations. As 748's we were not authorized to be part of the organization. So we applied for transfers. Some promotions were being made but we could not compete because we were not authorized. Our transfer requests were turned down. Reason: Shortage of MOS's in the command. One of many acts of double talk I was to encounter in my military career. I learned to ride with the tide, so to speak.

Anyway, while I was at Clovis I was on flying status as a B-29 scanner on a test flight crew. Our test pilot was a huge man named Callahan and he was also our maintenance officer. He had people working for him in grades from private to captain and just about everything in between. Nobody had any doubts about who was boss of that outfit. It was Lt. Callahan.

One night about nine PM we were attempt-

ing to test fly an airplane that was needed for something extremely important the next day. Thus, the night testing. Anyway, we headed down the runway and # 3 engine started streaming a flame about 30 feet long. I called out on the intercom, fire on #3. Callahan chopped all four and taxied off the runway and blew the fire out. The fire and rescue teams were there but Callahan would not allow them on it. We taxied back to the parking ramp and the other scanner and myself went to work on # 3 engine. We found a broken fuel spider line. We replaced it and Callahan was waiting. We finished the test flight and the aircraft was available the next day. This was late winter or early spring of 1946.

We had six or seven young troops who had been through school on the B-29 as mechanics. They kept us going until we could gain some experience. I was checked out and flew as a B-29 scanner and as a flight engineer on the B-25 while I was at Clovis. One time I was on a B-25 crew that took the payroll to the firemen and security people at Colorado Springs Army Air Base. It was a closed base but we had clearance to land with their money. That was 1946. I just thought I would let my 307th compatriots know that I had some experience on the very heavy bomber B-29, before I got to LAFB, the second time.

On Army Day in 1946 several B-29's from a number of bases around the US rendezvoused at Grand Island Nebraska's Army Air Field to fly over Chicago in celebration of Army Day. I was a scanner on one of the planes from Clovis, New Mexico. The pilots and co-pilots attended a briefing the day before the flight. It was held in the base theatre. Colonel "Killer Kane" of Ploesti oil fields fame was going to lead us over Chicago. He told the pilots to get a good night sleep, they were going to need it. He also told them that we would be going low and fast and if anyone dropped out that he would see them in his office immediately after they returned. We were a good ways back in the formation and we ended up flying low just about all the way. By low, I mean cornfields were damaged and fence posts were knocked down. Any aircraft damage was concealed until we got back to our home base. Our pilot and co-pilot were exhausted and I was so shook up that it took two drinks to get the shakes settled down, but our pilots did not have to face Col. Kane. Thank God for that. BLUE SKYS to all...

Don Ivie writes to Tony Minnick about past events...

Hello Sir... Tony to some, but Sir to me,

I'm not sure where to start, it's been nearly 50 years since LAFB for me, although I received my orders in January of 1955 to report to Lincoln on or before February 5th, 1955. When I arrived there I found an almost empty barracks and a nearly empty flight line. Some of the unit was just arriving from Okinawa and a few of us greenhorns just out of tech school were

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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.

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getting our first taste of Nebraska's bitter cold. Being one of the boys from Illinois I thought I knew what cold weather was, but I didn't have a clue what was in store for me at Lincoln.

I have a lot of fine memories of those times and I'm still able to call and recall the names of lot of the personnel that I served with. I won't bore you with a lot of it right now, but I did want to get in touch. You were a Major when I knew you and I was just an Airman trying to be the best soldier I knew how to be.

I am sending you a copy of couple of letters that you probably won't remember, but I was proud to receive them and have kept them all these many years. (These were letters of commendation addressed to Ivie for his role in stopping a security penetration at a UK base. Tony Minnick was the last indorser in the chain of command. Where would we be today without people like Don trying to be the best soldier? Don has also recently sent us old photos that now appear on our website.)

Another troop found us...

Earl Seagraves, former crewchief on 52-064 wrote us a newsy letter from Paso Robles, CA, where he is living with his niece, since his wife passed away in 2000. Earl was with the wing from 1953 till late 1957, and was onboard 52-0054 when it went off the runway in May of 1955. His career after discharge has been varied - he worked on the DC-6, 7, 8, and 9 at Douglas Aircraft, then got into refinery work with Shell Oil, then became a machinist until he retired in 2002. He is still staying in aviation, as R/C airplanes are his current avocation. He regrets having a conflict for the time of our Charleston reunion.

Inquiry about the 307th Presidential Unit Citation

I was stationed at Lincoln Air Force Base with the 307th OMS as a B-47 aircraft mechanic on 03/23/1964. While with the 307th we were authorized the to wear the Presidential Unit Citation with two Oak Leaf clusters. When I got discharged I had a copy of this authorization in my personal records. In the process of moving I lost my copy for this Citation, which was on some other form, maybe DD 215? This citation was not on my DD form 214. I was with the 307th bomb wing until 3/05/1965 and then got transferred to the 98th OMS until 12/14/1965. I have contacted national personnel records center and also headquarters Air Force personnel center: they keep telling me to resubmit my request, which I have done to this point with no results. This is why I'm asking for help from anyone that was stationed at Lincoln during this time frame. I'm hoping that someone may have a copy of the authorization for this citation so that I can get this back in my records. I need any information show-

ing that the 307th. Bomb wing was awarded this citation. I know that I maybe asking for a lot but I will ever be grateful! My phone number is 715-282-6645, and my email address is dhubatch@newnorth.net.

Thanks, David E Hubatch.

(Can anyone shed further light and help David? We have verified that the 307th was awarded two Presidential Unit Citations, or equivalent for WW2 action in the Pacific, and at least one during the Korean War. As a result, some of us remember being authorized to wear the PUC w/2OLC while at Lincoln, perhaps in recognition of the Wing's heritage. Thus far, we have been unable to determine if this was entered into personal records and on what type of record.)

Kids and Family Department...

In a previous issue we published a photo of **Calvin Gail Cragun** and his KC-97 crew in hopes that someone would identify those in the picture and get in touch with Calvin's daughter, **Kaya Staehlin**. Well, it happened, as Kaya writes below...

I've been meaning to drop a note of thanks for publishing the photo that I sent to the Newsletter. I think it looks great! I was very touched by what was written as well. I really enjoyed reading the Newsletter.

Another reason that I'm writing is to tell that I received an e-mail from **Richard Roberts** who saw the photo in the Newsletter. Richard wrote to tell me that he knew everyone in the photo AND....the best part....he remembered my father very well and held him in high regard. Richard also told me that he will send me stories about working with my dad. He told me that one of the guys in the photo, **Albert Brooks**, was his best buddy at Lincoln AFB and is still a good friend, and that Mr.Brooks is also interested in contacting me and telling me stories about my dad! Richard also sent me a bunch of e-mail

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Treasurer's Report			
307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association			
Ending Balance from last report February 15, 2005:		\$5,369.84	
	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	
General Fund Balance			\$5369.84
Expenses:			
Admin/Equip/Supplies	54.01		
Postage	263.95		
Printing	<u>594.01</u>		
	911.97		- 911.97
			4457.87
Income:			
Donations		440.00	
Interest on account		<u>3.03</u>	
		443.03	+ 443.03
Ending Balance June 15, 2005			4900.90
Tony Minnick, Treasurer			

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address of men who worked with my dad and remember him fondly.

I feel like it's Christmas and my Birthday rolled up together! I couldn't be more thrilled!

And I have the newsletter and the 307th Website to thank for this! All my best, Kaya Staehlin.

And **Sedge Hill's** son Mike writes...

I found the website on March 18 of this year, exactly 40 years to the day that I arrived in Minot. My dad (Sedgefield Hill) served with the 307th at LAFB. I would like to know if old SACBRATS qualify for associate membership in the Association?

Mike Hill (LAFB SACBRAT)...

Thanks for the comeback and the honor of becoming a member of the Association. I have to tell you that when I found the 307th Website I got tears in my eyes while going through some of the things that brought back memories. Ah yes, those were the best of time and the worst of times.

Finding the 307th Website prompted me to start a project that I have wanted to do for twenty years. I have started a database on all B-47 serial numbers that were built. At the present time I have all serial numbers in the computer and am fine tuning the list. I combined the 307th aircraft list and the crew chief list and that appears in the database. I noticed that dad was listed as a crew chief. Well he was for a brief time before he moved over to job control. His plane was 51-2207. It was later transferred out. It then came back and that is the B-47 that they put on display over by the BX- Annex. I believed that after the base closed it went across the field and was used for fire practice. I have also identified all of the serial numbers for the B-47s lost by the 307th. I downloaded all of the 307th Newsletters and spent about a week digesting them.

Mike Hill - SACBRAT

And from a Niece...

Things sometimes come at us from completely unexpected directions. Such is the following from Marsha West, the niece of **Col Walter F "Buddy" Duch**, who was the first Commander of the 424th BS, later FMS Commander and DCM. This came about within days after many additional 307th related photos were posted on the 307th website --one of these was an old WW2 photo from the CBI theater showing Duch and his deputy...

My name is Marsha West. I am PROUD to say (and delighted to see him) I am the niece of Walter F. "Buddy" Duch. I was thrilled to see his pix with John Pacura in Burma-1944. I loved him so very very much. He was the greatest. I am sobbing to see him. Thank you... I loved my Uncle Duch so much. He was so loving and the greatest guy. When we were young and he came to visit, we always begged him to put on his uniform with all his medals and then we "paraded him around the neighborhood". He was a

bit embarrassed, but he loved us so much, he did it for my sister and me.

We recently found a secret notebook our dearly loved Mom had and she tracked Uncle Duch and WW2 step by step in this scrapbook. It is amazing. So, when I saw him on your website, I was overwhelmed.

It surprised my sister Ladis and I that his nickname was "Buddy". He went by Duke always, as far as we know. I wonder how he got it? My sister and I now live in San Antonio where there is a museum dedicated to the WWII Pacific called the Nimitz. When I went there and "saw" what my uncle went through, as well as all the soldiers, and just guessed at all the different feelings and emotions he must have experienced, I cried like a child for an hour. (I did discretely go over to a corner so no one saw me.)

Sincerely, Marsha West

In late April, the 551st Strategic Missile Squadron Association, our sister association from LAFB, held their second reunion at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. The 551st Association was organized and is ably led by **Ken Fisher**, a retired NYC Firefighter, and **Ron Resh**, a Washington DC attorney. Their reunion was highlighted by dedication of a memorial bench, similar in structure to the 307th memorial bench, and is shown in the nearby photo, and by a concert by the Air Force Band of Flight at their banquet in the Museum. Ron has noticed a conspicuous absence in the Museum's Memorial Park, namely that there is no memorial specifically dedicated to the Air Force's most powerful and largest command, the Strategic Air Command. Ron has taken it upon himself to get the ball rolling on a fitting memorial - he has drafted a potential design and has conferred with the Air Force leadership regarding it. Stay tuned - we will be hearing more in the future.



Kat Ward, Bob Wise, Fred Bennett, Don Linnell, Richard Roberts, William Filpula, Bill Rogers, Ken Matthew, OK Shellhammer, Allan Cantion, Bob Mulleins, Joe Rogers, Ron Betts, Archie Christie, and Loue Roseling have all been heard from recently.



Charleston, Where History Lives

The Tenth 307th B-47/KC-97 Bomb Wing Association Stand-Up in Charleston is **just nine months away**. Contracts with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFRI) and the Clarion Hotel have been approved and signed. The dates are Sunday 23 April through Thursday 27 April 2006. Our Clarion host, Alastair James, is well along in his planning for our reunion. He and his staff are looking forward to the occasion.

A few reminders: The Clarion is located near Charleston International Airport, and there is shuttle service available to the hotel. 307th people will be able to check in three days early or stay three days after the event for the reunion rate of \$79.00 per night which includes a complimentary hot breakfast buffet each day. Those who drive in with RVs may park free at the hotel, but there are no hookups available on the premises.

AFRI will begin firming up tour possibilities in September, and we'll include an activities preference list for your consideration in the November newsletter. Sure to be included are tours of Historic Charleston. The area's rich military history extends from the Revolutionary war to now, and the itinerary looks at not only the military operations that took place, but also at the men and women whose sacrifices helped shape today's world.

Among the possibilities:

- A tour of The Citadel, including the Citadel Museum;
- A tour of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor where the civil war began;
- A Charleston Harbor tour;
- Charleston Harbor and Cooper River sunset experience, the SpiritLine Dinner Cruise. The three-hour cruise features the Spirit of Carolina, Charleston's finest dining yacht. Enjoy a three course meal prepared to order on-board, live entertainment, dancing, fully stocked bar, and beautiful views of Charleston's enchanting harbor. Boats depart from Patriots Point.
- Ft. Moultrie tour;
- Tour and lunch at Charleston AFB, home of the 437th Airlift Wing (C-17s and C-141s).
- Patriot's point Naval and Maritime Museum - Home of the famous WWII aircraft carrier Yorktown, submarine Clamagore, destroyer Laffey, Coast Guard cutter Ing-

ham, and the Medal of Honor Museum. Vintage military aircraft and weapons are on display;

- A visit to the Charleston Market and lunch in Old Market area restaurants (and from there it's an easy walk to Waterfront Park.);
- A visit to Magnolia Plantation and its Gardens. (This 60-acre blackwater cypress and tupelo swamp with wildflowers, bog plants, and native and exotic shrubs, is accessible via boardwalks, bridges and dikes with views of waterfowl, alligators and other wildlife.);
- A tour of Middleton Place, a carefully preserved 18th century plantation and National Historic Landmark, encompasses 65 acres of America's oldest landscaped Gardens. A tour of the House Museum highlights family collections and the role of the Middleton family in American history. Craftspeople in the Plantation Stable yards recreate the activities of a self-sustaining Low Country plantation.

AND.....

- Newly remodeled, the Middleton Place Restaurant offers expanded seating with views of the Azalea hillside and Rice Mill Pond. For lunch, Middleton Place visitors can enjoy a three-course presentation of Low Country cuisine. Dinner guests can pamper themselves in an elegant, candlelit atmosphere. Entrees include Roasted Pork Loin, Pan Seared Duck Breast and Garden Grits.
- The South Carolina Aquarium, located on Charleston's harbor, depicts the aquatic habitats of the state from mountain streams, through rivers, lakes and the salt marsh, to the depths of the Atlantic Ocean;
- Charleston Museum, the oldest museum in America.

So, you can see that there are a lot of things to see and do in what South Carolinians for generations have called "The Holy City." As we said, a firm list of possibilities for your selection will come out in the November newsletter.

Come share the history...
Jarvis "Flip" Latham

Tales of the Toolbox By Paul Koski

Chaplain's Corner

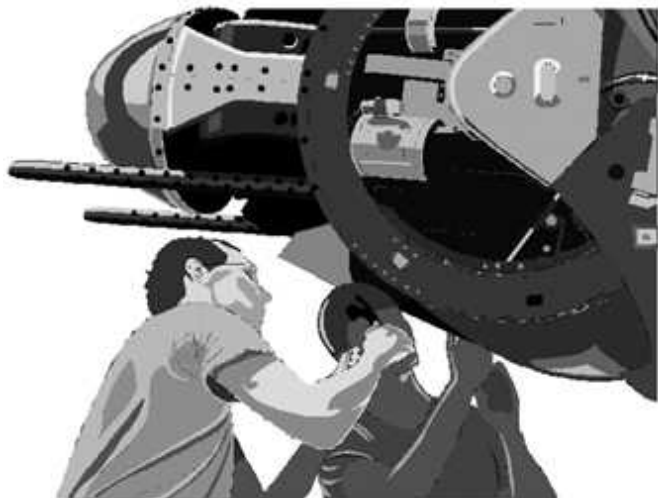
It was Saturday morning, 10:00 a.m. and we were at the base theater for commander's call. He had finished briefing us on the status of the wing and the upcoming ORI.

Someone had complained to him about our language and swearing too much. So he delegated to the chaplain the task of handling that portion of the assembly.

He introduced the chaplain, and his subject of Dynamics of Moral Leadership.

The Chaplain started out OK but when he reached the part about our language and swearing in public he ran into a problem, when he said "I don't know how so many of you can

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The Chief's Corner By Ernie Pence

Major Lindsay

Major William Lindsey was, to the say least, different from most officers one envisions whilst working your way through basic and tech school. He was a short man, heavy of beard, uniform shirt always finding it's way out of his pants. His cap had most of the silver trim worn off and it was a little black on the topside, from nosing under and around B-47's. Quiet most of the time, but dark eyes that would give away a laugh before he would. He was a man that totally understood enlisted humor and flat enjoyed it. He also had that sense that enabled him to judge a man's capabilities to do his job, and how long he would endure something before blowing his cool. His little brown Plymouth seemed to fit his demeanor as he made his rounds, it too, was a little faded. But when the chips were down he was hell on wheels and knew the book inside out or quoted it in such a fashion that others never questioned his knowledge.

One cold winter day Major Lindsey pulled up in front of Arthur Way's airplane, where a group of people from the engine shop had been wasting the better part of the day trying unsuccessfully to hang an outboard engine. Way had been standing by freezing his bun's off all morning, and half the afternoon waiting for the engine specialist to complete their assignment. The Major asked Way what the problem was, Way replied, "I don't Major, but it sure doesn't look that tough to me." Major Lindsey got out of his little faded Plymouth, walked over to the frustrated engine people and said, "Fellows why don't you let the chief put in the mount pin you seem to be having so much trouble with." There was some mumbling about he can sure as hell try, but it's not going to happen, we have been at it all day! Way hops up on the stand, looks through the mount pin hole, gives a few short signals to the engine crane operator, sets the pin in place, taps it lately with a wrench and it slides in place. Major Lindsey laughed out loud, then stated, "Come on Way, I'll buy you a cup of coffee, these people should be able to do the rest

without you." Talk about chagrin and long faces.

During Quemoy Matsu, we were uploading my bird with everything at one time, chaff, ammo, fuel, water alcohol, and yes, the weapon. We thought the lid would blow and both wings were maxing out to get everything uploaded. The Chaff people dropped a box of combat chaff on my left wheel well door punching a nice hole in it. Panic ensued and the field maintenance officer promptly arrived on the scene, and said all operations would cease, the wheel well door must be changed and a retraction test pulled. Through the chaos our short grizzled little Major arrived and stated, "Not no, but hell no!" He started everyone back to work, and told everyone within earshot this is not a training alert, it is an EWO operation. There would be no door change and no retraction test either. This of course set the Field Maintenance officer into fits of indignation and rage. As he was about to get into his first paragraph of regulations and protestations, the good Major shut him off. He flatly told him the damage was not in a critical flight surface area, the damage would pose no threat to crew or aircraft if it were properly scab patched. The Field Maintenance Officer was not about to be put off and started into his second argument, until Major Lindsey stated he would not cease upload operations, and would personally report to the DCM that this aircraft was going to be late cocking because an idiot was slowing down the process. Then asked if he or the offended officer would call the sheet metal shop. We patched and cocked the aircraft. Major Lindsey was a pit bull, we were damn glad he was ours. If I have to crew another bird later in the hereafter, I hope he has gotten his old job back.

More Memories of B-47 53-6244 from James Villa

It was very pleasing to see the photos of the B-47 Stratojet Association's memorial to the B-47 and all of the people associated with the airplane, in the 307th newsletter. There are not many that know about the B-47 and the mission that the airplane performed.

I had vowed to never visit the Air Force museum again when I learned what had happened to the 307th's 6244. When I learned that one of my fellow maintenance section's guys was going to attend the B-47 Stratojet Association's reunion in Dayton in September 2004, I put my feelings about the AF Museum aside and went. I am sure glad I did!

Not only did Jim Rusher and I come together again after forty years, but two more of the greatest guys in the 307th were able to attend; Charlie Baker and Richard Finke. Bobbi and I visited with T. R. Taylor and Mike and Jan Gingrich. It is very rewarding to know so many of the Lincoln Air Force bunch and see them after all these years. Jim and Helen Rusher, Bobbi and I just happened to get off course from the Holiday Inn, to the AF Museum the first trip. Helen and I left the navigation corrections

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These guys hadn't seen each other in 40 years! Jim Rusher, Dick Finke, and James Villa at the B-47 Stratojet Association Reunion, September 2004.

to Jim and Bobbi. We got to see a lot more of Dayton than expected.

The weather could not have been any better than the day of the memorial dedication. It was fabulous! The dedication program was just great and to see all of the B-47er's together, will always be frozen in my mind. To remember the event, I have a 10x36 photo of the entire group.

I was astounded when Mike Gingrich told Jim Rusher and I to take notice of the tail number on the B-47 rendition when the memorial was unveiled. There were the numbers **53-6244**.

The museum restoration people have done a wonderful job on the RB-47H 034299. Jim Rusher took many photos in the cockpit (*you can view them on the 307th website*), which show the meticulous work that was done. It is a great job considering the airplane had been exposed to the elements and vandalism while being a static display aircraft.

There were three big "feeds" during the reunion, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The banquet on Friday night was held at the AF Museum and our associations group had the museum to ourselves until 10:00 pm. That gave us a real personal chance to view the aircraft at a leisurely pace. The effort to provide such a fine aircraft collection is certainly demonstrated there at the museum. I am personally thankful for what has been done by the volunteers and others involved in the museum's operation. Bobbi and I were the last to leave that night.

The B-47 Stratojet Association will hold their next reunion sometime in 2006 in Wichita, Kansas. Information about membership can be found at the Association's website

www.b-47.com. Those not having access to a computer can contact me at 640 Koy Rd. Bellville, TX 77418. Cell phone is 979-877-5255. Anyone with an interest in the airplane's existence can be a member.

I was able to serve with some fine people from different parts of the US. I was selected to maintain one of the finest airplanes built, the B-47. I am supposed to forgive, but I won't forget.

Yes, I am bitter! Not only about the destruction of 6244, but just as much for the loss of the 307th place in history. The time I spent in the Air Force was the highest point in my life. It is my intention to continue to place evidence that 6244 existed and keep the 307th Bomb Wing floating in history, any way I can.

During the entire preparation time of 6244, she was kept in the south east quarter of the south hanger. The airplane was taken out only to be refueled and for running the engines. Then she was towed back into the hanger. A2C Bruce Stufflebeam and I would do some of the maintenance ground preflight in the hanger on the morning of the museum launch. Before daylight, she was towed and parked in front of Base Operations. There we continued our ground preflight with power connected.

When the flight crew arrived there were a few photos taken with the wing commander, Colonel A.W. Holderness. The crew members were Captain Gene Hickman, Aircraft commander; Captain Pete Todd, co-pilot; and Captain Al Ottaviano, navigator. A1C James Sine would be going along as crew chief.

The weather wasn't very cooperative that morning. It was overcast and a light drizzle. I heard there were supposed to be some people out from the city of Lincoln, but they didn't show, for some reason.

The aircrew climbed aboard and commenced engine start. Bruce and I closed up the 6244 for the last time.



6244 during it's brief life at the Air Force Museum

Almost six years would pass before I had the opportunity to travel to the USAF Museum. I can't explain the excitement as I walked out to the open display area where she was parked. I noticed the rudder unlocked and also the right outrigger tire was flat. What really set me back; our crew member's names had been replaced. As I walked around 6244 in the same way we did

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at the ground preflight inspections, I noticed the 307th crest had been replaced by another (note - that of the 19th BW, headquartered at WPAFB). I couldn't help but wonder what the hell had happened. It was great to see 6244. I gave a young couple a walk-around tour. Then I sat on a bench under the B-36's right wing for a long time remembering. Little did I know this would be the last time I would set eyes on her.

In 1997, I came through Dayton. I was raring to see 6244 again. I wanted to show the airplane to a little red headed woman who some of you know. When I saw 2280, I was stunned! I asked a few of the museum people what had happened to 6244, but I could have asked the museum walls and gotten the same response.

We came away from the museum theorizing the airplane had been moved to another museum. I had heard a SAC museum was being built in Nebraska. Maybe 6244 went there. Or maybe the airplane had been taken back into service and ended up being stored somewhere. I hadn't heard at that time, all of the B-47's had been scrapped at Davis Monthan.

A few years passed and then in 2002, the same red head kept prodding me to find out if the 307th Bomb Wing had reunions. Bobbi had "Military" send me a free copy of the B-47 Stratojet Association. I immediately applied for membership, and Sigmund Alexander, president at that time, sent the last newsletter.

When I opened the newsletter, the photos of 6244 being sent to the museum caught my eye. I will be thrilled! The fourth photo showed the unbelievable; 6244 on the fire pit. I must admit I uttered some very choice, unprintable words. For the last two years, I have been searching out details about 6244's removal from the museum. There have been several different reasons for replacing 6244. None of them hold much water. The most recent version is that 6244's wings drooped too low, and

would not clear sign posts and fences, to be moved to a new museum site. It would seem that a little fence work and sign removal wouldn't cost that much in comparison to a "one of a kind" airplane.

There isn't any doubt in my mind that Wright-Patterson wanted their B-47 in the museum and coveted 6244's museum slot. They most likely figured no one would care very much. There, I said it, and will stand by what I said. Well, they were wrong! Our Lincoln AFB people stand out as honorable and dedicated people. I am so glad for the sentiment from members of the B-47 Stratojet Association. They brought the B-47 memorial into being, and 6244's tail number was inscribed on the rendition of a B-47, on the memorial.

I invite you to visit our website, Bobbi's and mine, www.307bwassoc.org. and go the links, click, then scroll to James Villa and click. I have quite a bit of B-47 material. My Tech school manuals, photos at LAFB, Greenham Common and Spain. Gus Letto, AC from the 301st at Lockbourne, has some fabulous photos of B-47's in flight and on the ground.

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have sex with so many inanimate objects." That was when he noticed the four or five nurses in the front row. (it should be noted that these were the only USAF women personnel we had on base)

With a straight face he said "I didn't mean that you ladies are inanimate objects and then added, with a red face; I wasn't referring that you were having too much sex.
(Dead silence, then laughter).

The commander jumped up and saved the chaplain, thanking him for his comments and then said, "You know what he was trying to get across to you about your language and swearing. Group dismissed".

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The Last Flight

Robert H Boulware, 424th BS, Bossier City LA, 14 April 2005.

Richard O Dodds, ARS, Fair Oaks CA, 9 May 2005.

Shelly J Donner, FMS, Oshkosh WI, 26 March 2005.

Dewey R Franklin, ARS, Anderson SC, 15 March 2005.

Fred Harwood, ARS, September 2004.

Leroy Holbrook, ARS, 5 May 2005.

Doris Kretchmer, Diamond Springs CA, date unknown.

Samuel C Millward Jr, ARS, Citrus Heights CA, 29 December 2004.

Linda Rogers, Delta BC, 29 July 2004.

G Lee Schubert, 371st BS, Sacramento CA, 23 April 2005.

James L Stammers, ARS, Waterford WI, 8 October 2004.

George H Tinsley Jr, Abilene TX, 18 April 2005.

James R Trollinger, Yukon OK, date unknown.

Allen Turley, Wagoner OK, 2 April 2004.

Bruce Woodruff, St Louis MO, 29 November 2004.

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

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

The Last Fighter Pilot

He was born in the skies over France in nineteen-sixteen,
A daring young man in a flimsy old flying machine,
Ed Rickenbacker, the Baron, Frank Luke and the rest,
Paving the high road for those who would follow the quest.

In the twenties and thirties he stood against short-sighted men
Who clipped back his wings, saying they'd never need him again.

Then he strapped on a Spitfire and climbed in the bright English blue
To the cheers of the many who owed so much to the few.
From the white cliffs of Dover to islands of jungle and sand,
An entire world at war, but for him it was man versus man.

And when it was over and he stood against short-sighted men
Who clipped back his wings, saying they'd never need him again.

He climbed in a Sabre and flew through the Korean sky,
Up to Mig Alley with courage to fight and to die.
Then in Thud and in Phantom he called down the thunder again,
But this one was different, THEY WOULDN'T ALLOW HIM TO WIN.

And when it was all over he stood against short-sighted men
Who clipped back his wings, saying they'd never need him again.

The last fighter pilot is just like the first of his kind,
And when duty calls he's the first to step over the line.
A child of the heavens, a grandson and son of the best,
Still riding the high road, still trying to follow the quest.

And as the century passes he stands against short-sighted men
Who've clipped back his wings, saying they'll never need him again.

For you short-sighted bastards who kill with the stroke of a pen,
He stands at the ready, 'till the day that you need him again

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We hadn't had such a good laugh in a long time. This was a good commander's call!

Winters in Lincoln

I arrived in Lincoln at the Trailways bus depot, around seven o'clock in the evening, on Nov. 11, 1954. Tired and confused after being on the bus for two days, I asked the clerk about a bus going to the base. He had no idea what I was talking about but said "there was pick up point on 'O' Street that people sometimes use get a ride to the base. Just west on 'O', you can't miss it."

I found the pick-up point; the temperature was around twenty degrees with blowing snow. When doesn't the wind blow in Lincoln? We used to say there wasn't anything to stop the wind between the North Pole and Lincoln but barbwire.

My first impression of Lincoln was that no one lives there. I stood there for over an hour and during that time I could have shot a cannon down

"O" street and not hit a single car. I did get a ride to the base from a Lt. and checked in. I was the seventh person to sign into the squadron.

That winter was cold and snowy. Since we had no aircraft, they farmed us out to the 98th. They had just received the new B47E models. We froze our tails off working the flight line. We learned to layer our clothes but the lightweight field jacket did little to keep us warm.

We asked about issuing some winter clothing but supply said, "This area was in the moderate temperature zone and since you only need it for a few days a year that no winter clothing would be issued". This was one of many winters where we had below freezing temperatures for over thirty days. Was supply ever wrong?

The next winter they found some used parkas and flight pants. They were clean but well worn. We didn't care as long as we could be comfortable when working out side.

The second winter was as bad or worse than the first. I don't know how many times I had to sweep snow off the aircraft and also shoveled out the aircraft.

Some of the things that happened during the next few winters are told with tongue in cheek. I was sweeping the snow off the left wing and when I reached wing root, I slipped. I dropped the broom and grabbed the leading edge of the wing so I wouldn't slide off the back of the wing. I was hanging on so tightly that I know my fingers were embedded in the wing skin. I knew I had to stop sliding or I was in big trouble or so I thought. Just then a gust of wind hit and the aircraft rocked, just a little bit but it was enough to start me sliding down the wing still clutching the leading edge for dear life.

The problem I encountered was my speed was picking up. All I could think of was the Vortex generators (little airfoils on top of the wing to guide the air over ailerons in flight), they were coming up and being very sharp could cut you to pieces.

I went through them so fast I didn't have time to think. I heard my clothes ripping. I slid off the wing and landed in a snow pile. I looked down at my stomach, expecting to see blood but the only thing I saw was my shredded parka. I had no cuts and the Vortex generators were intact.

When I turned my parka in for exchange, supply wanted me to pay for it, since I had damaged government property; not only that but they wanted me to pay for a new one, since their books didn't list used parkas. My flight chief prevailed and I didn't have to pay anything.

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After several people fell off aircraft, the unit came out with a directive that we would wear a parachute harness with ropes attached, any time we were on top of the aircraft working in bad weather. This is fine in theory but "Murphy's Law" always seems to prevail.

We had a crew chief servicing water-alcohol and he was short of help, so he tied the rope to the water truck. He serviced the aircraft and passed the hose back down to the truck driver. He then went back on the wing to secure the service caps. You guessed it - the driver drove off. The crew chief played superman for a few seconds as he was yanked off the wing. He was about fifty yards down the road before they got the truck stopped. What was amazing, the crew chief only had some minor bruises!

I was sweeping off the backbone of the aircraft, removing snow and frost. I slipped and fell over the side, but luckily I had my harness on and landed gently. Everything seemed OK, until we heard a scream from the other side of the aircraft. It seems my assistant had tied the rope around his middle and since I weighed 200 lbs and he only weighed 160lbs, I went down and he went up. That darn rope just about cut him in two. He was sore for several weeks.

Remember this was the "COLD WAR" we were in and I think it was between Lincoln's winters and the USAF.

How Do You Spell "Relief"?

We were half way into our mission and the A/C reached down and picked up his relief tube. He went about his business until a golden waterfall came pouring down the side of his position. He got on the interphone and with a few choice words, told me to get the 781 aircraft form and enter, that the relief

Fighter Pilots Dream

Everybody's a lieutenant, except God... He is a General!
 You only come to work when you are going to fly.
 You fly three times a day, if you wish, except on Friday.
 You never run out of gas.
 You never run out of ammo.
 Your missions are one hour long (or longer if you desire) and no briefings are ever required.
 Sorties are air-to-air or air-to-ground, your choice.
 You shoot the guns on every mission...
 There are no check rides.
 It is always VFR, and there are never any ATC delays.
 You can fly out of the MOA and down to 10 feet AGL...if you want.
 There are no "over G's."
 Never any Fatals....I mean.....you are already there!
 There is never any OD or SOF duty..
 You always fly overhead landing patterns with initial approach at 20 feet, then break left.
 You can go cross-country anytime you desire...the further the better...
 There are no ORIs.
 There are no additional duties.
 Friday Happy Hour is mandatory.
 There are no flight surgeons.
 There are no Staff Jobs.
 "Happy Hour" begins at 1400 hours and lasts until 0200+ hours.
 The bartenders are all big bosomed friendly blondes.
 Beer is free, but whiskey costs a nickel.
 The bar serves only Chevas Regal, Jack Daniels and Beefeaters...plus 500 kinds of beer.
 The Girls are all friendly and each Aviator is allowed three...
 There are no fat women, and the thin ones look like Sophia Loren.
 Country and Western music is free on the jukebox.
 You never lose your room key and your buddies never leave you stranded.
 The sun always shines, and you can put your hat in your pants pocket.
 Flight Suits are allowed in the Club at all times.
 The BX always has every item you ask for, most being free.
 There are never any crosswind landings, !
 And the runways are always dry..
 Control Tower flybys for wheels-up checks can be made at 600 kts.
 There are never any noise complaints.
 Full afterburner climbs over your house are encouraged.
 ERs always contain the statement, "Outstanding."
 Functions requiring mess dress attire never occur.
 All air traffic controllers are friendly and always provide priority handling...
 The airplanes never break.
 "ACE" status is conferred upon all Aviators entering Heaven...
 And You Never Have To Grow Up!

tube was plugged. I asked him, not trying to be smart - - Did he press the button of the side of the tube? He asked "what button?" I told him that we modified all the relief tubes last week through a M.O. and if he pressed on the button it would drain. His remarks were "why didn't someone tell me." You know who got to clean up the mess.

It was late at night and the aircraft had just landed. We parked it on the pits since it was the next aircraft to be refueled. The co-pilot hurried off the aircraft and went over to the right wing, behind engines 4&5, and promptly relieved himself. The aircraft commander and I started the post flight walk around,

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when he saw the puddle and said, "Chief, it looks like we have a leak here.' He shined his light all over the bottom of the wing and engine but couldn't find where the leak was coming from. I told him "not to worry that there wasn't a problem." Since he was tired and a little irritable after a long mission, he wouldn't take my word for it. Before I could stop him he put his fingers into the puddle, felt it then smelled it, I did get to tell him before he tasted it that the co-pilot had left it there. The co-pilot and I both got a tongue-lashing. I don't think the co-pilot deserved it but I probably did since I should have told when he first noticed it.



Does anyone remember this logo for the 371st Bomb Squadron?

Photo from Don Ivie

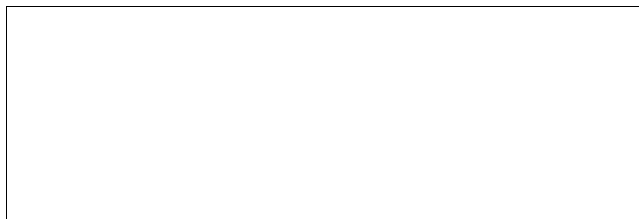
Lloyd Harding, one of our many troops lost over the Atlantic with the C-118 in October 1956.

Photo from Don Ivie



I just retired from the AF and came up on your web site while I was looking for information on my Uncle Robert Spurling. He is listed as lost on a aircraft over the Atlantic. My mother told me the story a long time ago but has since passed away. I was wondering if anyone in your organization would happen to have known him or have any information on the crash. My home phone is 850-515-2992. He was from Fonda Iowa. Thank you, Willie Guertman, Navarre Florida., email Dirtbag1sos@hotmail.com

The difference between a pig and a fighter pilot is a pig doesn't go into a bar at two AM looking for a fighter pilot!



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