

## ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 50

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

NOVEMBER 2006

## President's Column It's Later Than You Think!

The "Branson Bomber," aka Brent Horn, isn't letting any grass grow under his feet as the 2008 Reunion Chairman. He and Anne have already made a recce trip to Branson and he has kicked off the planning process with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFRI), our professional reunion organizer. **The dates they've settled on are 13-18 May, 2008.** That slot looks like an ideal compromise among weather, show talent in town and school schedules (i.e., there won't be too many families with ankle-biters around).

Those dates seem like a long way off, but with all that has to be done in the next year and a half, it's none too early to start thinking about the trip. Yeah, I know: we're all at the age where we don't make long-range plans, never buy green bananas, yadda yadda. However, unless you have specific plans to pack it in before the summer of 2008, I hope you'll seriously consider making the trek to Branson, MO, for what could be our biggest and best reunion to date.

I can't overemphasize how important it is for Brent and AFRI to have a ballpark estimate of attendees on which to base their planning. It affects almost every aspect of reunion planning, including tour and show options **and** the

deal we can get on rooms. (If we can reliably count on 150 couples, that gives us much more clout in negotiating contracts than 60 or 40 or a WAG.)

Let me reemphasize Brent's request: if you think there's even the **remotest** chance that you will attend the reunion in Branson, please let him know, either by e-mail (abhorn@everestkc.net) or phone (913-268-6368). **There is no obligation or commitment at this point, simply an expression of interest and intent.** The only people he *doesn't* want to hear from are those who definitely will NOT attend. Please do it today; we all know how these little to-do tasks get swallowed up in our memory "black holes" if we put them off.

I will now demonstrate my powers of distant perception. I know with high certainty what you have NOT done: you have **not** organized your notes, poured yourself a stiff drink and sat down in front of your video camera and related one or more "war stories" or other recollections to send to RT Boykin for his 307<sup>th</sup> video history. How do I know this? Well, I haven't done it either. Like you, after seeing RT's DVD at the Charleston reunion, I vowed to add my little slice of history to his project, but summer travel and other excuses got in the way. Let's do it right after New Years.

Speaking of which, Wendy and I wish you and your families a memorable and joyous holiday season and a healthy, happy 2007. Keep well and start saving for Branson!

Pete Todd

### Donations

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

George E Davis  
Roland England  
William P Johnson  
William M Kant  
Gene Lee  
Jim M Lundak  
Janie Marvel  
Perry C Meixel  
Thomas J Mills  
George E Nigh III  
Wilmot E Y Paxton

### Back in Touch

Harold T Beucus, 101 Pine Ridge Dr, Bastrop, TX 78602.  
Arthur J Newton, 15868 W Grand Isle Way, Surprise, AZ 85374.  
Kenneth D Pearce, 591 Laborcita, La Lux, NM 88337.

**1 November 1954  
USAF retired the last B-29  
from service.**

**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: petetodd@adelphia.net.

**Vice President/Newsletter:** Mike Gingrich, 2527 Greenlefe Drive, Beavercreek, OH 45431. Phone 937-426-5675. Email: mikegingri@cs.com

**Secretary:** Larry Boggess, 4304 Ridgecrest Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Phone 719-548-8024. Email: LarryJanB@gmail.com.

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

**Association Founders:**

Billy Williams, 5546 Enterprise Drive, Lincoln, 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 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: implanenuts@mchsi.com

**Co-Historian:** Ernie Pence, 1301 Lincoln Mall Skypark, Ste 101, Lincoln, NE 68508. Phone 402-317-1180. Email: erniepence@yahoo.com.

**Branson 2008 Reunion Chairman:**

Brent Horn, 12014 W 68th Terrace, Shawnee, KS 66216. Phone 913-268-6368. Email: abhom@everestkc.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**

It's always great to receive news of old friends. Nancy Ryder, the daughter of **Glen and Lucy Hesler**, was recently kind enough to give us an update on Glen and Lucy. Both have had their share of physical problems, but are not letting themselves be overwhelmed. The nearby photo shows clearly that Glen still enjoys his time with a fishing pole, and Nancy says they would enjoy hearing from you. Please email them at glenlucy@charter.net.

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Several months ago, **Bob & Genelle Cox**, of Lakeside, California, found our association through our website, and got in touch. You 307<sup>th</sup> old-timers out there might remember that back in 1956, Bob was a young copilot in the 371<sup>st</sup>, and had refueling pit duty the night a plane crashed into the birds being refueled. For the lifesaving actions he performed in the conflagration that night, he was awarded the Soldiers Medal. Thinking he was a casualty, his squadron mates were very pleasantly surprised the next morning when Bob walked into squadron ops for duty! Wife Genelle is an accomplished writer and has sent a number of engaging short stories about various adventures they have had along the way in Air Force and retired life, that we will publish for your pleasure as space permits. We begin here, as Genelle writes:

"We were located on 42nd Street near O St. Charles Starkweather, one of the first famous serial killers, was our garbage collector. One time when Bob was on the roof adjusting the TV antenna, Bob saw our garbage man (Charles Starkweather) trying to persuade the little neighbor girl who lived across the street to go with him. He was walking through the alley behind our place and the neighbors. The mother saw this, called her child into the house and phoned the Lincoln police. (Meanwhile Starkweather quickly slipped away). A motorcycle policeman immediately came by, Starkweather was nowhere to be found. A few months later there was a big manhunt for Starkweather as he had killed a couple who lived not too far from us and several other people. I have seen this story on TV several times and a movie too. It was pretty scary when the city was on lockdown, the National Guard was patrolling the streets and they asked us to stay home and not to answer our door to anyone.

When we were stationed in Greenville, Mississippi, while Bob was in flight school, Elia Kazan came into Greenville to make a movie called "Baby Doll" starring Karl Malden, Carol Baker and Eli Wallach who were the leads in the movie. Two of the wives of the student pilots who were good friends of mine worked for Elia Kazan. Missy Rex got a job as stand in for Carol Baker, she sat in a tree and other uncomfortable places while they adjusted the lights, camera and etc. Another friend Eleanor Crandall made out payroll checks, worked for the production company bookkeeping department, They used a lot of local Greenville people as extras and they actually burned down an old cotton gin outside of town for the movie. Some of the people from the base went to see the cotton gin burning. Since Mississippi was a dry state then, the only place you could get booze was at the base, or a little shack outside of town that the Sheriff ran for the locals; there were not bars or anything of that nature, except at the base. Karl Malden would come out to the officers club in

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the evening and have a snort or two. We saw him often in the officers club, I don't remember seeing Carol Baker, Eli Wallach or Elia Kazan at the club. After that, John Wayne decided he wanted to make movies in Mississippi. His whole crew came out to Greenville. The alligators, water moccasins and mosquitoes and other type bugs were so bad they canned the project."

Another story about Genelle's adventures in Greenville appears elsewhere in this issue.

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### **The 370<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron lives on with a new life:**

From: "Douglas Matthews" <dgmattews@hotmail.com>  
Date: August 9, 2006 09:34:13 MDT  
Subject: 370 Bombardment Squadron -> 370 Flight Test Squadron

To: Jim Kendall, 307th Bomb Group Association,  
Tom Stevens, 307th Bomb Wing/Group Association,  
Pete Todd, 307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association

I'm Doug Matthews, and I live in Great Bend, Kansas. My father, David Matthews, was a member of the 370 Bombardment Squadron, 307 Bombardment Group, during World War II. He's told me a lot about the 307th, and I've been able to collect a bit of history about the unit.

Quite by accident, I've discovered that the 370th Bomb Squadron is back in action!

On September 24, 2001, the 370th was redesignated the 370 Flight Test Squadron, and it was activated as a Reserve unit on October 1, 2001. The 370 FLTS is currently assigned to the 452 Operations Group and supports the 412 Test Wing as a flight test support unit. (At Edwards AFB).

I've confirmed this through two sources: the Historian at the Air Force Flight Test Center (AFFTC/HO), and the Organizational History Branch at the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) located at Maxwell AFB in Alabama.

The official (updated) unit history is at: [www.maxwell.af.mil/au/afhra](http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/afhra) The Public Affairs office at Edwards also has some archived articles on the 370 FLTS that are available via the Internet.

When I told Dad about all of this, he was extremely--but pleasantly--surprised. He also suggested that I notify the Associations to make you all aware of this turn of events.

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### **Moron AB website:**

Former members of the Combat Defense Squadron at Moron AB, Spain, have established a website at [www.3973cds.com](http://www.3973cds.com). There is some interesting material here and you can link to it from the 307<sup>th</sup> Links page.

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The Kisner family continues to excel in the Air Force as **Frank Kisner** writes "Our daughter, Janet Augustine, is on the Colonels List just released. Air Force Personnel Center has published the list." Congratulations to Janet and her proud parents.

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### **Boomerang Publications:**

A number of people have asked about Boomerang Publications, that supplied us with SAC and 307<sup>th</sup> momentos, hats, shirts, etc for many years. Based in Arvada, Colorado, they seem to have disappeared and most likely have gone out of business. **Pete Kraska** lives in that area and searched for them. He writes: "I have pretty much struck out on my search. Can not find any trace of Boomerang Publishers. There is a great shop here in Colorado Springs where he has almost every airplane thing there, old and new. In his shirts and caps line, would you believe he can not get a B-47. Would have to do art and whatever to start up a line which would be out of sight expensive. Anyway, am passing on his name and address for whatever it is worth: Aviation Heritage Collectibles, 2513 West Colorado Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80904. (719)471-9401. Owner: Don England

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**Hank Grogan**, B-47 and B-52 pilot, writes of his newfound interest in entomology, specifically, the seven year cicada:

"Seven year Cicadas were a plague last year, but with the summer heat on us and their racket again filling the air, we should review what Cicadas really are. These creatures are not poisonous and do not have a stinger. They serve no known useful function. They are not part of the food chain. Half of the population are males who spend their time singing or calling for the females to mate.

The annoyance from their loud singing, which can reach 100 db is almost unbearable, and is tempered by the fact that the periodic cicadas are only out for 4 to 6 weeks. While here, they are most annoying. Their bodies cover our cars' windshields as we drive. They are forever flying into us or alighting upon us. Yet they seem proud of their flying skills (which are limited to say the least). They are unwanted, loud, obnoxious, rowdy, driven it seems to a search for sex and determined to thoroughly annoy the human race. Many wonder where they come from.

*The best theory is that these obnoxious useless creatures are really fighter pilots returned to their natural state....."*

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**Johnny Clark** has informed us of the completion and publication  
(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.

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tion of his book, "From Hayseed to Jet Pilot and Beyond ". It is available from Johnny, for \$21.95. You can contact Johnny at Johnny Clark, 803 Villa Plaza, Papillion, NE 68046-3093. Phone 402-670-1331, or email: meptck@cox.net

Johnny tells about being an Iowa farm boy in the Great Depression, and his 20 years as a pilot in the Army Air Corps and the USAF, with stops along the way to marry his high school sweetheart, and for the Berlin Airlift. Then there is a second career in the natural gas industry and world travels.

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In our last issue we had a list of "truisms" entitled, *You might be a crew chief IF...* **Louis Durham** thinks one more item should be added to the list, namely: "I'm not the regular crew chief"!

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**Flip Latham** has sent in a correction to the caption of the humorous photo of **Bob Byrom's** crew in front of a RAF bomber that appeared in the last issue. The aircraft shown is actually a Vickers Valiant, and not the Vulcan as stated.

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The 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum's Mall of Memories has honored the 307<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing with placement of a brick in the Memorial Walkway at Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. The certificate presented to our association is shown nearby.

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**Clarence "Bud" Fehnel**, 371<sup>st</sup> BS, recently sent some ancient documents he found when he delved into an old footlocker. The 1960 and 61 commercially produced LAFB directories produce a flood of memories when one looks at all the advertisements in the back. Also, the Boeing publications "B-47 power plant familiarization" and "A discussion of B-47 flight characteristics". Then for you ancient jet heads, there is the Flying Safety Magazine December 1953 "Studies of Jet operational problems". Additionally, there are numerous typewritten operational and procedural "cheat" sheets. His crew photo appears nearby.

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#### From a British friend of the 307<sup>th</sup> ...

Some of us remember Ann Wilmot, the young British nurse who became acquainted with the 307<sup>th</sup> troops at Lakenheath and who later jumped the Atlantic and settled in Lincoln, working at the Lincoln Clinic. Ann found us through the website and sent us an email below. She would very much like to hear from her old friends by email at "awakenawareness@highstream.net".

"I feel so strongly to contact my friends at LAFB during 1957 to 1961. I originated in Lakenheath and Mildenhall and moved

to Lincoln from England. Stayed with Buzz and Elizabeth Flynn and have since lost contact with everyone there. Major Tony Minnick, Lt George Smith and Ray Stuermer to mention just a few names that come to mind. ...It was just a brief thought the other evening "I wonder where my friends are and how many of us are still here" was when I decided to make contact. ...They were wonderful, carefree years and I cherish the friendships to this day... a part of my life that I hold sacred in knowing such brave souls who dedicated their lives to our freedom. God Bless you all. I would be delighted for you to enter my email address when you next go to print with the newsletter so that we may continue to be in contact as I cherish my friendships and my thoughts are prayers are with you // May GOD PROTECT -- gratefully,

-- Ann Antoinette Wilmot, nurse from Lincoln Clinic and U.K."

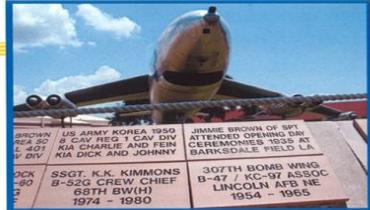
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Others who have been in touch recently, include Bob

## 8th Air Force Museum's MALL OF MEMORIES BRICK PROGRAM

The Service and Sacrifice to our Country that  
**307th Bomb Wing  
B-47 / KC-97 Association**  
has provided is honored at the  
8th Air Force Museum

**A Memorial Brick is displayed in your honor  
along the Memorial Walkway,  
Eighth Air Force Museum, Barksdale AFB LA**




Demkovich, Dick Amenell, Harlow Hall, John Malaspina, Marion Robinson, Roger Beamer, Ann Wilmot, Bill Rogers, David Avery and Richard Roberts.



R-22



## The Eleventh Standup

**When?? May 13<sup>th</sup> thru the 18<sup>th</sup> 2008.... Where?? The Lodge of the Ozarks in Branson, Missouri** (see [www.lodgeoftheozarks.com](http://www.lodgeoftheozarks.com)). May is a good month, the weather is mild, the kids are still in school and the tourist season hasn't hit its peak.

**What/Where is Branson??** Branson was a sleepy little town at the junction of U.S. Hwy 65 and U.S. Hwy 76 in the Ozark Mountains of Southwest Missouri, South of Springfield, MO. It became a tourist attraction back in the 1890's when a Canadian fellow turned a spectacular cave into an Ozark tourist attraction now known as Marvel Cave. That cave is now the center piece of the Silver Dollar City theme park.

What started out as a small strip of family entertainment theatres along Hwy 76 ("The Strip") has grown so much the highway had to be widened and several by-passes put in place just to get around. All the shows are family friendly and the entertainers welcome one and all. During the intermissions of their shows, they will come down off the stage, sell their latest CD's, sign autographs and even have their picture taken with members of the audience when requested.

For the sports minded members, there are several golf courses in the area and the BASS PRO SHOP located in Springfield 55 miles to the North. For the ladies, if the

"Shopping Mode" strikes them, there are two rather large outlet malls and the new Branson Landing shopping area along the shore of Lake Taneycomo.

Some of the well-known entertainers who have their own theatres are: Andy Williams, Yakov Smirnoff, Mel Tillis, and Jim Stafford, and for us "old timers" there is the Roy Rogers museum with all the family memorabilia and where his son, Roy "Dusty" Rogers, Jr. has his show. I will be checking to see if Andy, Yakov and Mel will be in town during our reunion. There is also the Branson Belle which is a paddle boat that has a dinner cruise and live entertainment.....**Soooo think Branson in the spring of 2008.**

I have a favor to ask of all our readers – **PLEASE** let me know if you are **thinking** about joining us. I need this information to start blocking our rooms. Please e-mail me at: [abhorn@everestkc.net](mailto:abhorn@everestkc.net). If not internet capable, please drop me a post card...**This is not a binding contract!!** I just need to get a feel for the numbers.

See y'all in Branson in 2008!!

Brent and Anne Horn  
12014 W. 68<sup>th</sup> Terrace  
Shawnee, KS 66216  
[abhorn@everestkc.net](mailto:abhorn@everestkc.net)

**Watch here and the website for further reunion developments.**  
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## Aviation Humor

The strength of the turbulence is directly proportional to the temperature of your coffee. --- Gunter's Second Law of Air Travel.

The three worst things to hear in the cockpit: The second officer says, "Damn it!" The first officer says, "I have an idea!" The captain says, "Hey, watch this!"

"In the Alaska bush I'd rather have a two hour bladder and three hours of gas than vice versa." --- Kurt Wien

Lady, you want me to answer you if this old airplane is safe to fly? Just how in the world do you think it got to be this old?

"Both optimists and pessimists contribute to the society. The optimist invents the aeroplane, the pessimist the parachute." -  
-- George Bernard Shaw

Treasurer's Report			
307 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association			
Ending Balance from last report June 20, 2006: \$4,063.17			
	Expenses	Deposits	
<b>General Fund Balance</b>			<b>\$4063.17</b>
Expenses:			
Admin/Equip/Supplies	48.10		
Web site	63.96		
Postage	254.36		
Printing	604.56		
Reunion Photos	100.00		
	<b>1070.98</b>		<b>-1070.98</b>
			<b>2992.19</b>
Income:			
Donations	650.00		
Charleston Balance	4120.03		
Interest on account	5.20		
	<b>4775.23</b>		<b>+ 4775.23</b>
<b>Ending Balance October 17, 2006</b>			<b>7767.42</b>
<b>Tony Minnick, Treasurer</b>			

**SKYKING..SKYKING... THIS IS SAC BRAT  
... With a "Noah's Ark" Message for all 307th  
Association Members.**

**O**ur book project is going very well. I have reviewed the microfilm and two boxes of JET SCOOP papers. This will give us a good background for the book. We have answered a lot of questions that were on the priority list. There are several questions that we are trying to get answers for.

1. A Navy jet jumped the chocks during runup and went into a WW2 hanger with great loss of life. We know a lot about this incident except for the date. Best info places this in Early 1955, maybe Jan or Feb.

2. We are still trying to pin down a date for actor Jimmy Stewart being at Lincoln and flying a 307th B-47 back to California.

3. What was the date for the Aqua Airshow and dedication of Bowling Lake. June or July 1958?

4. On May 13, 1957 an engine on a B-47 seized and departed the wing. Anyone remember the tail number and crew that were aboard?

5. April 8, 1958 KC-97 52-2804 had a near mid-air near Omaha after they had been cleared by KC ATC to climb to 20,000 feet. Anyone know who's crew was aboard?

6. A B-47 (53-2278) was on a low level mission in South Dakota on April 16, 1958. There was an IP aboard and informed the pilot that there were two towers in the area that were hard to see. Shortly, the pilot saw the towers and banked about 60 degrees to miss them. The towers were near Wessington Spring SD. Who was the crew?

7. April 16, 1958, 53-2139 was on a "Pop UP" near Storm Lake IA. Flying at 19,630 feet they had a near mid-air with another aircraft that had not been cleared to the area. Bomb Plot had no knowledge of the other aircraft. Who was the crew?

8. Sept 8, 1960 during a "COCO" Alert the pilot of 53-2139 felt a thud while taxiing to the runway. When on the active runway he was advised that the right outrigger was on fire. The B-47 was brought to a stop about 3,000 feet down the runway. The tire had blown and worn down to the rim causing the fire. Who was the crew?

9. I am trying to find out the date that T/Sgt Robert Conway was lost in the crash of his C-130 in France. He had served with the 307th at Lincoln and was a personal friend of my dad and many others in the wing.

We also need more personal memories of service there at Lincoln Airplane Patch to help make the history more per-

sonal and readable. At the moment we have a great start. The history could actually be written with the material that we have already, but your personal memory would be missed. PLEASE take a few moments and jot down some of your memories of those hectic days at Lincoln. I am starting an email campaign to try and stir the pot. For those of you who are "spam" and scam leery my authentication will be "307th BW History: SAC BRAT" and signed LAFB SAC BRAT. That way you will know that it is an authentic plea for help.

To those of you who have already answered and sent help, THANK YOU so very much. I am hopeful your effort will be rewarded by a great history of the Wing. Each of you who served in the 307th has a unique memory of Lincoln: flight crews, ground crews, wives and families all lived the Wing History. Please take a moment and help preserve the History of the 307th Bomb Wing for future generations.

Mike Hill  
1405 8th St SW  
Minot, ND 58701  
1-(701) 838-9288  
mikendaf@srt.com

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**Air Force Life  
By Genelle Cox**

**A**fter graduation from the University of Southern California, Bob was called to active duty in the Air force. He entered as a 2nd. Lt. and went right into primary flight training at Moore Air Force Base in Mission, Texas. He trained in T-34's and T-28's single engine airplanes.

After six months in Texas, he was sent to Greenville Air Force Base in Greenville, Mississippi, where he trained in the T-33 jet trainer that was similar to the F-80 fighter plane that was used in the Korean conflict. Six months later he graduated and won his Air Force wings.

While we were stationed at Greenville the base had a flying club for the personnel stationed there as well as any of their dependents who wanted to learn to fly. The club had 2 vintage airplanes to train in. One was a 1941 Aeronca Champion with a 65 hp Lycoming engine and a 1939 Taylorcraft with the same engine. The club had about 12 members, mostly airmen who were mechanics and maintenance men on the T-33 jet airplanes. Captain Corley, was a WW II flying ace and had flown P-38's in combat during WW II. The flying instructors in the club were T-33 jet instructors from the base. It only cost \$2.00 per hour for the plane and the instructor and so it was so economical I decided that I would learn how to fly too!

The weekly club meetings consisted of ground school with instructions on weather and the FAA flight rules in order to

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prepare for the written test. After the instruction we would be shown segments of the movie "The Air Force Story", which was the actual footage of dogfights and airbattles of WW II I took the written FAA test and passed with a grade of 100%, Now I was ready to solo!

My flying lessons were in the Aeronca Champion, a two seater side by side and made of fabric, wood and metal. My instructor was a young Air Force jet pilot instructor of T-33's. He later went on to be the lead pilot in the Air Force Thunderbird aerobatic team. When I had put in enough hours to solo. Capt. Corley, air ace and President of the flying club took me up in the Aeronca to check me out for solo flight.

When he stepped out of the plane and told me to do one go-around and land. My heart skipped a beat. I took off up, up and away. I looked at the seat next to me! Empty! Just me! I thought to myself, *what am I doing up here?* Now I have to land this plane by myself! I circled the field and landed perfect, then I touched the brakes gently in order to stop in the middle of the runway but the plane jerked and pulled to the left, the left brake pulled me around into a ground loop. I finally got control of the airplane and came back on the runway (after barely missing a runway light). The mechanic had changed the tires that I had worn out from my bad rough practice landings. The mechanic had gotten the wheels and brakes reversed, so when I put on the brakes they took hold in reverse. Capt. Corley had my logbook signed off which meant I now had a solo license. I could fly solo -no passengers unless they had a pilots license. I was on my way to becoming a pilot!!

A few days later my instructor, Capt. Kramer took me up again for a check out ride, we did touch and go landings. He let me solo again and I did three touch and go landings that were perfect. The following weekend my instructor took me up again, checked me out and let me go! Bob was at the Greenville Municipal airport with some of our friends to watch me do my touch and go's. I took off solo. One touch and go landing, perfect! I went around the traffic pattern again and came down on the runway, perfect landing again! I pushed the wheel forward for take off, pressure on the wheel, oh, I had forgotten to trim the plane for take off! The trim tab, a coffee grinder style was above my head in the cockpit. I took my eyes off the horizon and looked up, the nose of the plane went up and I stalled at about 100 feet off of the ground. The left wing went over and the nose headed straight for the ground. I'd lost control of the plane, the runway was coming up fast and all I could think of is that both of my legs would be broken. After an abrupt stop my mouth hit the wheel hard, gasoline was pouring over the windshield! All I could think of was getting out of that airplane as fast as possible, the wheels were pressing against the doors, I pushed the door open as far as I could and tumbled out on the ground under the wing on my hands and knees. A whole group of people were running toward me,

Bob, my instructor, and our friends. I was lucky to be alive,

I totaled the airplane, my back ached and my mouth was bruised and my front tooth was loose. The back ache was from a bruised kidney that quickly healed.

The airport management told us to get that plane off the runway as a Southern Airways (now called DELTA airlines I think) was due to land at anytime. The airport manager told me that they hoped I would give up flying! I had totaled the little Aeronca Champ. Now the Flying Club only had one airplane left, a Taylorcraft. After the accident a FAA investigator came to our home to make out an accident report and interview me. He had found out that my Air Force instructor did not have a civilian instructors license and neither did Capt. Corley who soloed me out. Capt. Corley had my logbook signed by a licensed instructor in the flying club. The FAA agent took my log book and deleted all my instructor flying hours and only left me with my solo hours. I would have to complete more instruction hours and be checked out with a civilian licensed pilot.

Bob was nearing the end of flight school and was to be transferred to an advanced training base. Bob got his orders to go to McConnell AFB in Wichita, Kansas to train as a co-pilot on a Boeing B-47 for the Strategic Air Command (SAC). As we were getting ready to leave Greenville for Wichita, a Major from the base came to our home and demanded that I sign a complaint against Capt. Corley for letting the base flying club give flight instruction using instructors who didn't have civilian instructor licenses. Also, to file a complaint against Capt. Corley for soloing me without the proper license and having a member of the club who was licensed sign my flight log. He urged me to sign the papers so they could begin a Court Martial. The Major told me that if I had been killed in the airplane accident Capt. Corley would be held for manslaughter. I refused to sign the paper as I felt that Capt. Corley was not being malicious. It was just a technicality in paper work. Greenville Air Force Base was very upset about my accident and they disbanded the flying club and sold off all their assets.

Later on when we were stationed at Lincoln Air Force Base in Lincoln, Nebraska I received a check in the mail from the flying club who divided up the assets of the club between all the members. I did not feel entitled to any amount because I totaled the club's airplane. Years later I heard that Capt. Corley went on with his Air Force career. He was Air Force liaison officer between Air Force One and the White House. Capt. Corley started writing novels during his later Air Force career and in retirement he returned to Mississippi. He wrote several books under various pseudonyms. Some of his books were best seller and were made into movies. Some of the titles are "Acapulco Gold", "Skyjacked" and "Air Force One". He passed away in his early 50's in retirement on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. He was a wonderful man, I was lucky to have known him.

"Air Force Life" was fun and exciting.

## **I'm The Navigator, And I Had Nothing To Do With That Landing! AKA, a SAC Story**

**By: Alex P. Brewer, Jr. (Lt./Col. USAF Ret.)**

**I**t's the early '50s - MacDill AFB - Tampa, Florida.

Colonel Mike McCoy was the 306th Bomb Wing Commander. I was assigned to the 367th Bomb Squadron, the first SAC outfit to get the all-new six jet engine swept wing Boeing B-47. I was crewed up with a "new" crew and after completing the necessary 50-8 training as a Ready (Combat Ready) crew we had just been upgraded to "Lead" status. My Aircraft Commander was a WW2 F-51 pilot with over 350 combat missions over North Africa, the co-pilot was a "wet behind the ears" Second Lt. just out of pilot training and myself, who had just finished a combat tour as a Nose Nav/Bombardier in RB-26s in Korea. General LeMay originally had decided to fill all three crew seats with rated pilots called "Triple Headed Monsters". This was a costly ill-conceived idea, which was abandoned as it soon became evident that pilots made poor radar navigators. Fortunately, I was one of the first Aircraft Observers/Navigators to be assigned to B-47 crew duty who was not a rated pilot.

My AC, who should have stayed in fighters, somehow got the idea that volunteering for what ever came along would somehow get us "Brownie" points for a coveted "Spot" promotion. SAC 50-8 training requirements were challenging enough for crew L-72, but my AC always hung around after duty hours and was a frequent Saturday morning volunteer. He would somehow get into the command post over the weekends and always knew about upcoming special events or missions that were in the planning stage that he could volunteer us for .

I wasn't surprised to find out that the AC had volunteered us for a "Special" SAC promo mission to Bryan AFB, the Air Force T-Bird (T-33) School near College Station Texas. Some demented individual at SAC HQ got the brilliant idea that showing off a B-47 to the student pilots at Bryan would somehow help SAC's image and that these young "Gung Ho" pilots would turn down Fighter assignments and be standing in line to volunteer for SAC. My co-pilot had been a recent graduate of this advanced pilot training base and was a classic example of a young pilot who had no concept of the SAC mission or of the importance of the Nav-Bombardier on a SAC combat crew. The Aircraft Commander was elated, but I wasn't all that excited about giving up a weekend, especially in Texas in the middle of summer. On top of that, the idea of trying to impress a bunch of student pilots who wanted to go to jet fighters seemed a little far out.

The Friday 50-8 training mission was planned to go like this: Take off from MacDill AFB on Friday morning, climb to altitude and then fly a routine training mission to include a

Nav-leg, Radar Bomb Scoring (RBS) runs, "Camera" attacks on Nike sites and then land at Bryan for the weekend stay. Saturday, we were to show off the bird with a static display, give a recruiting pep talk to the students at the base theatre and then return to MacDill AFB on Sunday, so we could get back to work on Monday morning.

After planning the regular 50-8 training mission on Thursday, we arrived two hours early for preflight on Friday morning. Mac Dill AFB was built on swampy landfill and from a biological standpoint it was the ideal breeding ground for "Salt Water" mosquitoes. By the time we did the walk around and were able to get into the airplane, the mosquitoes were flying formation around us and attacking like the Marine "Black Sheep" squadron of "Pappy" Boyington. The Crew Chief and ground crew usually sprayed insecticide in the cockpit area, but these pests were by now immune to the citronella and those on board would follow us to altitude and continue to munch on us the entire mission. As we departed MacDill early Friday morning we deviated from the checklist and delayed pressurizing the cabin area until 20,000 ft. The idea was that we had oxygen masks and the mosquitoes didn't, so our improvised euthanasia program was very effective. Flies were another story as they would go unconscious during unpressurized flight, but recover once we pressurized. For some bizarre reason, the flies seemed to like the gourmet flight lunches that the in-flight kitchen prepared for us. You know the lunches I am talking about, greasy chicken legs, ham on white bread (hold the mayo), a banana for the pilots, some peanuts and the little two packs of free cancer sticks.

After leveling off at altitude, we departed over Pinecastle AFB near Orlando (Later to be named McCoy AFB) and flew the radar navigation leg up to Atlanta for scheduled RBS runs against the Atlanta RBS site. We then proceeded westward to make RBS runs on Oklahoma City Bomb Plot, then south to Dallas Nike Site for a couple more simulated "Camera Attack" bomb runs. By now we were over six hours into the mission and after making a north to south camera attack on Dallas Nike, proceeded south bound to Bryan AFB which is in the heart of "Aggie Land" just north of San Antonio. Everything was proceeding as planned with the Co-pilot making a departure report to Dallas Center and then switching frequencies over to San Antonio Center where we were cleared to start our penetration from altitude by flying over the let down fix near Bryan AFB.

Bryan tower advised that there were several T-33's in the area with Instructor/student crews and to use caution. The tower also advised us of surface winds and temperature, in Celsius. The Co-pilot asked me to convert the temperature to Fahrenheit and when I told him the runway temperature was 109 degrees he got busy figuring stopping distance from the Dash-1 chart. This was interesting, as some mental midget at SAC had insisted on us making an initial fly by at 13:00 local, with a landing at 13:20, the hottest time of the day. I stayed off interphone, since "Fric" and "Frac" were arguing about approach speed, aircraft gross weight and all of those factors that account for a safe landing on a short runway like Bryan.

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In addition, not only had someone at SAC HQ made a dumb decision on the landing time, at the pilots request we had made our arrival over the base heavy on fuel so the pilots could look over the surroundings before making this short field landing. The Co-pilot was talking to Bryan tower and the tower had somehow got the message from SAC that our ETA was two hours later and consequently had several T-33s scheduled to land after 13:00. After making a radar directed let down and approach and taking the pilots down the centerline for the pilots to "look it over", I became more or less a passenger and merely monitored the upcoming "Monty Python Flying Circus" show. As a backup, I of course had my own Dash-1 landing charts in front of me and was carefully checking on their activities, since I suspected that the Co-pilot suffered from bouts of dyslexia when it came to reading landing and speed charts.

In any event, we were cleared for an orientation pass over the runway and with us being heavy on fuel; the tower requested that the T-Birds stay clear of the area to let us do our thing. After doing "our thing" several times and buzzing the hell out of the local area (after all the B-47 was a little noisy below 1000 ft), we were still too heavy to land. Three T-Birds declared "Bingo" on fuel and were sandwiched in for minimum fuel landings between our flybys. I really broke up when I heard one of the Instructor Pilots declare on Guard (the Navy channel) that if he were armed he would shoot us down.

After we had finally burned off the excessive JP-4, the pilot elected to put out the "approach" chute. This brought out several unsolicited comments by the T-Bird pilots who were still in the area, who had never seen an airplane with a parachute in trail position. Later we found out that a local Texas "Redneck" (probably an Aggie) called the base to advise them that someone had bailed out of the airplane and a body and parachute were hung up on the tail. This was probably the same guy who had reported seeing a UFO landing in a cow pasture west of Waco.

I leaned over to the left and looked over my shoulder at the Crew Chief, who we had brought along to prepare the aircraft for the return flight. For some reason the Air Force paid the enlisted personnel less flight pay than the rated officers. This didn't make sense since we had ejection seats and they had none. Today, he was earning his flight pay and then some as the "fourth" seat was in the crawl way with no safe way of egressing the aircraft in case of bailout. Not that the downward ejection seat of the Navigator was that entirely safe when you think about it. So visualize, low altitude, turbulence and hot stuffy cockpit area! A brief glance at the Crew Chief (who had turned pale green) told me that his "pucker power" had reached critical mass.

On what I hoped would be the final approach, we came over the fence a little fast and since it was really hot out there over the runway, the big bird really wanted to float and float and float. The pilot finally swallowed his pride and brought the power up to make our first go around. Just about the time the engines spooled up and the power kicked in, we were in a great position to land altitude wise except there wasn't any more runway left. Having never been excited about amusement park thrill rides, from my seat in the nose, this was getting to be a little scary to say the least and I was wishing that the people at Boeing had figured a way to put upward ejection seats for all crew members. After a quick glance back at the Crew Chief, I surmised that he was wishing he was on KP back at MacDill or better still was in the navy.

After flying what we will call a shortened pattern because fuel (or the lack of) was now becoming an item of interest, actually a matter of dire concern. The AC reverted back to his WW-2 experiences as a F-51 pilot and now made what I would describe as a tactical fighter approach at low altitude. His 60-degree banks and gyrations would have surely qualified him for a seat with the "Thunderbirds", the AF acrobatic team. He somehow got us lined up and the airspeed bled off as we came over the fence pretty well descending at the proper rate and started the flair for the final touchdown. With fingers crossed (mine), we started our final landing, but again the "float" problem, but this time he had the altitude and airspeed pretty well under control and managed to stick the front wheel trucks on the runway at about the 500 ft marker. This was an interesting pilot technique to landing this big 6 engine swept wing pride of the SAC fleet and contrary to the briefings I had attended with "Tex" Johnson, one of the Boeing Test Pilots who had briefed the pilots to never, never do this.

Somehow the word had spread across the base that an airplane (guess who) was in trouble, so with just about the entire cadre of Instructor Pilots, Student Pilots, Base Personnel, BX employees, dependents and several interested Civilian employees as witnesses, our landing now became a classic impersonation of what a porpoise looks like at Sea World doing its grand finale leaps. Somewhere around the 3rd or 4th bounce, I heard the Pilot say SH\_ \_ , which the Co-pilot interpreted as Chute, so he deployed the brake chute. I think at the time he deployed the brake chute, the rear mains were on the runway and the nose (with me hanging on for dear life) was about 20 feet in the air. We banged down really hard and I thought for a minute that I had blacked out as my helmet sunshade visor had slammed down on the bridge of my oxygen mask. If you have ever ridden a mechanical bull in a bar, you know what I mean about a hard landing. To add to the fun, the 5-gallon relief can located behind me in the crawlway had somehow unlatched and bounced/slid back to the rear of the crawlway. I glanced back and fortunately, the Crew Chief had somehow managed to get a wrestler type leg hold around it and kept it from spilling. Boeing never used the word in their Emergency section of the Dash-1, but had General Dynamics written the Dash-1 for the B-47, they surely would have warned that this type of landing would give you

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"Catastrophic" results.

The Pilots are frantically pumping the brakes and are now screaming back and forth at each other, blaming each other for this controlled (?) series of crashes. Bryan tower interrupted the discussion between these two gentlemen and asked if we needed assistance, (like a wrecker, fire truck, ambulance or perhaps the Base Chaplin). The Co-pilot stretched the truth and told the tower that everything was under control and everything was just fine. The Pilots somehow managed to stop just a few yards short of the overrun and the tower advised us to turn right on to the last turnoff, which led to the taxiway. Unfortunately, when they brought up the power and started the right turn on the asphalt turnoff, the forward main tires started to skid on the hot slippery asphalt so the pilot applied the brakes and with the weight shifting forward, the front tires proceeded to sink into the hot asphalt of the turnoff which obviously was not stressed for the weight of the B-47. Then, to add to the confusion and dilemma, the Pilot decided to power out and other than making a lot of noise and scaring the hell out of the fire truck crew and "follow me" truck driver, we were stuck with the rear mains on the active and the forward tires stuck in the soft asphalt turnover.

SAC in all of its glory had arrived, Peace Is Our Profession!

Fortunately, the tower realizes what has happened and is diverting the remaining T-Birds into Bergstrom AFB and Randolph AFB, which are just a few miles north and south of Bryan. Two T-Birds were Bingo on fuel and were allowed to land on the runway behind us, before the base was officially closed because of our "Stuck" position half on and half off the runway. Thanks to SAC, the runway was closed for all flying activities for several hours. I am sure this went well with the T-Bird Training Wing Commander.

After completing my "after landing" check list and re-installing the ejection seat pins, I had my nav briefcase and my overnight bag ready to go, so as the pilots were doing their after landing and shut down checklist, the Crew Chief opened the side hatch, lowered the ladder, climbed to the ground and walked under the aircraft to inspect the forward main gear. I was a few steps behind him and what a nice surprise as the Base Commander, Pilot School Commander and a handful of Full Colonels were there to greet me (the lowly Navigator). The greeting party had been out there in the sweltering heat for over an hour and their uniforms were wet with perspiration and they did not appear to be happy campers. They erroneously assumed I was the pilot and all had this "What the hell were you doing?" look on their faces, so after saluting the brass, I announced for all to hear that "I am the Navigator and had nothing to do with that landing!" The "old" Colonel Base Commander who wore flat wing pilot wings, (no star on top) who was nearsighted, took off his glasses, leaned over and looked at the Navigator wings on my flight suit and said "Damn!" The others (all pilots) shook their heads in disgust, as I was probably the only Navigator

on the base and having to deal with a wise A\_\_ Navigator at a time like this didn't really make their day. When the two pilots finally climbed down the ladder, I was already in the crew truck and figured it was prudent to keep out of it and let the pilots tell their own story using pilot talk, which is similar to "Fishermen" talk.

Saturday briefing for the Student Pilots in the Base theatre was a fiasco with questions like: "Was that a normal landing?" or "Do you usually make that many approaches before you land?" or "How long do you have to stay in SAC?" With most of these Student Pilots aspiring to be "Fighter Jocks", I am sure our visit to Bryan set back the relationship with Training Command and SAC several years. Before going on stage, my AC had advised me not to answer any questions and to "keep my mouth shut", so when one of the young students ask me if I was one of those "Triple Headed Monsters" I couldn't pass this one up so my answer was simply "NO, they were flying the airplane."

With the help of Base Civil Engineers, some huge planks and a lot of tugging, they finally backed the airplane back on the hard surface runway and tugged it down to a concrete crossover where it was finally tugged off the main runway. SAC flew in a recovery team from Barksdale AFB to repair the hydraulic seals on the front mains and make a general inspection of the airframe. The "yaw" string has somehow disconnected (wonder why) and one of the! mechanics fell off the airplane trying to connect another one, fortunately he was not seriously injured. After spending a week in the heat of College Station, Texas with the Pilots taking flak from the Bryan personnel every day, we were finally able to recover the airplane and fly it back to MacDill early Saturday morning.

The not too bright person at SAC who had dreamed up this fiasco had overlooked the fact that the B-47 needed a longer runway with the daytime temperatures of the runway well over 100 degrees. We had to wait until the runway temperature at Bryan was the coolest which was around 2 AM, so with minimum fuel weight on board, we somehow managed to get it off the ground without taking out the strobe lights placed in the overrun. Since we landed back at MacDill early Saturday morning, it is a good possibility that the AC went from debriefing direct to the Command Post, looking for another "Brownie Point" mission.

Fortunately, I wasn't asked to attend the "Special" debriefing that Col. McCoy had with the pilots, but I am sure that it was really as hot as the runway temperature at Bryan.

After all, I wasn't invited because "I was just the Navigator and had nothing to do with the landing!"

\*\*\*\*\*

There were three Indian squaws. One slept on a deer hide, the second on an elk hide, and the third on a hippopotamus hide. The first two had baby boys and the third had twin boys. This proves that the squaw of the hippopotamus is equal to the sons of the squaws of the other two sides.



## The Last Flight

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

**Robert Bernard Burns**, ARS, Charlotte NC, 29 August 2006.

**Mary L DeJulio**, Maitland FL, 23 June 2005.

**Margaret "Peggy" Duch**, Wilmington NC, 13 March 2006.

**Ben R Goza**, 370<sup>th</sup> BS, Tulsa OK, 23 August 2006.

**Robert R Hall**, San Pedro CA, 11 October 2005.

**Cecil E. Harden**, OMS, St Louis MO, 25 November 2005.

**Larry Gene Julian**, OMS, Springfield MO, 24 June 2006.

**Ed Lundak**, Lincoln NE, 9 November 1998.

**William E Martin**, OMS, Willingboro NJ, 1 October 2006.

**Harvey A Mattice**, Lincoln NE, 2 May 2006.

**Dorothy Louise Mattick**, San Antonio TX, 14 August 2006.

**Dottie Myers**, Albuquerque NM, 27 May 2006.

**Clarence H Rodgers**, 371<sup>st</sup>, AEMS, Harrisburg IL, 24 January 2005.

**Joan Samuelsen**, Houston TX, 25 August 2006.

**Don Schweisinger**, ARS, June 2006.

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

## September Song by Rachel Firth

Autumn leaves rustling, together to the appointed place, the old warriors come.

Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve.

Where they meet is not important anymore.

They meet and that's enough for now.

Greetings echo across a lobby.

Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close.

Embraces, that as young men they were too uncomfortable to give, too shy to accept so lovingly.

But deep within these Indian Summer days, they have reached a greater understanding of life and love.

The shells holding their souls are weaker now, but hearts and minds grow vigorous, remembering.

On a table someone spreads old photographs, a test of recollection.

And friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white, or merely gone.

The rugged, slender bodies lost forever.

Yet they no longer need to prove their strength.

Some are now sustained by one of "medicine's miracles," and even in this fact, they manage to find humor.

The women, all those that waited, all those who loved them, have watched the changes take place.

Now, they observe and listen, and smile at each other; as glad to be together as the men.

Talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands.

Stories are told and told again, reweaving the threadbare fabric of the past.

Mending one more time the banner of their youth.

They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as engines roar, propellers whirl, and planes come to life.

These birds with fractured wings can be seen beyond the mist of clouds, and they are in the air again, chasing the wind, feeling the exhilaration of flight, close to the heavens.

Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit, move silently among them.

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Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes.

Each, in his own way, may wonder who will be absent in another year.

The room grows quiet for a time.

Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns.

The talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of futility.

So, this is how it goes. The past is so much present.

In their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches and the prayers, one cannot help but hear the deep eternal love of country they will forever share.

Finally, it is time to leave.

Much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday, but the past cannot be held too long, for it is fragile.

They say, "Farewell . . . see you another year, God willing."

Each keeps a little of the others with him forever.

**Year 2035 Headlines**

Ozone created by electric cars now killing millions in the seventh largest country in the world, California.

White minorities still trying to have English recognized as nation's third language.

Spotted owl plague threatens north-western US crops and livestock.

Baby conceived naturally.... Scientists stumped.

Castro finally dies at age 112; Cuban cigars can now be imported legally, but President Chelsea Clinton has banned all smoking.

George Z. Bush says he will run for president in 2036.

Postal service raises price of first class stamp to \$17.89 and reduces mail delivery to Wednesday only.

Thanks to T R Taylor



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