

## ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 53

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

NOVEMBER 2007

## President's Column A Different Breed of Cat

As we've gotten deeper into the 2008 reunion planning for Branson, we've discovered that this great location has some unique "hooks" of which all of us need to be aware. Moreover, the timing of the reunion is going to require a quicker decision and response cycle than we've gotten used to in the past. Let me explain.

Our professional reunion coordinator, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFRI) and our Reunion Chairman, Brent Horn, have worked out an attractive lodging package at a great price in a prime hotel, the Lodge of the Ozarks. Included in this newsletter is info about the hotel, plus tour and show options. At this point, the schedule of tours listed should be considered "representative," since we're still trying to coordinate show schedules (some of them start pretty early for ladies and gentlemen of a certain age!) and transportation options (add-on costs for motor

coaches are proving to be much more expensive than we anticipated). To mitigate the costs of transportation to the shows, and since most folks plan to drive to Branson, we are looking at the possibility of car pooling. Another wild card is that many of the show packages require a minimum number for a group rate and yet we don't want to overschedule activities. After all, the entertainment is secondary to the main reunion mission: spending quality time with old comrades and close friends. All in all, this is going to be one of the most complex reunion schedules we've ever had to construct.

We will have all these issues firmed up by the time we publish the January newsletter, which leads me to the second "footstomper." The realities of show schedules, reservations and costs and the imperatives of the newsletter publication cycle mean that you'll have only few weeks to make a final decision on attendance, fill out your regis-

tration forms, make your hotel reservations and get your check to AFRI to lock in our commitments. **Please see Brent's article in the newsletter for the actual deadlines for the key actions on your part.** Also, please confirm with him ASAP if you're a definite attendee and let him know how you plan to travel. (We're trying to determine how many members will have cars in Branson for possible carpooling purposes.)

Wendy and I hope that you and your families have a great holiday season and that you'll be able to be quick out of the chocks after the first of the year when travel decisions need to be made.

Pete Todd



### Back in Touch

**Jess H Diehl**, 5135 SE Tecumseh Rd,  
Berryton, KS 66409.

**Raymond R Krause**, 4007 N 10<sup>th</sup> St, Lin-  
coln, NE 68521.

**Wayne L Marty**, RR2 Box 5570, Salem,  
Mo 65560.

**James Sutton**, 600 Cherokee, Algonquin,  
IL 60102.

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

#### Officers of the Association:

**President:** Pete Todd, 1250 Big Valley Dr,  
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Email: petetodd59@comcast.net.

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2527 Greenlefe Drive, Beaver creek, OH  
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**Secretary:** Larry Boggess, 4304 Ridgecrest  
Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Phone  
719-548-8024. Email: Larry-  
JanB@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, Lin-  
coln, NE 68521. Phone 402-438-6061.  
Email: jeanbill@windstream.net

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:** Mike Hill, 1405 8th St SW,  
Minot, ND 58701. Phone 701-838-9288.  
Email: mikendaf@ndak.net.

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

#### Branson 2008 Reunion Chairman:

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

**B**elow is a photo of a number of  
gentlemen from the 307<sup>th</sup> ARS  
shown celebrating their performance at  
the SAC Bomb Comp in October 1958.  
The photo comes from **Ken Tarwater**,  
who has put name labels on the folks he  
can identify, but we need your help in  
identifying the others. If you can help,  
contact Ken at nanatar@kc.rr.com.  
Also, nearby is a somewhat more recent  
aerial photo of the LAFB tower and  
base ops, from which one can see some  
of the post-closure change to the archi-  
tectures. This comes from Jeff King,  
who works for Duncan Aviation at the  
Lincoln airfield. Jeff says his office is  
located in the former fire station located  
near base ops. Jeff has recently taken it  
on himself to start a website devoted to  
the history of the airfield and you can  
view his efforts at www.lincolnafb.com.  
It's very much a work in progress but  
shows great promise to help preserve  
the heritage.

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**Bob and Genelle Cox** recently visited  
the Museum at the former Castle AFB  
where they ran into "Spirit", the last  
B-47 ever flown. Genelle sent a photo of  
Spirit, with her standing by. As a  
refresher, Spirit was found derelict,  
miles out in the desert at China Lake  
NAS in the early 1980s. A group of  
dedicated volunteers rescued her and  
restored her to flying condition. Then  
in 1986, SAC released her for a one  
time flight to the fledgling museum at

Castle. Many things went wrong in the  
air but she made it. We will have a  
short video of her saga to show at Bran-  
son, including her hairy landing at Cas-  
tle.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dale Christians** writes about a chance  
encounter with an old friend...

I went down to get a haircut today and  
who should I run into but **Jerry Rotter**  
who was in the 370th BS for a while  
before going to the missile squadron  
there at Lincoln AFB. This is the first  
time I have seen him since leaving Lin-  
coln in 1964. He looked real good. He  
showed me all of the missions he had  
flown over Germany during WW II.

\*\*\*\*\*

From **Bob King**...

Sold our RV after twenty years of hav-  
ing the pleasure and interest of that  
wonderful experience. We served on  
the National Board of Directors and one  
year as National President as well.  
Like everyone, health issues are show-  
ing up with all its ugliness as we age,  
but Shirley is a two time cancer sur-  
vivor and my blood pressure and heart  
problems are kept under excellent con-  
trol so we travel often. Hawaii calls  
every winter now as the wetness in the  
Northwest gets a little chilly these years.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Legislation Allows Veterans to Salute  
the Flag**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator  
Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) today praised the

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*The Eleventh Standup  
6 Month Warning!!*

**SKY KING, SKY KING, THIS IS A GREEN DOT MESSAGE FOR ALL MEMBERS!!! BECAUSE EXACT PRICES, SHOW AND BUS SCHEDULES WERE NOT AVAILABLE IN TIME FOR THIS NEWSLETTER, THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL CONTAIN THIS VITAL INFORMATION AND IT WILL COME OUT IN JANUARY, 2008!!!**

**Branson...When?? May 13<sup>th</sup> thru the 18<sup>th</sup> 2008... Where?? The Lodge of the Ozarks in the Entertainment Capital of the Ozarks – Branson, Missouri.** You can see what they have to offer at [www.lodgeoftheozarks.com](http://www.lodgeoftheozarks.com). I have been asked to list the Lodge's phone number so here goes --- **800-213-2584 OR 417-334-7535.**

Well folks, the time is drawing nearer and nearer. Anne and I would like to express our appreciation in all of your responses. As of this date there have been **213** responses!! We would like to ask all of you fine people to do us **2 BIG** favors. They are:

1. **PLEASE, PLEASE** do not call the Lodge of the Ozarks to place your reservations until after receiving the **January, 2008** newsletter. They will be handling several reunions before our dates and this will eliminate any confusion on their part
2. **IF YOU ARE COMING, PLEASE** send me an e-mail, letter, post card, or call us and leave a message, if we are not here. We have 90 rooms blocked and I now need a **firm count** to see if we need to block more rooms. We sure hope we need to block another 10 making the room count 100.

**Prospective Attendee List:** An updated list, as of 4 October, of our members who are thinking about or made a decision to come is located in our website. To find it, go to the Home Page, and one third of the way down in the left hand column,

click on **Table of Contents**. Then, click on **Branson**.

If you don't see your chum's name on the list, tell him to get on the stick and sign up!

If you don't see your name on the list, you either haven't decided to come or failed to contact us..... **We need you!!!**

**For the flyers:** This is the info I received from AFRI about transportation between Branson and the Springfield/Branson Regional Airport. This was used for their May 2007 reunion in Branson by another military group. This info will be repeated again in the upcoming newsletter.

Four airlines (American, Northwest, Delta and United) service the Springfield Branson Regional Airport. **Classic Shuttle Service** is an independent shuttle service in Branson offering veteran discounts. Please call **417-698-0227** to make your reservations. The current fare for one way service is \$50 for one person, \$65 for 2 people, \$80 for 3 people, \$25 each for a party of 4-10 people. **Happy Trails** offers service to and from the airport; current fare for one way service is \$50 for one person, \$75 total for 2 people; please call for other rates. Call **417-339-3420** to make your reservations and ask to speak with Kim. **Jerry's Shuttle Service's** current fare from the airport to the hotel for one way service is \$70 for one person, \$90 for 2 people, \$100 for 3 people and \$35 for each additional person. To reserve space please, call **417-334-5678**. **Reservations need to be made twenty-four hours in advance for all shuttle services.**

**Car Rentals:** Budget, Avis, Hertz, National and Alamo have lots close to the airport.

**Entertainment Section:** From the questionnaires/responses we have received to date, your picks are: **Dixie Stampede** = 45, **Magnificent Seven** = 34, **Golf** = 4, **Dick Clark's Theatre** = 1.

Things are really starting to come together. AFRI is working on the show schedules and transportation. The enclosed activities agenda is what I am proposing, but, is subject to minor changes depending on the show times. Anne and I are also enclosing a show description for you to look over and help your planning. We hope you all will be pleased with the picks. The final times and costs will be in the **January 2008** newsletter along with the hotel room reservation sheet.

And don't forget, in addition to all these wonderful attractions, we will have the usual Hospitality Room, where you can catch up at length with your friends, and reminisce at the memorabilia...to help the good times flow, we'll have a cash bar daily from 3 till 10 PM. Oh yes, for our banquet meal we will have two choices - Filet Mignon or Chicken Breast with Cornbread Dressing. Those of you with special dietary requirements will be asked to include them on your activity sign-up form.

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**Remember!!! 1.)** At our age time flies by rather fast when we are having fun and we tend to forget some of the important things, such as bills and **reunion stuff.** **2.) THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE COMING OUT IN JANUARY, 2008!!! THE SHOW REQUESTS AND YOUR CHECKS WILL NEED TO BE SENT TO ARMED FORCES REUNIONS INC (AFRI) NOT LATER THAN MARCH 11, 2008 AND THE HOTEL RESERVATIONS MADE (NLT) APRIL 11, 2008!!** Also pack a swimming suit; they have an indoor and outdoor pool.

Sooooo, I know this is a repeat, but - Send those cards, letters, questionnaires & e-mails about coming!! We will also keep the answering machine on so as not to miss your very important messages about COMING.

See y'all in Branson in 2008!!

Brent and Anne Horn  
12014 W. 68<sup>th</sup> Terr  
Shawnee, KS 66216  
[abhorn@everestkc.net](mailto:abhorn@everestkc.net)  
913-268-6368

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**307<sup>th</sup> BOMB WING B-47 KC-97 ASSN. RE-  
UNION  
MAY 13 – 18, 2008  
LODGE OF THE OZARKS – BRANSON, MO**

**Tuesday, May 13**

12:00pm	- 11:00pm	Hospitality Room open
2:00pm	- 7:00pm	Reunion Registration open
		Evening and dinner on your own

**Wednesday, May 14**

7:00am	- 7:30am	Reunion Registration open
9:00am	- 11:00pm	Hospitality Room open
2:00pm	- 3:00pm	Reunion Registration open
4:30pm	- 9:30pm	MAGNIFICENT SEVEN (description follows)

**Thursday, May 15**

9:00am	- 11:00pm	Hospitality Room open
4:15pm	- 8:30pm	YAKOV SMIRNOFF THEATRE (description follows)

**Friday, May 16**

9:00am	- 11:00pm	Hospitality Room open
10:30am	- 2:45pm	SHOWBOAT BRANSON BELLE LUNCH CRUISE (description follows)
6:00pm	- 10:30pm	SHOJI TABUCHI (description follows)

**Saturday, May 17**

9:00am - 12:00pm	Business Meeting
Squadron photos will be taken immediately following meeting	
12:00pm - 5:00pm	Hospitality Room open (Cash bar available 3pm-5pm)
4:30pm - 7:00pm	Cash Bar Reception and Couples' Portraits
7:00pm - 12:00am	Dinner Banquet

**Sunday, May 18**

Farewells & Departures

**LODGE OF THE OZARKS - BRANSON  
417-334-7535 OR 800-213-2584**

The Lodge of the Ozarks is located at 3431 West Highway 76, Branson, Missouri 65616, near the Jim Stafford Theater and Factory Merchants Mall. Nearby restaurants include Ruby Tuesdays, Pizza Hut, Plantation, and Gilley's Café. If you are driving, please call the hotel directly for accurate driving instructions. The Lodge of the Ozarks has many amenities which include an all-season pool and hot tub that opens out to spacious sun decks, Jacuzzi rooms, and a lounge with three shows in it. Each room has a coffee maker and hairdryer and iron/ironing boards. Handicapped rooms as well as non-smoking rooms are subject to availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your hotel reservation. The hotel offers ample free parking. Hotel check-in time is after 3:00pm and check-out time is 11:00am. *The Club Restaurant*, open from 11:00am-11:00pm, serves lunch and dinner. *Timbercreek Café*, open from 9:00am-6:00pm, serves snacks, desserts, and drinks daily. *Room Service* is also available. **The firm cost of the rooms are \$69.00 per night and is payable to the Lodge of the Ozarks not later than 4/11/08.**

Airport transportation from the Springfield, Missouri Airport should be arranged in at least a week in advance. Gray Line offers transportation to and from the airport. Currently, the rates are \$52.00 per person with a minimum of two passengers. Please call (800) 542-6768 for information and reservations.

Parking is available for RVs at the hotel. For hook-ups, consider Branson KOA on Animal Safari Road. It is approximately two miles from the hotel. Call (417) 334-4414 for information, directions, and reservations.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheel chairs by the day and week. Please call their toll free number at (888) 441-7575 for details. All prices quoted include delivery fees.

More info next page...

## TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

### MAGNIFICENT SEVEN VARIETY SHOW

Wednesday, May 14

Begin the evening with a delicious four course meal which includes garden salad, fresh baked Bavarian bread, your choice of K.C. strip steak with baked potato or mesquite grilled chicken breast with rice pilaf, steamed vegetables, iced tea or coffee and dessert. Once your taste buds are satisfied prepare to be dazzled by the ultimate variety show. The show's producers and a stand out cast of singers and dancers lead you through 50 production numbers with over 150 costume changes. Comedy, dancing, powerhouse singers and seven decades of music makes the Magnificent Seven Variety Show the funniest and most unique experience in the region.

### YAKOV SMIRNOFF THEATRE

Thursday, May 15

During this inspiring show filled with patriotism and love of family, Yakov Smirnoff serves up humor for the heart over and over again! The Yakov Smirnoff Theatre offers a fun-filled show featuring "Branson's Comedian of the Year," the famous Russian comedian. Sit back while he delivers explosive laughter in a show filled with brilliant special effects, dazzling dancing, heartfelt moments, and just plain fun. The show also features the Russian dance troupe, *Neva*, and the comedic juggler, Slim Chance.

### SHOWBOAT BRANSON BELLE LUNCH CRUISE

Friday, May 16

Cruise the waters of Table Rock Lake on board a brand new paddle wheeler, the Showboat Branson Belle. Enjoy a served lunch and great entertainment. The show features a talented cast of singers, dancers, and musicians, who will take you back to the time when showboats were once famous.

### SHOJI TABUCHI THEATRE

Friday, May 16

Branson's hottest ticket is the Shoji Tabuchi Theatre. Enjoy the show that's become the "talk of the town" as one of Branson's most delightful family shows. Shoji and his magic violin will dazzle you with practically every kind of music. Listen to country, bluegrass, Cajun, swing, jazz, and even a little Classical music. His wife and daughter will perform as well, and you'll understand why this is truly a family show.

## The Airman's Creed

I am an American Airman.  
I am a warrior.  
I have answered my nation's call.

I am an American Airman.  
My mission is to fly, fight, and win.  
I am faithful to a proud heritage,  
A tradition of honor,  
And a legacy of valor.

I am an American Airman,  
Guardian of freedom and justice,  
My nation's sword and shield,  
Its sentry and avenger.  
I defend my country with my life.

I am an American Airman:  
Wingman, leader, warrior.  
I will never leave an Airman behind,  
I will never falter,  
And I will not fail.

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passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S.1877) clarifying U.S. law to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag. Current law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states that veterans and servicemen not in uniform should place their hand over their heart without clarifying whether they can or should salute the flag.

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Senator Inhofe said. "Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform."



Genelle Cox and B-47 "Spirit", the last B-47 ever flown, at Castle AFB Museum

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Treasurer's Report			
307 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association			
Ending Balance from last report June 27, 2007: \$6,875.94			
	Expenses	Deposits	
<b>General Fund Balance</b>			<b>\$6875.94</b>
Expenses:			
Admin/Equip/Supplies	36.97		
Postal	231.74		
Web site	54.01		
Reunion (Dep)	300.00		
Printing	621.73		
	<b>- 1244.45</b>		<b>-1244.45</b>
			<b>5631.49</b>
Income:			
Donations		460.00	
Interest on account	5.27		
	<b>465.27</b>		<b>+ 465.27</b>
<b>Ending Balance October 26, 2007</b>			<b>6096.76</b>
<b>Tony Minnick, Treasurer</b>			

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"Unfortunately, current U.S. law leaves confusion as to whether veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag. My legislation will clarify this regulation, allowing veterans and servicemen alike to salute the flag, in uniform or not.

"I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly at baseball games, parades, and formal events. I believe this is an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the United States who have served in the military and remain as role models to others citizens. Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this



LAFB Tower in recent years

right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others."

*Note: as of publication time, the bill is held up in committee.*

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### 307th HISTORY BOOK UPDATE; Turning on Final Approach

The first draft of the history book on the 307th Bomb Wing is in the computer. So far it looks pretty good. But, it can be a lot better with your help. To make it more interesting and personal we need more personal stories.

Please take a moment a travel back to those hectic days at Lincoln and dust off the memory banks. We need stories of any interesting flight across the pond, alert incidents, inflight happenings that were out of the usual routine, mass gas refueling, flying the oil burner routes and low level bomb runs on those RBS Express targets.

One big item is the Jimmy Stewart legend. We know he was at Lincoln and flew a B-47 back to California. We know the flight crew and the two aircraft involved. Sadly we do not know the date he was there. By using the information that we have, our best guess is that he was at Lincoln between July and November 1958. If anyone has a date or more clues as to his being at Lincoln, PLEASE let us know.

PLEASE-PLEASE take a moment and

jot down some of your stories so we can include them in the book. You lived and made the 307th history, with your help we can write an interesting and accurate history of the 307th BombWing.

Mike Hill  
1-(701) 838-9288  
mikendaf@srt.com

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### SAC 2008 REUNION

April 30th - May 4th 2008  
Holiday Inn, Fairborn Ohio

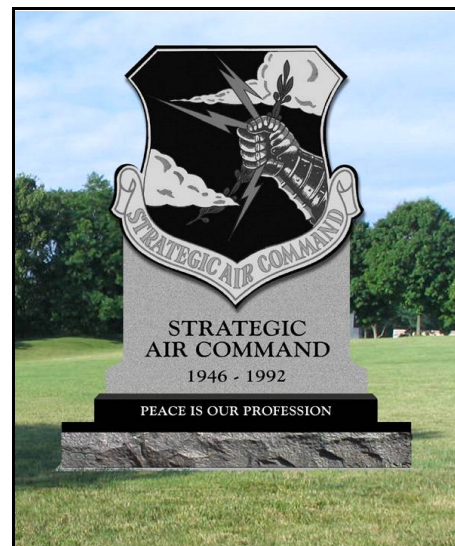
The highlight of this reunion will be the Dedication of a SAC Memorial, shown below, at the National Museum of the United States Air Force on Friday May 2nd. This memorial was conceived and nurtured by Ron Resh, a member of our association, and a former member of both the 98th BW and the 551st Missile Squadron at LAFB.

Other organized activities include the Cradle of Aviation Tour, dinner theater with West Side Story, dinner dance at the hotel, a "Banquet Under the Wings" and SAC tribute at the Museum.

Contact: Major J T Romero (Ret), jtrome-25@excite.com, phone 520-203-8809, or 866-260-9302 (toll free outside of Arizona); PO Box 14223, Tucson, AZ 85732-4223.

**George Lewis**, a former ARS troop, who spent 1954 to 1965 in SAC, was in touch recently to tell about a project he is starting. His desire is to chronicle the

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experiences of SAC aircrews, particularly B-47 crews, during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He wants to hear your stories. The association has provided him the info we have on file, but we know it doesn't even scratch the surface. So, all you gentle readers, please tell your story to George, lest it be lost forever. Maybe, just maybe, we can educate the JayWalk generation a little bit! George is located in Daytona, Florida, and can be located by email at signsgeo@yahoo.com, and by landline at 386-492-3925, and by cel at 386-846-4701.

**Helen Ecelbarger, the originator of this newsletter**, writes that she's living with her daughter in Blythe, California, and enjoyed a trip to Alaska this summer.

Others we've heard from over the past several months include Bud Fehnel, Jim Villa, Jim Chittendon, Jerry Sparks, Ken Matthew, Harry Krebs, and Joe Rogers.

## The Early Days of Alert Duty (From the perspective of the differently abled)

By Earl Hill

Crew Chief, B-47E # 4227

\*Disclaimer.\*

For those intent on compiling an accurate history of our period of confinement, be aware that what is presented here is carefully selected, smoothed and edited to suit the writer. A certain amount of raw mendacity may also be expected. Contradictions arising at some later date will be resolved by whatever chicanery lies readily at hand.

In the superb July issue of our noozletter, Dave Fehnel wonders thusly: "How many of you recall when we started the

## Bad Email Addresses

*The email addresses we have for the folks listed below are all non-current. All have had one or more emails returned as non-deliverable. If you wish to remain in touch with the association and its members, please send us your current address. And...don't forget to reregister with your current address on the website in order to get a password.*

Margaret Akins, Sandor Babos, Robert Baker, Trudy Barth, David Bench, Fred Bennett, Ron Betts, Ronald Bill, Ray Birdwell, Max Bodenhausen, Arnold Bruland, James Bunkley, Robert Burns, Art Cantion, Duane Cassidy, Ansel Chase, Bill Clark, Vern Cole, Dewey Cook, Bob Corti, Art Craft, Bill Crane, Alvin Davis, Bill Doetzel, Daniel Doherty, Harold Duffer, Earl Estabrooks, James Fields, Bob Fisher, Dennis Fox, Howard Friedman, Donald Gosting, Julius Gutierrez, John Herder, Lee Herdridge, Betty Hickman, Oliver Hinde, Arthur Hood, Charlie Hooker, Art Ingle, Jim Jacobs, Donald Johnson, Elaine Johnson, Robert Jorgensen, Larry Julian, James Kent, Jimmie Kurtz, James Lathrop, Elwood Leonard, George Lewis, Max Marsh, William Mc Phail, Otis Mcclung, Gary McGill, Gwen Nelson, Jack O'Brien, William O'Mara, Henry Paulin, Marvin Pearson, Joe Phelan, John Puckropp, Bob Reinhard, Richard Roach, Dave Roebuck, Peter Rollin, Bill Schuck, Bill Schwob, Merrill Sinclair, Keith Steele, Larry Talovich, Fred Tanner, Paul Thurn, Robert Titzer, John Traeger, Mark Vangalis, Ed Venable, Don Watts, John Yaryan, Merle Young.

## Donations

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

Richard F Delaney  
Frank J Kisner  
Albert F Opitz  
Paul R Trudeau  
Norman Weinlein

Home Alert Duty?"

Good question, Dave.

How many of us recall the time that our young bride suddenly grew very serious



## The Last Flight

**R Ward Allen**, 371st BS, Danville CA, 20 May 2005.

**Charles "Chuck" E.B. Davis**, 370<sup>th</sup> BS, Cordell OK, 13 June 2007.

**Ethel Dodge**, Milford NE, 8 August 2007.

**Donald W Hickman**, 371st BS, Tucson AZ, 21 October 2006.

**Sharon Koski**, Kansas City MO, 2 November 2002.

**Richard Kowalchuk**, OMS, Tacoma WA, 30 May 2007.

**John B Mattioli**, 370th BS, Lake Forest CA, 20 May 2007.

**Margaret (Peg) E McCarthy**, Colorado Springs CO, 25 October 2007.

**Harold C Morrison**, 371st, 372nd BS, Manteno IL, 2007.

**Arthur C Rein**, ARS, Amhurst OH, 15 December 2006.

**Lena Rosemond Scott**, Osceola IA, 5 June 2007.

**David W Snow**, ARS, Littleton CO, 16 January 2007.

**Donald E Spence**, FMS, Timberon NM, 12 February 2007.

**Larry Wiler**, Lincoln NE, 21 August 2006.

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

*I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here I am; send me. Isaiah6:8*

at the dinner table and informed us in no uncertain terms that we, Studlee Gotwood, had set in motion an event

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that the budget was not likely to cover?

Then there is Perry's Puddle. Neither significant to the origins of alert duty nor particularly interesting, it's merely a relative time marker. The enthusiastic volunteers conscripted to make LAFB's pleasure dome (aka: The DUI Diversion) a physical reality were convinced that this Sisyphian enterprise was conceived at the dawn of time and would proceed onto infinity. Wrong. (Though, as we have come to know abundantly, ALL conceptions seem like a good idea at the time)

In fact, The Great Donut in the Ground did not disturb so much as a single blade of grass until well after alert duty began in earnest. How do I know? Well, my recall in the matter is unusually sharp. Mostly cuz of a well honed talent for artful dodgery. You see, those who heeded the call and rose to man the shovels have in consequence "redacted" those moments from their memories. Not so with artful dodgers. We simply have no uncomfortable thoughts that require a "Select All" and "Delete". Our motto remains: "Play and I'll play with you. Work and I'll play alone". Memorable are the tribal gatherings in the Base Ops coffee shop. The usual menu of world changing personal opinions temporarily withheld in favor of dark mutterings regarding that "G-d'd lake". Above all, an artful dodger knows when to remain silent..."Sip".

For the record let it be known that, unlike the silly denials of our beloved King Willy; I never set foot on that G-d'd lake project.

Kicking through these scattered files is not easy. Most are dog eared and suffering the ravages of time and destructive larvae's borne of too many G&T's. Nonetheless artful recall, like it or not, is our *raison d'être* for gathering here.

So, who could forget those winter season night shifts? 2300 to 0700. And who could forget the day shift's most popular refrain: "\*\*\*\* it, leave it for

night crew".

Substantial snows lie about. Maybe not up to the knees but certainly to mid shin. Me 'n Mongo dragging a work stand along. Jest doin' our pat-ree-otic best to install wing tank fairing on an airplane that "absolutely must be ready for a 0600 takeoff". The time is 0300. It's purty chilly. (Out of respect for the sensitive reader, graphic descriptions of sinus conditions and their picturesque effect on furree parka hoods will be held in abeyance.)

Now Mongo was a righteous observer of the installed pecking order. Neither wuz he one to scroo with the natural order of things. Dutifully, he managed to drag over a ground heater and set it alight for the comfort of the aircrew, whose arrival we anticipated momentarily.

Meanwhile:

The ramp is still snowed in. The wing tank is still empty and ruff men with snow shovels have yet to make an appearance. Moot issues really, cuz we ain't even got one wing tank done. (there's 33 dozen #10 screws per wing tank fairing and only two holes line up ..... also in keeping with the natural order of things)

"Geez Mongo, no sign of the aircrew? I wonder what's keepin' em?" (Like, duuuuh!)

"Whad'ya figger on that ground heater Mongo, more heat into an empty cockpit or do we stuff that duct under our stand and enjoy life for awhile? My fingers is freezin'"

"Mongo, him not like cold. Mongo ..... hate cold". (Over time, we all gained an appreciation for Mongo's understated eloquence)

"Me needer and b'sides, the air bottles are ..... close enuf."

Snippets like these were a daily constant. So too, the nature of their conclusion. For, yea and verily; if ya ain't the lead dog, the scenery never changes. It

may not have been Biblical but it shur as hell was accurate. Still is, actually.

Getting back to Dave's introduction of the topic for a moment:

For the first two paragraphs, Dave's recollection of those very early days on alert duty mirrors that of my own. From there, he sorta runs off the rails just a bit. Not as a matter of super-annuated synapses certainly but rather, as a matter of divine function and his relative position on the great wheel of organization, as it existed in that time.

In the fall of 1957 it was a distinct privilege to have under my care and feeding, the unit numbered 4227. Her flaps were clean and the thunder mug disinfected; though in November a relief can generally garnered far less comment than it did in July and August.

In those days the ground crews were still a part of the operational squadrons. The brain phart known as an OMS was yet to be inflicted on us.

At the time I happened to be assigned to the 371st. Roger LaFontaine had bequeathed 4227 to me and the line chief seemed to agree to the deal. Roger had got hizself an early out and his brogans was scratchin' gravel. For my part, I couldn't understand how or why any sentient being could throw over such a fascinating business for a career in encyclopedia sales or some such. (Fortunately, time and experience have a habit of tempering all enthusiasms ..... serial conceptions included)

\*Question:\* Who was the line chief of the 371st in that period? An NCO I regarded highly, he subsequently became wing line chief when the OMS was formed.

As best I can re-jigger memories of the period, the alert system began sometime in November of 1957. At least it did for us. Aircrew involvement was proly delayed until Jan or Feb, waitin' on trainin' wheels for them "rental cars". Then there were additional issues to resolve like, a properly constituted

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driving permit, insurance, remedial road sign recognition, maps with bold lines drawn from the O club to the alert area ..... and the always useful admonition to avoid driving over the sentry when challenged.

In the beginning, Someone created that alert area. It was located at the far south end of the ramp. Either Adjacent to, intermingled with or simply expropriating the transient aircraft parking area. Best that can be said of that early arrangement is that it was a forlorn appearing Gulag. Later it would complete the picture by taking on the appearance and odor of a transient labor camp. Form follows function. .... Once again, the natural order of things.

The initial alert setup consisted solely of forlorn aluminum creatures and the yellow machines required to bring them to life. Each morning, a bus -- or buses -- appeared and discharged a contingent of scruffee looking men whose sworn duty it was to ensure that the aluminum creatures were fully prepared at a moment's notice, to drop heavy objects wherever and whenever ordered. A simple concept actually.

Budgets being what they were, are and ever shall be, no on-site provisions were made for the care, feeding or creature comforts of the scruffee bus riders. It should also be noted that this was in a time prior to the appearance of rock concerts, peace rallies and tree hugging. Events that would later create, among other things, a mass market for fibre-glass comfort stations. No matter, the weeds appeared grateful for our random renewals of their nitrogen cycle.

Hazing this ramble along; after 3 or 4 cycles of alert duty, 4227 was finally placed in the alert rotation and I got to participate (sic) in this mostly useful endeavour. The period was prolly early December. When not on the ramp, opening and closing inspection panels as was our custom we, the great unwashed, were also quartered in a BOQ. It may not have been THE BOQ but I do recall hearing, on good authority, that the building was so designated.

As testament to our understanding, the rooms were light and airy. Entirely befitting the needs of those who think largely and express themselves well. To that end, a very large writing table was made available as a permanent feature of the suite.

Accustomed as we were to a 3 legged card table in a crowded day room; I took the thing for a test drive and was astounded to discover stuff that had never occurred to me before. Lofty thoughts. Flights of fancy. Kicking some ass in "upper management" was not troublesome at all. Ideas of the sort that should have raised an alarm in any young guy who holds no training in the disposition of such. Thoughts that he would be wise to discard at all costs and hazards. Matters that were purely above my pay grade appeared easily and soared like eagles. Re-organizing wing operations figured prominently. Or failing in that endeavor, -- dare I say it? ---- dark thoughts of sedition.

The beds, of course, were of the sort only encountered in public accommodations of the very first kind and are seldom made available to those of us found bootless and unhorsed. Reminiscent of "Grandma's feather bed", actually. In truth, the beds were of such nature as to induce recurring dreams of unauthorized guests sharing these very same quarters. Troublesome images. Of counterpanes cast carelessly aside. Of sweaty, extended bouts of "slap and tickle". To be certain, rude, scurrilous and unwarranted they may have been but muses on a winter's eve have a habit of cutting their own track. Present day denials by former inhabitants aside, there yet remain those odd pencil marks so often found inscribed on the wall above the head boards. Brothers to the end, our lips remain sealed. What happens in Vegas, shall remain in Vegas.

Yes, it's fair to say that the ground crews did find themselves in a BOQ during those first days. In my own case, a not so amusing incident (at the time) occurred and it was directly related to our quarters. A couple of days into the alert cycle, the klaxon sounded some

time after midnight. I'm not exactly certain what time of the night that was, because I slept right through it. I do however, recall being rudely awakened by an NCO sometime around 0400. You see, I had that suite all to myself and the bed was quite comfortable and with the door closed, the klaxon was in another universe for all practical purposes. Higher pay grades reorganized immediately and we all received roomies. The alert in question was of the Bravo variety and the crew chief that covered his unit as well as mine was not especially amused. No attempt was made to impress upon him the desirability of acquiring skills yet to be added the standard syllabus. ... "Sip".

Mess facilities and their location are lost to time but I feel confident in concluding that dining in the O club was never a part of our support equation. No matter, we were already operating in a heady realm and could afford to wait our turn for proper instruction in the art of fine dining. As it turned out, it would be several years for many of us before the manifold complexity of proper utensil selection could be unraveled. A guy in a greasy field jacket is easily able to conclude that safety wire cannot be managed with cannon plug pliers. Not so when confronted by steak and peas, delivered by a bewildering array of specialized dining utensils.

I don't recall that the BOQ routine was kept for more than a few months. Later there were modest travel trailers -- spartan actually -- set out for our comfort and convenience. It was an arrangement fully suited to our station fur shur. The arrival of those sausage containers was greeted with inexpressible joy by their inhabitants. You see, living above our station in the BOQ had for some time, been gnawing away at our sense of purpose and self respect. We were after all, warriors, and as such had an image to uphold. Yes, squalor was more fitting to our self image and squalor was what we would make of the place. It was accomplished without breaking a sweat.

For the life of me though, I don't recall

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if we slept in them. (I think we did. I have an image of awakening under a musty blue blanket.) We did spend the entire day in them, rather than return to our BOQ after the morning pre-flights were completed. It wasn't long though before the transformation of those trailers was completed. The word sty comes easily to mind. Vile would work too. The odor of tobacco smoke and 24 hour coffee was a permanent fixture. The important stuff like card playing became a test of endurance, as well as money. It was good to be young.

My recollection of events in the trailer trash period is not entirely trustworthy. Perhaps someone else will pick up the thread of that 50 year old event. It's safe to say however, that at no time were we ever issued rental cars. In result, we had no hope of daytime encounters with fancy wimmin or any other pleasant distractions for that matter. But, envy was unknown to us. Dictated to by circumstance, we were actually Panglossians at heart (there wuz another choice?) and so it prolly wuz, all for the better. Hell only knows what mischief would accrue should we have been afforded the means of making a quick trip downtown to "The Pines". We were after all, on track to save the world from wretched barbarians. (The world changes but, what of officious rhetorical flourishes? -- never!). And so concludes the opening chapter of alert duty, from the perspective of the differently abled.

Where next did the alert area alight? ..... and were the aircrews really issued personal drivers, parking attendants and gummint issue AmX cards?

To be continued...hopefully!

### **Batman & Robin Words to Live By**

Batman to Robin: "When you get a little older, you'll see how easy it is to become lured by the female of the species."

Robin: "I guess you can never trust a woman."

Batman: "You've made a hasty generalization, Robin. It's a bad habit to get into."

## **A Bomber Christmas Story By Neil Cosentino**

It was a week before Christmas 1964, and we had some time left to fly around a bit after RTB to Lincoln AFB, NE. I talked Barney (Capt William J. Barnicoat, Jr.) into flying at about 1,000 feet to look for Christmas trees. I was the copilot on this B-47E, and I was looking for the right size tree away from farmhouses-out in the open range. The mission was to find one, to go there after landing, cut it down and take it home for Christmas. Mac (James MacElvain, Capt, USAF) our navigator, was looking through the zoom of the optical bombsight and we both gave directions to Barney about where to fly. We spent about a half hour looking around until I spotted what looked like a good tree near a snow covered county road with good access, and, no farmhouses around! Now to land, then to go out and cut the tree and haul it home on the top of my car.

All went well after landing - we, Mac and I, drove out to the area, and finally found the location, which was no easy task. When we reached the open field there was light snow falling on us. Everything looked much different from the ground versus from the air. The size of that lone Christmas tree looked about right, but its location in that field was a different matter. The walk in deep snow out to it, across that windswept snowfield, seemed to us as if we were E&Eing across the steppes of Russia! But we had got that far and were now determined to keep going all the way. With ax in hand we headed out. The snow began falling heavier-but we kept on course in the "whiteout", finally getting to the tree. It turned out to be a cedar tree! It sure looked good at 1,000 feet and 250 knots, and from the road a half-mile away, but up close it was one that would cost less than \$5 even today - the kind that would be the last to sell on Christmas Eve! It was a tough, shaggy tree that had survived years in winter winds out there in the middle of nowhere - a tough survivor on the Western Prairie, and very special to us!

When we reached it, the snow started to

fall harder than ever, coming down so suddenly that it was like being hit by a small avalanche - pressing down - a strange sensation - it was sucking our breaths away! We cut the tree down and started back across the field still in the whiteout. The snow continued to fall and then started to blow like a blizzard in strong horizontal bands - it was like walking across the front of a giant Langley wind tunnel with horizontal streams of snow that looked like the smoke trails in a wind tunnel.

This has a wonderful happy ending - a very Merry Christmas season, which we celebrated in the great German tradition of drinking the best hot red wine in a heated silver lined bowl with the best brandy and with orange rings floating on top of the wine - wine we brought back from Spain in our B-47 while SAC reflexing there! We toasted our tree many times - we had the poorest tree, but with Maria decorating, it looked wonderful! It was the most memorable tree I can remember! A Christmas at home for a change, never to be forgotten, with a tree that no one but Barney, Mac, and I, and our wives, knew where it came from, and how we used a SAC bomber to find it!

*This story first appeared in the Daedalus Flyer, the magazine of the Order of Daedalians. At the time described, Neil was assigned to the 372nd BS. Post-Lincoln, he went on to KC-135s, the ABCCC, and a F4E tour in SEA. After AF retirement he was a pilot consultant to the Iranian Air Force until their revolution....there must be some interesting stories therein!*

### **Aeronautical Terms**

**AIRSPPEED** - Speed of an airplane. Deduct 25% when listening to a retired Air Force pilot.

**BANK** - The folks who hold the lien on most pilots' cars

**CARBURETOR ICING** - A phenomenon reported to the FAA by pilots immediately after they run out of gas.

**CONE OF CONFUSION** - An area about the size of New Jersey located near the final approach beacon at an airport.

**CRAB** - A VFR Instructor's attitude on an IFR day.

## A Fishy Tale By Genelle Cox

After our retirement from the business world, Bob and I spent most of our time in Baja California Sur, Mexico. We lived full time in our 32-foot motorhome. Periodically we would come back to California to reunite with relatives and take care of our personal business. Most of the time we were living in Los Barriles, a small fishing village on the Bahia de Palmas on the Sea of Cortez, the area is also known as the East Cape. The village is 65 miles north of Cabo San Lucas and 65 miles south of La Paz, the capital city of Baja California Sur.

We owned a 26 foot Mexican Panga fishing boat we named the African Queen. The "Queen", as we called her, was anchored in the Palmas Bay. We usually were fishing or diving every day, weather permitting. We almost always caught fish, yellowfin tuna, dorado (mahi mahi), sailfish, blue and striped marlin. The excess fish we couldn't use we gave to the local Mexican families who were always in need of something to eat. One of the local family men named Joe asked us to catch a marlin for him, he would smoke it and give us half of the fish. It sounded like a good plan to us. Joe was drying the marlin on his palapa roof (a roof made of palm fronds), he was on the roof turning the fish, the roof gave way, he fell to the ground injuring his back. He had to be taken to the hospital in La Paz. After hearing of Joe's accident Bob and I drove to La Paz to visit him in the hospital.

While we were visiting Joe a man called from one of the rooms, "Are you an American?, I need help". The voice was a US citizen in bed with both legs broken, in casts, he didn't speak a word of Spanish. The man was a senior citizen probably in his 60's and introduced himself as Harry Whale, a retired Helms Bakery man from Long Beach. Harry told us he was sailing a friend's motor sailer from Long Beach to Hawaii, he pulled the boat into Turtle Bay in Baja to refuel, there he got stuck on a sandbar. The Mexican navy came by to help pull the yacht out of the

sandbar. The navy gunboat attached Harry's anchor chain to their boat and pulled. As the Navy boat was pulling him out of the sandbar the chain snapped and hit Harry across the legs badly breaking them. The Mexican Navy called in a helicopter to carry the injured Harry to the hospital in La Paz, he had been there for 5 weeks. Harry didn't have a newspaper, magazine or book to read. No TV or radio. He was tired of the diet of beans, rice and tortillas. He had no family or friends in Mexico. We felt so sorry for Harry, we went to the local stores and purchased some food and reading material for him. He had no money so we gave him \$50.00 to help him with anything else he needed.

We returned to Los Barriles planning to return to La Paz the following week to shop for groceries and visit with Joe and Harry in the hospital.

When we returned to the hospital in La Paz, Joe had gone to his sisters home in La Paz to recuperate. Harry's room was vacant. We asked the nurse in Spanish, "Where is Harry?" The nurse who didn't speak English, she said "efe be i." We weren't sure what we were hearing. We asked her to write it down on paper, she did, FBI, and flapped her hands like wings flying. We told her we understood! Hmm-Harry must be in some kind of trouble, we wondered what it was.

A month or so later we left Mexico to return to Southern California. Bob's mother had a message from a detective from the Long Beach Police Department for one of us to phone him when we came back into the States. Bob phoned the detective. Harry was going to trial in Long Beach the day Bob phoned. The detective told Bob the story. Harry Whale having never sailed a boat before had stolen a 45-foot motor sailer from the Long Beach Yacht Harbor and was trying to sail it to Hawaii. He got into a bad storm, trashed the engines and beached the yacht at Turtle Bay in Baja, causing thousand of dollars worth of damage to the motor sailer.

Several months later we received a let-

ter from Harry who was residing in Soledad Prison in northern California thanking us for our help in La Paz. Enclosed was a check from his prison account for the money we gave him plus interest. He invited us to dinner with him and his girlfriend at Charlies Brown's Restaurant in Long Beach in three years when he was scheduled to be released from prison.

We never went to dinner, nor did we see or hear from Harry Whale again. Just another adventure in Baja.

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## Where Can We Go On The Day That We Die? By Bob King

I hope there is a place way up in the blue where old SAC crew members can go on the day that they die. A place where a guy can buy a cold beer for a friend and a comrade whose memory is dear. Those great men in my life who were the Aircraft Commanders, Jim and Tom and copilots over those years, Lynn, Jim, Hap, Don and Larry.

A place where no doctor or lawyer can tread nor a ground pounder would n'ere be caught dead. Just a quaint little place, kind of dark, full of smoke, where they like to sing loud and love a good joke. The kind of a place where a lady could go, feeling safe and protected by men she would know.

There must be a place where old crewmen go when their flying is finished and their airspeed is low. Where whiskey is old and women are young and the songs about flying and dying are sung.

Where you'd see all the fellows who had flown ORI's and would call out your name as you came through the door. Who'd buy you a drink if your thirst should be bad and relate to others, "He was quite a good lad".

Where finally through the mist I'd spot Jim Pumford, my Aircraft Commander,

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whom I had not seen in years. The one who taught me everything a SAC crewman should know. He'd nod his head and grin ear to ear and say, "Welcome Navigator, I'm pleased that you're here. We have a long mission today and I need a Heading and an ETA."

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## Another Landing Gear Problem

By Paul Trudeau

An interesting flight took place around 1957. My crew and I had flown to Lockheed Marietta Georgia to pick up and deliver back to base, either a new Bird or one that had gone through modification; I don't remember which. Those of you who had the experience will verify the royal treatment received upon arrival at Marietta. A delightful and pretty Georgia Gal met us at the airport and chauffeured us to a hotel.

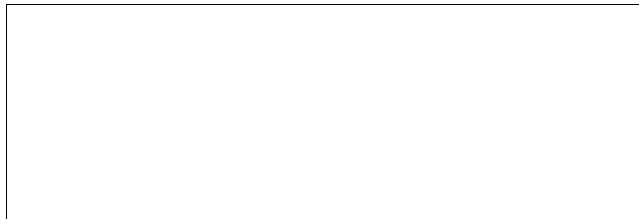
She and the Limo would be our wheels for our length of stay. I do believe this was to jolly us so we would waltz through the release forms we had to sign off on the Aircraft to be picked up. At any rate, it was late on a Friday evening when all the details were taken care of, the aircraft was ours.

We filed our flight plan to arrive at Lincoln sometime after midnight. The flight back was normal although I did note that the landing gear came up immediately after lift off and before I called for it. We arrived over Lincoln, made a normal down wind, lowered the gear which extended normally, but as soon as the gear lights showed four in the green, up they came again. The Copilot made the remark that they had come up on takeoff before he raised the gear handle.

After several attempts and with the same results it was decided to lower the gear, pull the proper circuit breakers, then crank them into the green. The maintenance job control officer was in the tower, an emergency had been de-

clared. A normal landing was made, stopped on the runway and waited for maintenance to insert the down locks. We wrote the problem up and retired for the night.

A few days later, while playing golf on a day off, a staff car came racing down the fairway, out jumped the Director of Maintenance. Seems as though the aircraft had ground checked O.K. and was cleared to fly. After completing a mission the crew had encountered the same problem. A Tanker had been alerted for refueling while the situation was researched. After repeating the procedure we had used the bird landed O.K. I don't remember getting any merits or demerits for this incident but my tours on alert and Reflex seemed to come one on top of the other.



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