



Videmus Omnia

55th STRAT RECON WING ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2006

REUNION OMAHA/OFFUTT-“RETURN TO RECCA”

20-24 SEPTEMBER 2006

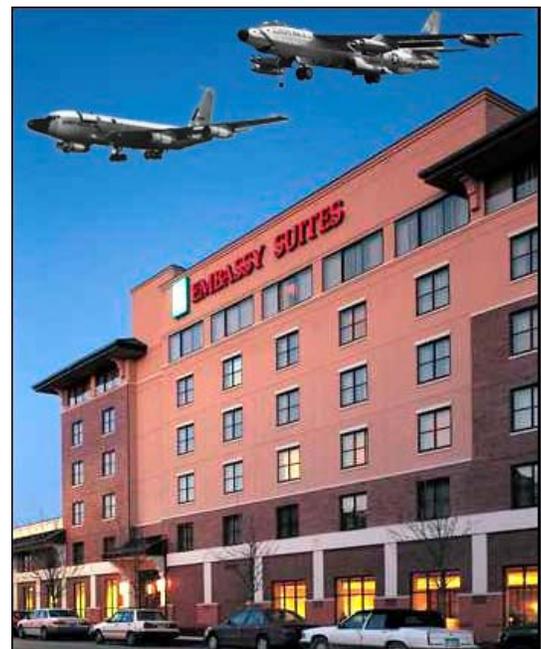


The 25th (Silver) Reunion of the **55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association** will return to the current home area of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* for the first time in ten years. **President Jim Thomas** is chairing this reunion and has committees at work.

This will mark an opportunity to reengage former members, friends and associates of the **55th SRW** with this generation of warriors presently serving our nation in the War on Terror.

You do not want to miss this one.

Headquarters will be the Downtown/Old Market Embassy Suites at 10th and Howard Streets in Omaha, NE. It is located just across the street from the bustling and eclectic Old Market area of downtown Omaha, noted for its diversity in fine restaurants and array of myriad specialty shops.



*The 55th Aerial Demonstration Team!
Gear down, slow flight, low pass.
LOOK OUT OMAHA!!!*

To book your suite, the number is 1-800-EMBASSY (362-2779), refer to the ID name: **55thSRW Association** if you use the call in. Or, you can go online and check out the hotel at www.embassysuitesomaha.com. If you register on line, the ID block code is loaded as **RWA** since SRW was already allocated. To call the hotel directly, phone: 402-346-9000.

The IDs are needed to get the special reunion rate of \$119 for single and \$124 for double occupancy (plus taxes and fees, 16.46%). The rate is good for three days either side of the 20-24 September 2006 reunion dates.

This may seem high to regular reunion goers, but it must be pointed out that the Embassy Suites is **not** your generic hotel. The accommodations are two-room suites with more amenities and conveniences than a regular hotel – desk, sitting area, sleeper sofa, refrigerator, microwave, two TVs, wet bar, coffee maker, iron and hairdryers.

In other words, ***“Everybody gets an upgrade!”***

The rate includes for guests, a made-to-order, hot breakfast, an evening manager-hosted cocktail reception, complimentary newspaper, and free parking **every day**; plus courtesy (free) shuttle transportation to/from the airport.



Embassy Suites atrium/lounge

Attractions

Things to see and do: ConAgra’s International HQ campus, the Heartland of America Park, the Leahy Mall waterwalk, and the Durham Western Heritage Museum are all just a couple of blocks from the Embassy. There is a world-class zoo (with an indoor jungle, a desert dome, aquarium, and the new gorilla valley where the people are inside); Joslyn Art Museum; Botanical Gardens; Rosenblatt Stadium (home to the triple-A Omaha Royals, and the NCAA College World Series). All add to the city’s allure for business and tourism visitors.



Omaha Old Market Scene

Events

At press time for this newsletter, details on the schedule of events are still being coordinated. **When that is completed, the membership, in a future mailing, will receive a registration package with the costs, planned events and tours, registration form and all the info and paperwork necessary to finalize plans to attend what promises to be another in the series of great reunions.**

Tentative plans are for the Board of Directors to meet on Wednesday, 20 September; a tour to the former SAC Museum near Ashland on I80; the formal banquet to be on Friday night; the membership business meeting (to include the election of the Board of Directors) on Saturday morning, and the rest of the day to be an Offutt day of tours, briefings and an informal BBQ gathering on the base that evening. It is expected that will be the best chance for the troops of today to mingle and socialize with the seasoned veterans of the past.

There will be generous hours for the hospitality suite and alternative activities for the ladies.

Make your plans now to “Return to Recca” at Omaha/Offutt in September 2006!



PRESIDENT’S CORNER



Hello, once again, fellow members:

The Association has been busy with some very important activities in recent months. We have made “contact” with the new wing leadership. We are off running toward a grand year of significant events for the Association and the **55th Wing**.

We had a good opportunity to say farewell to **MGen Craig Koziol**, and he was presented with a personal copy of “*We See All*”. We participated with the local Air Force Association Chapter in the design, purchase and installation of the flag pole at the base cemetery. T’was MGen Koziol’s idea to put a flag there. How did so many of us for so long not notice? That’s history now and a beautiful flag flies over the cemetery. It was a great project and a fitting opportunity for the Association to pay respects to MGen Koziol for his support of the Association, and then to become known by the new wing commander.

Next, we took **Col Jonathan George**, the new wing commander, to dinner at Gorat’s Steakhouse. Former wing commanders, Directors, and Omaha Caucus members dressed in their finest (to include “regimental ties”, of course) came out to extend a welcome, and to present our best wishes for the continued mission success of the ***Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth***. In spite of the snow/ice storm howling outside, the get-together was a grand success.

Col George responded to our goodwill by requesting the presence of a few Association members at a Standup Briefing where he acknowledged, to 60 or so of the wing leadership, the panoramic monument picture donated to the wing by **Harry Tull**. He then talked about the Association and its significance to the current **55th**

Wing. Col George does not waste words. He gets right to the point. The new commander is “on board” with the Association. He shares many of our values. Our next step is a return “show” at Standup in March. We will have the floor to address to the entire wing leadership, about the Association, who we are and where we are coming from. Max and Robb are dusting off an outlined briefing, and rounding up some historic, key photos that carry the right message.

Many members and committees are busy planning and arranging for the next major events: ***Tales of the 55th***, the Birthday Ball, the Award for Excellence and the Hall of Fame selection processes, and reunion planning. Max has put together another outstanding newsletter which covers those events and many other items of interest.

We will be coming out with a special reunion mailing around May with the entire package for our September 2006 Omaha Reunion. Hope to see each and everyone at either the Birthday Ball or the reunion in September 2006.

Until then, fair winds and blue skies...and be careful out there!

Videmus Omnia, Jim



ASSOCIATION BUSINESS & MEMBERSHIP SOURCES DIRECTORY

Business/Policy/Reunion Suggestions:

President Jim Thomas

4418 Anchor Mill

Bellevue, NE 68123-1168

E-mail: JThomas927@aol.com

Membership Dues/Changes of Address:

Treasurer Errol Hoberman

6441 Avenida De Galvez

Navarre, FL 32566

E-mail: SAC-EWO@mchsi.com

Newsletter Editor:

Secretary Max Moore

201 Basswood Court

Bellevue, NE 68005-2001

E-mail: MaxMoore55@aol.com

Association Historian:

Robb Hoover

13412 Tregaron Circle

Bellevue, NE 68123

E-mail: RobbHoover@aol.com

Association Web Page Comments/Ideas:

Don Griffin

8683 Rawhide Lane, #11

Wilton, CA 95693

E-mail: dgrif@citlink.net, or

Jim Maloney

7908 Kona Circle

Papillion, NE 68046-5619

E-mail: jim@maloney.com

Other Officers and Members of the Board of Directors:

Vice President Ricky McMahon

Permanent Members: **Sam Pizzo, Sparky Adams, Charlie Waters, Bill Ernst.**

Elected Members: **Joe Gyulavics, Fox Censullo, George Ross, Kevin Todd, Dennis Haun, Michael Cook**

Active Duty Members: **Colonel Don Kelly and LtCol Ken Bauer.**

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TREASURER'S REPORT

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

The Association, as of 13 February 2006, had a checking account balance \$5,709. Another \$7,462 is in a saving account, and \$10,000 is held in a CD.

The Association is solvent.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Also on 13 February 2006, the Association had **1,045** members in good standing, 161 of which are widows, and 33 associated members. This is a net **increase** of **86** members since 21 August 2005.

Errol embarked on an effort to recoup some 260 former members whose memberships lapsed from 1994-2004. A 'we want you back' letter went in the snail mail the latter part of January. The result of that campaign has already produced a good number of alumni "returning to the fold."

There will be a full report on what the response rate was in the next *Videmus Omnia*.

The Association has members in **49 states**, Guam, Puerto Rico and APOs in Europe. (*We still lack representation in Alaska. Duh?*)

The number of **active duty members** continues to rise as interest has picked up due to the Association's exposure in the Offutt area, the solid support of the **Wing** senior staff, and as current members continue to recruit.

2006 on your address label means that your dues expire at the end of this year, and you are still a Regular Member (RM) in good standing. Any other year indicates when your dues will expire, or have already expired.

Dues come due each January, so if you haven't already done so, reup now.

Other membership status indicators on the label are explained one more once: LM is Life Member (no more dues); HLM means Honorary Life Member (widows)(no dues); AM indicates Associate Members (no dues); NLR means you got the newsletter gratis from the Association.

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If your dues expired 2005, \$20.00 is due to include 2006. One year's dues is \$10; \$25 will update your membership for three years beyond what now shows as an expiration year.

NOW is the time to renew.

If your dues expired in 2005, this is the last newsletter you will receive unless you renew your membership.

Please remit dues to 55SRW Association and mail to Errol Hoberman as soon as practical. For those who receive this newsletter via regular post, an Association-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

New members receive the Association's dual-shield lapel pin and the **55thSRW** Cold War Memorial coin when they join.

Members desiring replacement or additional pins can get them from Errol for \$5.00 prepaid (*if you want more than one pin, the cost is just \$3.00 for each additional pin if mailed at the same time; i.e. one pin, \$5, two pins, \$8, three pins \$11, etc.*).

Jim Thomas and Max Moore have pins and coins, as well, so members in the Omaha area can get the pins from them for \$3.00 without the postage. Extra coins are \$5.00 each.

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Over the years, it has not been an unusual occurrence for some members to include modest amounts of money over and above that required for annual or three years' dues to add to the treasury.

Every dollar is appreciated.

Others may wish to contribute to the Association with an outright donation, or by an endowment or bequest.

Something to think about.

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If you don't receive e-mails from the Association, it likely is because your e-address is not listed or outdated. To get on the *members only* e-mail roster, or correct/update, send your current e-mail address to Errol Hoberman at SAC-EWO@mchsi.com.

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UPDATED ASSOCIATION ROSTER

Membership Chairman Hoberman is in the process of updating the membership roster to be published in the near future. So, be sure your latest address and phone info is up to date with him. If you want your cell phone number published, as well, please let him know soonest, but NLT 15 March.

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OFFUTT AFB CEMETERY FLAG/FLAG POLE DEDICATION 11 November 2005

The military cemetery at Offutt AFB has existed since the Ft Crook cavalry days of 1895. Yet in all that time, no flag pole to hold the nation's colors had graced that hallowed ground. That situation was rectified in September 2005 thanks to a joint effort of the **55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association**, the AK-SAR-BEN Chapter of the Air Force Association, and the 55th Civil Engineering Squadron. The Association's cost share was \$998.



The **55th Wing** Commander, then-**BrigGen Craig Koziol** had noticed the absence of a flag at the cemetery and asked his **Command Chief MSgt Robert Muthard** to look into correcting the void. The Chief inquired of the local AFA chapter executive board if they would like to take on the project. AFA President Michael Cook (also a member of the **55th SRWA** Board of Directors) then asked **55th SRWA** President Thomas if he wanted to make it a joint project. Accepting another chance to assist the **55th Wing** was an easy decision.

Spearheaded by the respective presidents of the two associations, and coordinated by Thomas, the process moved very quickly with the cooperation of the 55th Civil Engineering Sqd. The procuring of the flag pole and large US flag was done, and the CE troops built the base plot to support the pole. It actually went up on/about 22 September in hope that BG Koziol could see his idea come to fruition and officiate at a dedication ceremony. However, his pending change of command and other events filled his schedule, so it didn't happen then.

The formal dedication ceremony took place, appropriately, on Veterans Day, 11 November 2005 at 1000 in unseasonably moderate autumn weather. A crowd of over 100 retirees and active duty personnel witnessed a dignified and solemn presentation.

Colonel (BG-sel) Jonathan George, now the **55th** Commander, presided over the event. It began with the US Strategic Command Honor Guard (a marine, sailor, soldier and airman) raising a ceremonial flag accompanied by a soloist singing the National Anthem.



An invocation by the wing chaplain blessed the honored dead whose permanent resting place is the Offutt Cemetery. Col George made sincere remarks recognizing the efforts of all involved and the purposeful meaning of the ceremony.

That was followed by the unveiling of the dedication plaque, mounted on a pedestal at the base of the flag pole, by **55SRWA** President Thomas, and newly elected AFA Chapter President **John Daly**, the recently retired vice commander of the **55th Wing**.



55SRW Assn President Thomas, 55th Wing CC Col George, AFA Chapter President Daly

Col George then placed a wreath on the site, followed by a 21 gun salute and the playing of echoing Taps. The ceremony closed and the assembled group departed.

Among those in attendance were: **Mrs Sharon Thomas, Mrs Donna Daly**, past **55th SRW Assn** president Ernst, Secretary Moore; Board members: Hoover, Maloney and Colonel Kelly; former **55th SRW** Commanders **Regis Urschler** and **Steve Stevens**; **55th SRW Assn** members **Harry Tull, Arlen** and **Mary Howe, Hank** and **Joanne Reiden, Jo Hedge, Frank** and **Lawanda Hicks, Rich Marcoux, Dick Purdum**, (the last 3902 AB Wing Commander), **Sandy** and **Carl Diver, Dave Sanborn**, (a Bellevue city councilman), **Tom** and **Francine Garrity**, and **Pete Glenboski**.

Great credit goes to **MSgt Jay Corales**, leader of the Offutt Honor Guard, who planned and coordinated the event; **Mr Mark Broytsky**, Chief of **55th Protocol**; and their many assistants who made the ceremony a very dignified and smoothly orchestrated occasion. A job well done in every way.

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MEMORIAL BRICKS CAN STILL BE ORDERED

Dear Friends,

One more reminder: I know that there are still some **55th** veterans out there who haven't gotten the word about the **55th** Cold War Memorial that was completed in the US Air Force Museum Memorial Gardens, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, and dedicated in September 2003. This project is a magnificent tribute to the Cold Warriors of the **55th SRW** and is centered on a paver brick patio.

Many of the bricks were engraved-to-order for the purchasers. If you haven't bought a brick, or know of an individual who has not bought a brick and wants one, **the time is now** to purchase one or more. It will be necessary for us to have 15 or more orders for the contractor to engrave the additional personalized bricks on-site.

The cost is \$65 for each brick, and the engraving is **limited** to three lines, 13 characters per line including spaces, dashes and slashes (**No periods, commas, colons or semicolons or quotation marks**). Example is as follows:

LTC JOE DOKES = 13 Characters

RC-135 AC/IP = 12 Characters

38TH/343RD SRS = 14 Characters, but ok

If you want to upgrade your membership with a brick buy, send us **\$100** and you will pay for a **brick and three years' membership extension**. Add \$65 for any additional bricks.

As I have said before, **now** is the time to get a brick for your grandchildren and great grandchildren to reflect upon in the years to come.

Make your checks to **55SRW Association**, tell us **exactly how you want your brick(s) to read**, and mail to Bill Ernst, 410 Greenbriar Court, Bellevue, NE, 68005.

No more orders for bricks will be taken after the reunion in September 2006.

See you in Omaha in 2006! *VO, Bill*

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DINNER WITH THE WING COMMANDER

Members of the Omaha Caucus of the **55th SRW Association** feted the newest **55th Wing Commander**, Col (BrigGen-sel) Jonathan George at dinner at Gorat's Steak House in Omaha on the evening of 15 Nov 05. He is the sixth wing commander to meet and greet members of the Association in such an intimate social setting.

Among those attending were three past wing commanders, **Regis Urschler**, **Steve Stevens** and **Dan Peterson**. Association President Jim Thomas presided over the event which began with an hour of socializing as Col George moved among the group.



L to R: Wing Kings - Urschler, Col George, Stevens, Peterson

Robb Hoover, Association Historian, began the ceremonies with a rendering of the tale of the **55th** ceremonial bell which was 'liberated' from a **55th SRW** forward operating location, and eventually was returned to the Wing at Offutt. Accompanied by two other of the original crew members whose names are engraved on the bell, Harry Tull and Arlen Howe, Col George rang the bell to commence dinner serving.

Also on display during the event were the **55th SRW Association** Award for Excellence trophy, the original **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** heroes lithograph, a picture of the **55th SRW** Cold War Memorial, and the Association flag.

After a most excellent dinner, Pres Thomas made remarks welcoming Col George, and an around the table introduction of the guests ensued. Thomas then presented a copy of **Bruce Bailey's** "We See All" book to Col George.



Grip and grin, once again now.

THE 55TH WING HALL OF FAME

Col George addressed the group and expressed his appreciation for the experience, commitment, and contributions of the **55th SRW Association**.

Tull then made a presentation to the Wing of a copy of the panoramic photo from the Cold War Memorial dedication ceremony taken in September 2003. The photo is now displayed in the Wing Headquarters just outside the Command Section.

(Another one, previously donated to the Wing in January 2003, is on permanent display in the General Dougherty Conference Center at Offutt, along with the bell and Award trophy.)



Association Secretary Moore gave Col George bound copies of recent newsletters (pre- and post-Dayton reunion, and post-San Diego reunion). Col George already had a copy of the Association's history in the October 2005 newsletter. He also received gifts of the Association logo polo shirt and ball cap (he was wearing the Association tie and pin).

All in all, it was a worthwhile and convivial evening in which Col George was well impressed with the dedication that former members of the **55th** still have for serving the current active duty wing.

Also in attendance were: Association Board members: past president Ernst, Maloney, Col Kelly, and LtCol Bauer; plus members Hicks, Garrity, Glenboski, Purdum, **John Tresmer**, and **Dave Wolfe**.



Montage

Inductee plaques

The Hall of Fame display is located in the hallway immediately outside and to the right as one exits the **55th Wing** Command Section in the Wing HQ building. It is impressive as a visitor proceeds down the passage to view the individual plaques of the inductees.

The montage in the center was made for the original "Heroes" lithograph that was produced by A.C. Lofton in 1999. It is a depiction representative of the various eras and significant events in the heritage and storied history of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth**. A plaque above the montage reads:

THIS 55th WING WALL OF FAME HONORS THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE FIGHTIN' 55th WHO HAVE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED INCREDIBLE PROFESSIONALISM AND DEDICATION IN SUPPORT OF THE MISSIONS WE HAVE BEEN TASKED TO PERFORM BY OUR NATION. THEY REPRESENT THE UNTOLD NUMBER OF VALIANT, DEDICATED, AND PATRIOTIC WARFIGHTERS WHO HAVE SERVED THIS GREAT NATION, AND THIS WING, WITH DISTINCTION. THIS WALL OF FAME SYMBOLIZES AN ILLUSTRIOUS HERITAGE AND LEGACY OF WHICH ALL MEMBERS OF THE 55th WING, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, CAN BE JUSTLY PROUD.

VIDEMUS OMNIA
DEDICATED 31 JANUARY 2003
*(Authored by BGen Craig Koziol
and LtCol (Ret) Max R. Moore)*



THE 55TH SRW ASSOCIATION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The **55th SRW Association Annual Award for Excellence** is presented to that individual, crew, group, or organization that best exemplifies the basic tenants of the **55th SRW Association**.

The award winners are announced at the annual **55th Wing Birthday Ball** and at **55th SRWA** reunions. Their names are inscribed on the base of the trophy and they receive a representative plaque.

The process for selecting the 2005 awardee was in progress as this newsletter went to print.



The trophy now resides between the memorabilia cases, near the **55th** ceremonial bell, in the lobby of the **Gen Russell Dougherty** Conference Center at Offutt. Many significant events are held there each year, including the ACC Commanders Conference, so it is in a high visibility area.

Past award recipients are **LtCol Ricky McMahon**, 338th Combat Training Squadron commander, for 2000; and **MSgt Steven and MSgt Lisa Haggett**, **55th Wing** Command Section, 2001; **LtCol Kurt Kramer**, 38th RS commander, 2002; and **Col (Sel) Glen Gulleckson**, 343rd RS commander, 2003; **TSgt Terry Hunt**, Medical Support Group, 2004.

The seventh edition of the *“Tales of the 55th”* will be held **Friday, 31 March 2006**, at the Offutt Club beginning with a social hour at 1600.

Opening the **55th Wing** Birthday Ball weekend, speakers from various eras of 55th heritage tell their tales. It is one more opportunity for **55th** alums, both local and out-of-towners, and active duty troops to mingle, and relive, or learn of, some significant stories from the *“Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth’s”* history.

Originally created and coordinated by Robb Hoover, President Thomas has taken over the duties of orchestrating and emceeing the affair. The 2006 program was being finalized at press time.

This year’s event will again be tri-sponsored by the **55th SRW Association**; the Strategic Roost, Association of Old Crows; and the local Curtis E. LeMay Chapter, Order of Daedalions.



55TH WING BIRTHDAY BALL 2006

The **28th Birthday Ball** will be held on **Saturday, 1 April, 2006**, at the Qwest Center Omaha. This is a departure from the traditional January/February schedule for a variety of reasons. But, mark your calendars now and plan to attend.



This year’s theme is shown on the coin/logo above. The guest speaker will be LtGeneral (USAF-Ret) **Thomas G. McInerney**, former Assistant Vice

Chief of Staff, HQ USAF. He retired in 1994 and now appears as a military analyst for Fox TV News.

The event's program includes the announcement of the 2005 **55th SRW Assn** Award for Excellence winner, and the induction of new members into the **55th Wing** Hall of Fame. The Noteables big band group of the ACC Heartland of America Band will provide the musical entertainment.

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CAPT JONATHAN GEORGE'S U-2 SAVE



In 1986 a remarkable save of a U-2R was recorded by Captain Jonathan George of the 9th SRW. He was flying his first operational mission out of Osan AB, South Korea, when the autopilot disconnected and the pitch trim ran full nose down. The aircraft nosed over and exceeded allowable Mach, but George managed to grab the yoke and somehow pull the bird out of a steep dive before the airframe failed.

But try as he might, he could not reset the trim. Capt George lowered the gear and started a slow descent to base, during which he was forced to "bear-hug" the yoke, exerting up to 50 lbs. back pressure to prevent the aircraft from pitching over.

After an hour of this he arrived overhead at the airfield, but due to tremendous fatigue, muscle cramps, and other physiological problems caused by such heavy exertion while enclosed in his pressure suit, George was unable to properly configure the

aircraft for landing without losing control. Thus, he executed a spiraling approach and flew a perfect no-flap approach to a full-stop landing.

Recovery personnel had to carry him from the aircraft and send him to hospital, where he was treated for severe muscle strain and exhaustion.

Notes: BrigGeneral-select George is currently serving as Commander, 55th Wing at Offutt AFB, NE.

This account is excerpted and edited from Chris Pocock's "50 Years of the U-2: The Complete Illustrated History of the Dragon Lady". The source is cited in a footnote in the February 1987 issue of "Combat Crew" in which the article appeared, as well.

Contributed by Robb Hoover.

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AN ACTIVE DUTY PERSPECTIVE

By Colonel Don Kelly

Deputy Commander of the **55th Wing** Operations Group, and a member of the **55th SRW Association** Board of Directors



In early February, I had an opportunity to talk to the students of the Airman Leadership School as the guest speaker at their graduation. Surely, there was no more talent, nor more hope for the future than right there in that room. I wished I could have traded places with them. But at the same time, looking at them, I was confident that they were among the future leaders of our military, and that we can all be very confident about tomorrow. I talked about the warrior ethos of the airmen, about the legacy of Air Force's warrior spirit, and about

the young airmen's responsibility to it. I think the message hit home.

While writing the speech, I had time to reflect on my own career, thinking about what nuggets of knowledge from my own past I could give the young airmen to help them along the way. That I even had a career was really a matter of chance. Although I grew up in the shadows of Offutt AFB, I never really thought about a military career.

However, that changed when I married the daughter of a long-time member of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*, Lt Col (Ret) Arlen "Ziggy" Howe. He "steered" me in the direction of a military career, and as luck would have it, one that followed a similar footpath to the one he walked for 26 years (*minus 3 Distinguished Flying Crosses and about 7,000 flying hours*).

So back in 1983, I reported for duty to the 38th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron and began what has been a truly fulfilling Air Force career that has now come full circle and brought me back to where I started—the 55th Wing.

Today, I am at the point of my career where one begins to reflect on what was, and what could have been. My own initial thoughts when I began this journey were on becoming a good airman, a good leader. And I was probably right to concentrate on the job at hand, for the job of a lieutenant navigator is a tough one, and without a doubt the most important, and if you take to it, the most rewarding.

It also provided me a solid foundation upon which to build a career. Ironically, after almost 24 years I am still striving to do what I started out to do--becoming a good airman, a good leader.

Moreover, if the members of the 55th SRW looked back over the past, they would quickly realize that our Wing has produced some truly remarkable leaders. If you took the time to pick up a pen and paper and start writing down the names of the great leaders and mentors you served with, under, or along side of, the list you would produce would be very long.

Just to name a few, there was of course, Harry Tull, Regis Urschler, **Hank "Gunner" Dubuy**, **Bruce Olmstead**, and some of my own personal favorites, **Kermit Neal**, **Rich Wilson**, and **Rich Holsinger**, and too many others to name because our Wing has produced such a rich abundance of talented leaders. More importantly, I want to assure

you that for every great leader we have produced, there are at least a dozen more ready to step into the breach and take the reins.

However, do not take my word on this--come see for yourself. On March 31, we will celebrate the *"Tales of the 55th"* at the Offutt Club. It is the one night a year where the past, present, and the future of our great Wing converge. We will lift a few glasses, tell a few stories, reminisce and share the camaraderie, a special bond that only exists amongst airmen.

I am hoping that SRW alums turn out in great numbers so you can talk to your legacy and see what I have been talking about with regards to our future. The airmen are looking forward to the opportunity to meet you, hear your stories and thank you for your service. That is the way it has been and forever shall be.

Videmus Omnia, Don Kelly.



T A P S



Ken Allemand, May 2005; Haughton, LA; wife, **Ellie**. Ken served as a navigator in the 82nd SRS at Kadena AB, Okinawa, and with the 55th at Offutt AFB, NE, 1973-76.

Allen Blum, 29 September 2005; Excelsior, MO. Al was a WWII veteran P-38 pilot who came to the 55th at Forbes AFB, KS, in 1960 as an RB-47 aircraft commander.

John Hammerer, 15 February 2005; LaPlata, MD.

John M. Hodgson, 69, 18 October 2005; Lakewood, CO; wife, **Wilma**. A retired MSgt, John served as an aircraft maintenance technician on RB-47s at Forbes in the 1960s.

Charles F. Jones, 8 January 2006; Henderson, NV; wife, **Louise**. A WWII veteran, he served with

LETTERS AND STUFF



the Royal Canadian AF, then the USAAF. A B-17 bomb/nav, he flew bombing missions over Germany, including Schweinfurt. His tenure with the 55th was as a KC-97 nav in the Air Refueling Sqd at Forbes in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Judye Meyer, 16 November 2005; Palm City, FL; wife of **John F. (Jack)**, RC-135 navigator at Kadena and Offutt in the 1970s.

William C. (Willie) Mueller, 65, 13 October 2005; Albuquerque, NM. He began his EWO career with the 55th in RBs at Forbes in the mid-1960s and moved to Yokota AB, Japan, and Kadena in RCs and the original cast of the 82nd SRS.

Lloyd Navarro, 73, 18 January 2006; Universal City, TX; wife, **Sylvia**. Lloyd was a marine and served in Korea before joining the AF. He became an EWO with the 55th in RBs at Forbes for several years, then went into RCs at Yokota and Kadena in the late 1960s, also in the first group of crewmembers. He returned to the Wing at Offutt after that tour. After the AF he had a second career as an accountant for the city of Austin, TX.

Paul O. Olsen, 69, 9 June 2004, Arlington Hts, IL; wife **Michele (Shelley) Ann**. Paul was an RB-47 pilot in the 55th at Forbes in the 1960s, then moved into RCs at Offutt. After he left the AF, he had a career with United Airlines.

Carl T. Vergin, 88, 19 January 2005; Reno, NV. Joined the Army in WW II, but transferred to the Air Corps and became a navigator. Flew with the 55th as an EWO in RBs at Forbes in the late 1950s and early 1960s. After retiring, he taught high school math in Reno for a few years.

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TAPS – News of Association members, friends and associates leaving this mortal coil, should be sent to Jim Thomas and Max Moore (*see DIRECTORY, page 3 for contact info*).

Please include next of kin and an address and to whom the Association condolence card may be sent; date of demise, age, crew or duty position; bases and approximate years with 55th; and any other pertinent information.

The news in TAPS is limited by how much and how accurate the given information.

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A conscience is what hurts when everything else feels so good.

Fellow 55SRWA Members:

Thanks so much for your generosity and contribution to the Offutt AFB community by spearheading (and funding) the cemetery flagpole project.

My father is buried in the Offutt Cemetery, and you have honored him (and my family) by your work and deeds. The Association once again comes through and continues to do great things. Of course I would expect no less!!

Kudos to the 55 Wing/CE troops and the AFA chapter for their parts as well. A great teaming effort – very much appreciated.

Videmus Omnia,

Bo Marlin, Alexandria, VA

(Colonel Marlin is currently serving in the Pentagon. He is a graduate of Bellevue HS and the USAF Academy, and a former active duty member of the 55SRWA Board of Directors.)

(From an e-mail 6 October 2005.)

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Happy New Year to all members (*of the 55th*), past and present. My prayers are with all of our current warriors fighting in the War on Terrorism

Being a former enlisted man, I hope more of the active duty enlisted personnel can be motivated to participate in the Association. We have a rich heritage and enlisted maintenance troops can take large credit for the success of the organization.

Sincerely, **Douglas R. Eddins**,

Pleasant Grove, UT. December 2006

(MSgt USAF (Ret) Ten years at Forbes in the 55th A&E Sqd.)

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Dear Mr. Hoberman:

My father, **Cornelius Collins**, served in the 55th **Strat Recon Wing** and was a member of your Association until he died. My brother and nephews are/were also members of the Air Force.

I am interested in obtaining several of the Cold War Memorial coins advertised in your newsletter, *Videmus Omnia*. The *Fighting Fifty-Fifth* coins will mean a lot to those family members and will remind them of Dad.

Thank you in advance for your help, and for all you have done to make this a great country!

Sincerely, *Resee Collins*, Oxford, GA

(From an e-mail 30 October 2005)

(The coins were sent and Ms. Collins responded:)

Just wanted to say that I received the coins and know that they will be a meaningful and pleasant surprise to my family in memory of Dad on Christmas. Thanks for helping to spread some holiday joy. November 2005.

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Editor's plea: If any members wish to contribute letters, stories, photos and articles, please send them to me. If events occur in your area that you think would be of interest to the general readership, mail or e-mail the pertinent details, and include the names of those Association members who attend. Names are news. The only way to broaden our coverage is to get input from 'out there'.

Thanks, and Videmus Omnia, Max

(Contributions may be edited for content, readability, and spacing.)

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ASSOCIATION POLO SHIRTS/CAPS

You will surely want to acquire a shirt and/or cap before the next big reunion in Omaha to wear at the membership meeting and Offutt Day.

They will be available at the reunion, but buy now and avoid the rush. No waiting.

The February shirt inventory by sizes: medium – 4; large – 5; XL – 3; XXL – 3. If those go, we can always order more of any size as needed, including small and XXXL. A new order will likely be placed before the reunion. Cost is \$25 per shirt.

The dual shield logo is on the left front, white with red collar and sleeve trim, navy blue front placket, no pocket. They are 100% combed cotton. The quality is such that there is little to no fading or shrinkage.



There are 10 **golf/ballcaps** on hand. They are royal blue with the dual shield logo on the front, and an adjustable back strap. **They go for \$7 each.**

The items can be viewed in color on the Association web site at www.55srwa.org, and click on the *Clothing Sales* link.

Anyone desiring to purchase either or both can send an e-mail to: MaxMoore55@aol.com; phone: (402) 291-8272; or write to: 201 Basswood Court, Bellevue, NE, 68005-2001

There are charges for priority postage to be added to the individual item costs: \$7 for two shirts; \$6 if both a shirt and cap are ordered; \$5 for a shirt only; \$3 for a cap only. *Yep, the rates went up, but the items costs haven't.*

Checks for the full amount of your order should be made to the 55th SRW Association, or to Max Moore. Either way, the bucks end up in the Association treasury.

One more way to identify with your Association and “show the logo” at appropriate functions, on the golf course, wherever.

They are unisex, so get one for your spouse, significant other, or other family members.

Great gifts!

Come and get 'em!!!

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THE ASSOCIATION TIE

The tie is a distinguished blue and red striped design with the Association's dual shield logo prominently displayed in the tie's center. A fine gold line defines every fourth blue/red stripe.

It can also be seen in color on the web site.



The price is \$20 each which includes postage. Order now! This item is a must have for the Omaha reunion banquet, and other appropriate events. Don't be the last on your block to own one.

To acquire the 'regimental' tie, contact Jim Thomas at JThomas927@aol.com, or write him at 4418 Anchor Mill, Bellevue, NE 68005-1168. **Make checks payable to the 55SRW Association.**



SPARKLY 55TH PINS



(Shown as near actual size)

As a direct result of newsletter notices, the above pins have sold at a steady pace to **55SRWA** members all over the country. They are quite in evidence at social occasions in and around Offutt on ladies of the **55th Wing**, and at recent Association reunions.

You will want to acquire one for that special lady in your life to wear at the next reunion in Omaha and other any appropriate occasions.

The Association does **not** sell these pins and receives **no** money. But, as a service for those who wish to possess same: **Erwin's Jewelers, Frank Kumor**, proprietor, in Olde Town Bellevue, has an

inventory and **you can purchase directly from the store.**

Send requests to 223 W. Mission Ave, Bellevue, NE; or call: (402) 291-2454, or fax to (402) 293-5873 to order the pins. Costs are \$9 for the pin and \$3 for shipping.



YOUR 55TH SRW ASSN WEB SITE

www.55srwa.org

The Association web site is an integral and vital part of the Association's line of communications and information. If you have not already done so, you are urged to check it out.

Everything you want to know about the Association is there: **constitution, bylaws**; officers and bios; membership form, library, picture gallery, bulletin board, and links to other associated and interesting sites.

Timely info and updates on the next reunion, other events and important bulletins on any projects in progress are posted. Also, there is e-mail traffic on subjects of interest to members.

Webmeister Griffin and his creative cyber-cohort, **Dave Johnson**, maintain and regularly update the site so as not to let it get stale.

Jim Maloney has agreed to become the new webmaster. He is in transition training from Grif as he and Dave gradually retire from maintaining the site as they have so brilliantly done since its inception in 1996.

They are always looking for new and fresh ideas. Inputs from members are encouraged and welcome. Send them pictures, war stories, anything you want to share with the Association.



E – NEWSLETTER

Association members in good standing who so desire can receive the newsletter via electronic transmission. **To get on the *members only* e-mail roster, send current e-mail address to SAC-EWO@mchsi.com.** Or go to: **www.55srwa.org** for full instructions on how to read and/or download the e-newsletter. **There is an archive of many past issues there, as well.**

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REUNIONS

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343rd STRAT RECON SQD

10-12 MAY 2006

Wichita, KS



Former members of the **343SRS** and **55th** Support Group from the 1950s and 1960s will convene at the **Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Wichita, KS**. It is located at 5805 W. Kellogg, just a few miles from the Mid Continent Airport, and with access by I-235 or US 400 (US54). Rate is \$71 per night and includes a hot breakfast. All events will be held at the hotel.

Registration fee is \$27 per person and \$23 per person for the banquet on Friday night, 12 May. There will be a hospitality/meeting room open each day, and open bar from 4-6 pm.

Paul Dolby is chairman for the reunion. For more details, he can be reached at 1-260-356-1761, e-mail: paul343rdsrs@yahoo.com, or write to: 1211 Riverside Dr., Huntington, IN, 46750.

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STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND

24-27 MAY 2006

Tucson, AZ



The Double Tree Hotel at Reid Park will be the HQ for this gathering. It is located at 445 S. Alvernon Way. Special rate is \$78 and includes taxes. Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-222-8733, or e-mail reservations@doubletree.com; and be sure to mention you are attending the SAC 2006 Reunion.

More information on the schedule of events, tours, etc., can be obtained by contacting **J. T. Romero**, the reunion project officer, at 1-520-203-8809, or e-mail jtrome-25@excite.com.

Registration forms and payment must be received **not later than April 20, 2006**.

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B-47 STRATOJET ASSOCIATION

21-23 SEPTEMBER 2006

Wichita, KS

For more detailed information, please contact the association website at B-47.com, or President **Don Cassidy**, 1-630-8591-1922, or e-mail colcass@sbcglobal.net.

*(Too bad there wasn't coordination on this one as **55thers** are good, but can't be in two places at once.)*

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**DEDICATION OF HOOVER
HALL, MAXWELL AFB, AL**

The Air Force Officer Training School (OTS) at Maxwell AFB, AL, is proud to announce that one of the main auditoriums will be dedicated to honor the lifelong and career contributions of LtCol USAF (Ret) **Robb L. Hoover**. The auditorium, now known as "OTC Small", will be renamed "Hoover Hall" and dedicated on **Wednesday, 17 May 2006**.



Four other Cold War heroes of strategic reconnaissance (*and the 55th SRW*), who exemplify the qualities OTS desires to instill in young officers, will be recognized in ceremonies, as well. They are LtGen (Ret) **C. Norman Wood**, BGen (Ret) Regis Urschler, BGen (Ret) **Lawrence Mitchell**, LtCol (Ret) Harrison Tull.

Hoover Hall will have a display area to honor these men, and containing memorabilia of Cold War strategic reconnaissance efforts. Anyone wishing to contribute items for the display is urged to do so with the gratitude of the OTS staff.

The long term plans are to dedicate the entire foyer outside of Hoover Hall to Cold War heroes who are graduates of OTS, OCS, or aviation cadets.

Events are scheduled for 16-18 May 2006. They include a dining out; the dedication of Hoover Hall; dinner with the OTS staff; and the OTS Graduation Parade.

Any and all who wish to attend the festivities to honor those five veterans, and/or donating any memorabilia, should contact **Capt Dale Kolomaznik** at 334-953-0318 for more details and billeting information.

The brains behind this project are two former **55th SRW** crewdogs, and current Association members, **LtCol Mark Morris** (*a second generation 55ther, he is the son of Mike Morris*) and **LtCol Bill Danskine**. Both are squadron commanders at OTS, and they determined that the auditorium was pretty drab and in need of a theme.

Once the proposal for a Cold War motif was approved, those gents spearheaded the drive. They are hoping for a good turnout of **55th** veterans and friends of the five honorees to enjoy the week.

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MEMBER BOOK PLUG

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THE INVISIBLE FORCE

By **Ed Parker**

The Invisible Force is a composite of people, concepts, circumstances and orders to perform. This is a mystery sprinkled with humor and tragedy.

Much has been written about the 1 July 1960 shootdown of an USAF RB-47 reconnaissance

plane of the **55th SRW**, and this is another version with a distinct personal slant.

In addition to first hand knowledge, numerous formerly SECRET and TOP SECRET documents were used to substantiate the material presented in this story.

The book can be ordered through www.nightengalepress.com

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P-51D RESTORATION

Sirs: Our California Air Heritage Foundation is in the process of acquiring the remains of a former 55th Fighter Group P-51D that crashed in 1944 during a mission over France. It is our hope to rebuild this aircraft for display at our museum in Los Angeles where the plane was built at North American Aviation.

We need donations to help finance the acquisition, shipping and restoration costs of this project. We are a small, non-profit organization and could use any assistance your members would care to give.

Thanks, **Bruce Orriss**, Director

(For more information on how and where to send donations, e-mai: bruce.orriss@ngc.com)

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WHO SHOT WHAT?



Picture credits to: Omaha Chamber of Commerce web site for the skyline and Old Market; Embassy Suites for the hotel shots (*Dave Johnson added the flyovers*); Moore for dinner with Col George, and Offutt cemetery flag pole dedication, Hall of Fame, the cap/shirt; Capt George/U2 from "*Combat Crew*" magazine; Don Kelly for his official AF pose; **Gerry Pritchard** for the bell/trophy; Pizzo for the tie; **Beth Kelley**, the sparkly pin; Hoover ported from the web page.