

Videmus Omnia

55th WING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

MAY

2010

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from the Midlands.

Time sure does fly. Seems just last week, I was recovering from our reunion at Reno...or was that the *Tales of the 55th*, or the Birthday Ball? It is all starting to blend together now. I hope that is not contagious.

So, when is the next fun time event for the **Association**? Of course, it is our reunion in the spring of 2011 in McKinney, Texas. **Greg** and **Julie Smith** will be our host and hostess. The weather should be cooperative and there is much to do, including a first class tour of E Systems at Greenville, where the **55th Wing's** aircraft are modified and maintained in battle-ready condition. It will be another great get together. Stay tuned. Keep your eyes on our web site for the plans as they come together.

Looking back on recent events, you will see in the detailed articles from Max, that Heritage Week at the **55th Wing** was action packed. The support that **BGen Jack Shanahan** has given the **Association** continues to be extraordinary. Many actions were completed during Heritage Week ...all celebrating a proud past and a promising future for both the **55th Wing** and our grand **Association**.

I would urge all members to be diligent in keeping your contact information updated with the **Association**. We need the most current means of contacting the membership. E-mail addresses seem to be the most elusive as they change more than addresses or phone numbers. Please use the membership info form, or send a quick e-mail, to give an update.

Challenge yourself to get one veteran to join, or to rejoin, the **Association** this year.

Now, you all be careful out there this summer.
Videmus Omnia, Jim

ASSOCIATION NAME CHANGE RECAP

After an extensive discussion among the **Association** Board of Directors (BoD) in January 2010, the BoD decided it should **recommend** to the membership to change the name of the organization. The rationale was to be relevant and more conducive for recruiting of current and future generations of the **55th Wing**. Particularly since 'Strategic Reconnaissance' was dropped from the Wing's designation in September 1991.

President Thomas appointed a committee to formulate the methodology for the voting process on the issue. The committee of co-chairs named was **Michael Cook, Dennis Haun, and Max Moore**, all members of the BoD.

The committee determined that voters could indicate if they did not want a change; and those who did favor change could select from the choices the majority of BoD recommended: The **55th Wing Association** or The **Fightin' 55th Association**.

The cover letter was an amalgamation of opinions, ideas, rationales, and comments that were expressed at the Reno reunion; from the November 2009 president's letter and published membership meeting minutes; in addition to inputs from the January BoD discussion. The letter explained the BoD reasons for recommending a name change, **but was also neutral by design so as not to influence any member's voting**.

However, **there was emphasis and encouragement for the members to respond**. The ballot was a prepaid, preaddressed postcard, which merely had to be marked and posted. (*The date of 5 March was actually an optimistic target to encourage quick returns by the voters.*)

Fed-Ex Kinko's was contracted to produce, process and mail the package. Due to unforeseen

ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND BUSINESS DIRECTORY

delays in the production process, the letter/ballot did not get to the USPS until late February. Consequently, many members did not get them in a timely manner. *(Several members noted that when they voted. There were also some other cryptic comments, as well.)* **The committee had already decided that all ballots would be counted regardless of when they came in, some as late as 29 March.** *(Ed note: a small number of votes trickled in though April and into May, but did not impact the final outcome.)*

In addition to the posted mail, e-mails were sent on/about 9 March to 352 members who had not responded via postcard in an attempt to include more members in the voting process. *(Various servers rejected 108 of those e-mails.)* The letter/ballot was also posted on the **Association** web site for a time.

Thus, every effort was made to get the maximum response in voting on this significant decision. Yet, over 200 members did not vote for whatever reasons. **No member was disenfranchised unless he/she chose not to vote,** or did not receive a ballot due to change of address or other problems.

A significant majority of the membership decided to change the organization's name. A summation follows:

Letter/ballots were mailed to **741 members in good standing as of 31 December 2009.** Of those, **439** mailed in ballots. Just **seven** were returned as 'undeliverable'. The e-mail ballot request garnered **92** more votes. *(Anyone who voted by both methods was counted just once.)* Thus, **71.8%** of the membership voted *(better than national general elections)*, a very solid representation.

The vote percentages were: **67%** elected to change the name of the **Association**. **33%** voted not to change the name. Of those who voted to change, **44%** choose "**The 55th Wing Association**", and **23%** picked "**The Fightin' 55th Association**".

A cursory scanning of the ballots revealed that **the voting appeared to cross generational lines,** i.e. 'old guard' and younger members voted for change, and a smaller cross-section voted **not** to change, even some active duty members. An important observation.

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Association Business/Policy/Awards:

President Jim Thomas

4418 Anchor Mill
Bellevue, NE 68123-1168
E-mail: JThomas927@aol.com

Vice President Ricky McMahon

14325 Orlando Road
Nokesville, VA 20181
E-mail: Rick_CaryMc@comcast.net

Membership/Dues/Changes of Address:

Treasurer Michael Cook

3204 Rahn Blvd
Bellevue, NE 68123
E-mail: Michael.Cook@cox.net

Secretary Kevin Todd

2922 Blackhawk Circle
Bellevue, NE 68123-3711
E-mail: Guyn5gals@msn.com

Newsletter Editor 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/Input:

Webmaster Jim Maloney

7908 Kona Circle
Papillion, NE 68046-5619
E-mail: jim@maloney.com

Other Members of the Board of Directors:

Sam Pizzo, Sparky Adams, Bill Ernst, Errol Hoberman, Don Griffin, Joe Gyulavics, Fox Censullo, George Ross, Dennis Haun, Pete Glenboski, Larry Utley, Don Kelly. Active Duty: LtCols John Cooper and Mohan Krishna.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of 18 May 2010, the **Association** had 634 members **in good standing**, including 20 life members and 12 gratis positions from the **55th Wing** senior staff.

It is hoped/expected that those who have yet to renew their dues will do so soonest.

Due to a continuing effort to encourage members to renew their dues (*ya think?*), and the recruiting of members, new memberships and renewals are coming in regularly. Keep it up, folks.

Another 37 **55th Wing** units, plus other associated organizations, receive the newsletter for public relations purposes.

Approximately 170 widows of former members receive the newsletter at no cost, and are welcome to participate in any and all **Association** activities.

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The **Association** has members in 46 states, plus DC, Guam, and APOs in Europe and the Pacific. (*Alaska, Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota are MIA*). **Nebraska** leads with 144. Texas (85), Florida (65), California (62) and North Carolina (60) follow. (*See map, page 17*)

The number of **active duty members** continues to increase due to the **Association's** exposure to the **Wing** at events such as the *Tales* and Birthday Ball, in addition to the solid support of the **Wing** senior staff at Offutt. There was more noticeable interest after the **Association** name change was announced during Heritage Week events.

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The most asked question of the membership chairman is, "What is the expiration date of my dues?" It is indicated on your address label: YOUR DUES EXPIRE: 20XX

For example: **2010** on your address label means your dues will expire on 31 December 2010. Any other year indicates that your dues did, or will, expire on 31 December of that year. **If you are delinquent, or are due to run out on 31 December of this year, please renew soonest.**

Any member whose dues **expired on 31 December 2009** was taken off the member-in-good-standing roll effective 1 April 2010. To be reinstated, please remit **\$20** to become current through 31 December **2010**. Or better still, **send \$55 for three years.**

Dues are payable anytime during an expiration year, so, please renew now. The calendar year is the dues year.

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Effective 1 January 2009, membership dues became **\$20 per year**, or **\$55 for three years**. All advance years' expiration dates are being honored if paid at the former rates.

Dues become delinquent on 31 March of the year following the expiration year. After 1 April of that year, delinquent members will be notified that their membership has expired and they will no longer receive the **Association** newsletter. (*Ouch.*)

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If your dues expired in 2009, or will in 2010, please remit payment to **55th Wing Association as soon as practical for future years.** (*Y'all notice a continuing theme here? Nag, nag, nag.*)

Mail to: **55th Wing Association,
ATTN: Michael J. Cook
PO Box 13165
Offutt AFB, NE 68113**

For whatever reason, if you do **not** know your expiration date, to inquire on same, please e-mail **Michael.Cook@cox.net**; or drop him a note at the above address to get an update on your dues status.

You will also find a membership/information update form at the back of this newsletter. This form may used to report any address or other changes in your contact information.

New members receive the **Association's** lapel pin and a **55th** Cold War memorial coin when they join.

Current members desiring replacement or additional lapel pins can get them from Cook 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.*).

Thomas and Moore have pins and coins, as well, so members in the Omaha area can get the pins from any of those three for \$3.00 without the postage. Extra Memorial coins are \$5.00 each.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

As of 1 May 2010, the treasury had an account balance **\$25,600**. Please pay your dues promptly, or early and often. Although the **Association** is solvent, we have expenses, obligations and bills to pay, such as publishing this newsletter and a new **Association** directory in the near future.

Thank you very much.

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Occasionally, members include modest amounts of money over and above what is required for dues to add to the treasury. Those donations (NOT DUES) are tax deductible under an IRS ruling for the organization. Every dollar is much appreciated. We can use the economic stimulus like every other group.

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55TH WING HERITAGE WEEK

Wing Commander **BGen John Shanahan** announced in a 2 April 2010 'Shanagram' to the entire wing staff and personnel that he had declared the week of Monday, 5 April as *Heritage Week*.

In that missive, he defined his reasoning for recognizing the unit's storied and long history dating to its roots as the 55th Pursuit (later, Fighter) Group, and its beginning as the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* of WWII. He further outlined a series of events throughout the week to accomplish that, and encouraged the current active duty troops and veteran 55th alums to interact. The week would culminate with the *Tales of the 55th* and annual Wing Birthday Ball.

The seed for this unprecedented weeklong celebration was planted by **Association** President Jim Thomas, and the general embraced the idea wholeheartedly and made it happen.

The first significant event came at the Wing senior staff meeting (*stand-up to us seasoned guys*) on Monday, 5 April. President Thomas, and members of the **Association** Board of Directors (BoD), were invited to attend and make an opening presentation.

After his remarks of who, what and why of the **Association**, Thomas announced that the organization had voted to change its name to the

55th Wing Association effective 2 April. That was greeted with an appreciative round of applause.



Thomas announcing **Association** name change

President Thomas also presented a check for \$1000 to **Major Soo Sohn**, chairperson of the Birthday Ball, as the **Association**'s annual donation.

Attending from the **Association** BoD were Michael Cook, Robb Hoover, Don Kelly and Max Moore.



Major Sohn accepting the check

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The following day, 6 April, a road on Offutt was dedicated in the name of **Harry Tull**, who passed away last October; and the 343rd RS named their briefing room in Harry's honor (*see following article*).

The 38th RS was to hold a Wednesday gathering of former and current members, but was preempted by more pressing real-world duties. (*Imagine that.*)

Thursday, the 45 RS hosted an "Old Guys/Newer Guys" social in the squadron heritage lounge. At that function, **LtCol Brian Humphreys**,

the squadron commander, welcomed the veteran/senior **55th'ers** in attendance and encouraged interaction with the active duty troops.

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Friday, 9 April, was a very full day beginning at noon with the 338th Combat Crew Training Sqd welcoming back its 'founder' LtCol (Ret) **Ricky McMahon**, (and the **Association** VP) with a tribute in the crew lounge named for him just last year.

Major Eric Paulson, squadron operations officer, greeted another cadre of **55th** vets (many of whom were in town for the Ball) who crowded into the area to mingle with the 'schoolhouse' instructors and students.



Ricky Mac was presented with a photo of a WWII pre-mission briefing of 338th Fighter Sqd in 1944 by Major Paulson, the significance of which is a conundrum.

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The Hall of Fame induction ceremony was at 1500 Friday in Wing HQ, and the **Tales** commenced shortly thereafter with social time and a program of speakers. (Articles to follow)

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TULL ROAD DEDICATED

BGen John Shanahan greeted a crowd of family, friends, local dignitaries, media, and well wishers to the ceremony in dedicating a



north/south street on Offutt near the west-center base perimeter in the name of the late LtCol (Retired) **Harrison G. Tull**, a Tuskegee Airman and a true **55th** legend.

In his remarks, the general noted that any one of Harry's life accomplishments was noteworthy, but taken in the aggregate, they put him in a class by himself.

A tribute by Robb Hoover opined that "Harry never succumbed to adversity, never bemoaned his fate, and always triumphed through superior performance."

So, it was entirely appropriate for further recognition of this extraordinary person on a warm, bright spring afternoon. An original member of the Wing Hall of Fame, Harry is in the Nebraska Aviation Hall of Fame, and had been awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by **President George W Bush**, as were all the living Tuskegee Airmen.

Witnessed by several members of the Tull family, **Dr Janet Tull**, Harry's daughter, was assisted by BGen Shanahan in unveiling the road sign indicating the new street designation, "**Tull Road**".



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Immediately after that ceremony, the Tull family and much of the crowd proceeded to the 343rd squadron building for yet another dedication.

LtCol Mohan Krishna, 343rd commander, announced another honor for Tull in that the squadron briefing room in Bldg 497 would henceforth be known officially as the LtCol "Harry" Tull Main Briefing Room.



Plaque with Tull's biography and WWII Tuskegee photo.

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The day's activities continued as some of the assemblage moved down the hall to 'rechristen' the Hoover Lounge amongst the current crewdogs of the 343rd. LtCol Krishna welcomed Hoover back to his name sake 'crew relaxation' area that had been recently and completely renovated since its original dedication in July 2006.

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HALL OF FAME

Lt Colonel (Retired) Howard L. (Lynn) Duncan is the 2010 inductee to the **55th Wing** Hall of Fame. He was installed by Wing Commander BGen Shanahan in a ceremony at the Wall of Fame in Wing HQ on Friday, 9 April. He was also presented at the Birthday Ball the next evening.

The event was attended by many family, friends and members of the Wing senior staff. Also there were Hall of Famers: **Reg Urschler, Larry Mitchell, Loose Lane, Bill Ernst, Jeff Needham** and **Hank Dubuy**.

Colonel Duncan began his service with the **55th SRW** at Offutt in 1982 as an RC-135 Electronics Warfare Officer (EWO) in the 343rd Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron. He made a rapid upward progression to EW Crew Commander, Instructor, and Stan-Eval Examiner.

While assigned at Headquarters Strategic Air Command, Directorate of Reconnaissance, he was significantly involved in the planning, execution and monitoring of the first combat deployment of

the **55th SRW** during DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion.



During his career and after, he has been immersed in COBRA BALL and BIG SAFARI operations. His expertise in that arena, and important contributions to **55th** mission success over many years, is well known and now recognized.

In 2001 after a 20 year Air Force career, Colonel Duncan retired, but continued his responsibilities as Program Manager with the BIG SAFARI Office, which moved to a position responsible to both HQ USAF and the Under-Secretary for Defense for Intelligence.

Colonel Duncan contributed greatly while assigned to the **55th** on active duty, and from other commands and other assignments. That service to the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** continued in his post-Air Force career. His numerous and extraordinary contributions to the **55th** over many years is most deserving of recognition and induction into the Wing Hall of Fame.

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TALES OF THE 55TH

Association president and emcee Jim Thomas began the 11th edition of the **Tales** on Friday afternoon, 9 April, by welcoming the crowd of active duty troops, retirees, friends, family and guests. After a few introductions, he asked BGen Shanahan to make his opening remarks.

Both men commented on how the **Tales** contributed to keeping the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth's** heritage and legacy alive, from its foundation as the WWII 55th Fighter Group through the present day.

The general joined Robb Hoover and **Arlen Howe** in ringing the ceremonial bell to start the program.



Thomas presented a briefing on a 343rd Fighter

Sqd WWII mission in which they thwarted a German bomber raid. The group in their P-51 aircraft encountered the Luftwaffe flight of fighters and medium bombers over the Elbe River, and stopped them from reaching their intended targets

Hank Dubuy then recounted his experience as co-pilot on LtCol **Hobart Mattison's** crew in April 1965. Their RB-47 aircraft was on a routine reconnaissance mission out of Yokota Air Base, Japan, when North Korean fighters made an unprovoked attack on the plane and crew over the international waters of the Sea of Japan east of the Korean peninsula. Dubuy reported returning fire from the RB's tail guns and the probable hit on one bogey.

Although severely damaged from repeated MiG cannon fire, the RB-47 was safely recovered to Yokota due to the skill of LtCol Mattison and professional crew coordination.



Part of the standing room crowd.

A terrorist incident in Athens, Greece, in August 1987 was the premise of Jeff Needham's tale. He was a member of an RC-135 crew enroute to their hotel quarters, after completing an operational mission, when their unmarked bus was targeted by a terrorist car bomb.

The detonation injured 10 people on the bus, including the Greek driver, and some bystanders. The bus was badly damaged, so once the crew gathered themselves, they made the rest of the trip to the hotel on foot.

Major Ross Bullock, operations officer of the 45th RS, was chief of wing tactics in September 2001, and he spoke of how the Wing reacted after the 9/11 attacks. He was part of the initial 55th team deployment to the SW Asia theater to conduct Operation Enduring Freedom.

He detailed how operations were set up in a bare base environment, beginning from scratch, and yet 100% of their missions were completed during the first four months they were deployed. Major Bullock credited the extremely high professionalism, expertise and dedication of the maintenance, support and flying personnel in that success.



The session ended with the speakers leading the traditional toasting to the Wing's nearly 1300 deployed troops around the world.

One of the Wing's mottos, "*The sun never sets on the 55th*" continues to be as appropriate today as it has been for over 55 years.

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55th WING BIRTHDAY BALL 2010

The gala 32nd annual **55th Wing Birthday Ball**, celebrating the 69th anniversary of the origin of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* in WWII, was held on **Saturday, 10 April 2010** at the Embassy Suites in LaVista, NE. Over 850 active duty, retirees and local dignitaries attended the festivities at the new venue, and the event was yet another great success.



The guest speaker was **MajGeneral Thomas K. Andersen**, Director of Requirements at HQ Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, VA. The general served in the **55th SRW** as an RC-135 EWO, 1986-89, and he related to that time in his remarks which connected to the audience. He also had tours at SAC HQ and USSTRATCOM at Offutt.

Dave Webber, WOWT Omaha personality and a SAC veteran, again plied his wit and charm as the emcee for the fourth year.

The confluence of MGen Andersen as featured speaker, and Lynn Duncan's Hall of Fame induction, both of whom were contemporaries in the **55th** as RC-135 EWOs, brought back to *Recca Mecca* a cadre of their fellow alumni to participate in the week's activities. They came from Virginia, Maryland, Colorado, California, Nevada, Florida, Pennsylvania, Texas, Ohio, and other points to make this a special event for that peer group. **Association** Vice President Ricky McMahon was the driver behind that gathering.



Five former Wing Commanders attended, as well: LtGen (Ret) **George Miller**, BGen (Ret) **Regis Urschler**, BGen (Ret) **Larry Mitchell**, Col (Ret) **Steve Stevens** and Col (Ret) **Dan Peterson**.

Of course the usual suspects from the local environs and nearby states, and active duty

members, swelled the **Association** attendee numbers to well over 150. Another mini-reunion.

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At the suggestion of BGen Shanahan, for the first time, the **55SRW's** Cold War contributions were specifically recognized in a video presentation as part of the Ball program. Robb Hoover, Max Moore, **1Lt Andrew Kasperek**, and video specialist **Kevin Schwandt**, both of the **55th** Communications Group, were instrumental in producing the tribute.

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*The traditional cake cutting is performed by BGen Shanahan, assisted by Mr Don Gifford, of the **55th** Fighter Group Association, the most senior member attending; and by Airman Kayla Hubbell of the **55th** Force Support Sqd, the newest Wing member.*

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The Ball committee was led by **Major Soo Sohn**, **55th** Medical Support Sqd. Her team of several representatives from across the Wing, did a superior job in putting on the Wing's largest formal social event of the year. Most noteworthy in their contributions, but not limited to, were: **Vice chairs MSgt Carla Lafrancios and MSgt Daniel Kasper; Treasurer MSgt Roland Eder, Ticketmaster SSgt Sidney Frith, 2Lt Theresa Buck, and Protocol's 2Lt Robyn Greischaber, and Comm Guy 1Lt Andrew Kasperek**, a stalwart fixture of the last three Ball committees.

Ernst and Moore once again represented the **Association** on the committee, and the \$1000 donation helps defray the costs for younger airmen who attend the Ball.

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TAPS



Major Sohn (center) displays a replica of the Association check, amid some of her committee.

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Be it noted for future planning, the 2011 Birthday Ball is tentatively slated for **Saturday, 4 June**. Venue TBD and planning is in the earliest stages. **Major Andrew Burroughs** of the 45th RS is the chairman. Driving the date is to avoid conflicts with other major events in April and May 2011.

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AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The **Association's** Award for Excellence, recognizing individual outstanding service in 2009, was presented to **SSgt Bernard Byer, Jr**, a network administrator with the 390th Intelligence Sqd at Kadena AB, Japan. He was honored for his sustained superior performance. SSgt Byer also was previously selected as the 2009 **55th Wing** Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year.



Association Board member Don Kelly, hands the Award to SSgt Byer at the Birthday Ball. Pres Thomas is at the podium in the background, and the permanent trophy can be seen behind Kelly.

BARRETT, Burton S., 88, Mesa, AZ, died 19 March 2010. Burt passed while with family in San Luis Obispo, CA. A B-25 pilot in the Pacific theater in WWII, he later flew missions in the Berlin Airlift in June 1948. His tenure in the **55th SRW** was as an RB-47 aircrew commander in the early 1950s at Forbes AFB, KS. Burt was an original member of the **55th Wing** Hall of Fame inducted in 1999.

BOUGHTON, Shirley Ann, 86, Tucson, AZ, 7 October 2009; she was the widow of **William**.

CARLTON, Paul K., 88, San Antonio, TX, 23 November 2009. General Carlton was a WWII veteran who flew sorties against Japan from India and China as a B-29 pilot. He later served in Strategic Air Command as a bomber pilot; was an aide to **General Curtis LeMay**; and held positions at SAC HQ. He also commanded **15th Air Force**, and then Military Airlift Command.

EDWARDS, Wayne, N., 77, Danville, VA, 18 November 2010; wife, **Frances**.

GLASS, Frederick, Cypress, CA, 17 December 2009; wife, **Marne**. Fred was an RB-47 EWO at Forbes during the 1960s. He became a minister after retiring from the Air Force. Fred was known to most of the **55th** family as a regular reunion attendee where he acted as the **Association's** de facto chaplain. (*See Letters*)

HEIDT, Kenneth R., 46, Lakewood, IL, 18 January 2010. Ken was an EC-135 pilot with the **55th** at Offutt AFB, NE, during the 1990s. He became pilot with United Airlines after serving 11 years in the Air Force.

PICKETT, Thomas, W., 57, Rockwall, TX, 4 March 2010; wife, **Karen**. Ken died as the result of a scuba diving accident in Key Largo, FL.

RILEY, James R., 87, Derby, KS, 20 November 2009; wife of 65 years, **Roberta**. Jim was a WWII veteran who piloted B-24 missions in Europe with 8th AF. He served in the **55SRW** at Forbes for 17 years in RB-47s, and in staff and command positions. After retiring from the Air Force, he worked as a program manager for Litton Systems for 17 years.

WARD, Kay J., 82, Austin, TX, 6 November 2009. She was the widow of **Walter**, a pilot in RB-50s and RB-47s in the **55th**. Kay had her own career as a civil servant with the federal government and the state of Texas for many years.

YANUZZI, Nicholas, 76, Thousand Oaks, CA, 10 January 2010; wife, **Georgina**. A navigator in RB-47s at Forbes in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Nick retired from the Air Force after 22 years. He later worked as a department manager for DOIT Center in Thousand Oaks for 23 years.

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TAPS notification of **Association** members, spouses, friends and associates taking the Big PCS should be sent to Jim Thomas and Max Moore (*see DIRECTORY, page 2 for contact info*).

Please include next of kin and an address to whom the Association condolence card may be sent; date of demise, age, location; and if known - crew position/aircraft, or duty specialty, organization and bases, and approximate years with 55th; and any other pertinent information you wish to relate.

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

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TULL DONATIONS FOLLOW UP

After the passing of Harry Tull last October, a method to honor him with a means of scholastic financial assistance was set up by the Offutt/Omaha **Alfonza W. Davis** Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen.

As a result of the suggestion of **Shirley Hoover**, and communicated by Robb Hoover, generous

donations to that fund in Harry's memory rolled in from members of the **55th SRWA**, who contributed directly to the Tuskegee chapter, or through the **Association**. (*Donations from 13 members totaled \$1350, via the latter means.*)

Additionally, the **55th Wing**, the Strategic Roost of the Association of Old Crows, and the AKSARBEN Chapter of the Air Force Association, and at least two individuals donated \$500 each.

The **Association** has been informed by BGen (Ret) **Randolph Scott**, president of the Tuskegee chapter, that his organization "is in receipt of the scholarship contributions to honor Colonel Tull. We have a special educational assistance fund in Col Tull's honor, and we (have) specific criteria needed to be awarded the assistance." This recognition was for Harry's military career and as a teacher, benefactor and mentor.

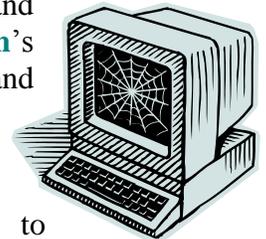
Pres Thomas will be liaison with BGen Scott on that recognition.

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YOUR 55TH SRW ASSN WEB SITE

www.55srwa.org

Webmeister **Jim Maloney** continues his due diligent good works with the **Association** web site. The home page is an integral and vital part of the **Association's** line of communications and information.



Among other things, our internet presence provides two primary functions: First, is to keep viewers up to date. It provides members a forum to keep in touch, learn about current and ongoing **Association** activities, and reference previous projects and/or events.

A second increasingly important function in this ever evolving cyber-age is that our internet link to the world provides former **55th** warriors a means to come back to the fold. It is consistently common for past **SRW/55th Wing** members, or friends and families, to find our web site after an internet search, and reconnect with friends and comrades from their days with the Wing.

You are urged to check it out often for timely news, activities and information exchanges. Everything you want to know about the **Association**

is there: "Corp HQ" includes the constitution, bylaws, memos for record, officers and bios; and a **membership/info update form**.

The latest news on upcoming reunions, the Birthday Ball, and other significant events are covered; plus important bulletins on any projects in progress. "Mail Room", "Clothing Sales", "Memory Lane", a picture gallery, and links to other associated and interesting sites are included.

There is also an archive of past newsletters for review and research. As examples: the October 2005 issue has an article on the **history** of the **Association**; the August 2002, April 2003 and February 2004 issues have all one would want to know about the **55th SRWA's** Cold War Memorial; and the January 2001 issue has an item on the Wing Hall of Fame evolution.

Jim is always looking for new and fresh ideas. Inputs from members are encouraged and welcome.

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MEMORY LANE FEATURE

The **Association** web page *Memory Lane* has factual, non-fiction stories on **55SRW** and **55th Wing** individuals, crews or events. Browse it and you may be surprised at what you view. You may even be inspired to contribute a first person story yourself.

You are invited, encouraged, urged, and welcomed to submit your inputs. This is your chance to let the **Association** membership learn of your experiences, 'war stories', and 'there I was' tales. Take advantage of this opportunity to share and preserve history.

You do not have to be a seasoned elder vet to contribute. We would be particularly pleased to get tales from the active duty troops of the Association regarding Operation Desert Storm on thru the current Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom efforts in SW Asia.

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Did you ever notice that when you put "the" and "IRS" together, it spells "theirs"?

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LETTERS AND STUFF



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*Back in November 2009, The Omaha World-Herald's opinion/editorial page had an item by one of its editors praising the **55th Wing's** missions. It was applicable then, is now, and will be into the future. It follows in part:*

WELL DONE, **55TH WING**

Confidently, quietly, professionally, members of the Air Force's **55th Wing** at Offutt AFB roam the skies in locales around the world, performing vital high-tech missions that bolster America's security.

Omaha residents have reason to be tremendously proud of the impeccable service rendered week after week, month after month, year after year, by the **Fightin' Ffifty-Fifth**.

When Midlanders (*and all Americans*) turn in at night, they can rest easy that the members of the **55th Wing** are in the air, helping protect our nation and supporting our allies around the globe.

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Hey Max:

Got my (**Association**) newsletter today; GREAT JOB!

Enjoyed the many reunion pictures.

Good to see so many of us old dogs still getting with it!

Cheers, **Don Jolly**, Alma, AR.

(From an e-mail, 2 December 2009)

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Max:

I'm renewing my **Association** dues. Wouldn't want to miss any of the 'magnificent' newsletters.

Greg Smith, McKinney, TX

(From an e-mail, 15 January 2010)

(Note: Greg will be heading up the next reunion in May of 2011.)

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Max,

Fred was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors on 29 January 2010. It was truly a memorable service.

Fondly, **Marne Glass**, Cypress, CA.
(From a card April 2010)



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The late **John King**, who died in December 2006, a former 343SRS squadron commander and RC pilot at Offutt, has been previously recognized by the Rockwall County (Texas) council for his years of dedicated service on that body and to his community.

John King Blvd, a 7.5 mile section of Texas highway 205 was dedicated in May 2008. On 10 May this year, there was a ground breaking ceremony in John's honor to begin work on an interchange, also bearing his name, which will link south and north sections of Texas 205.

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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 the near and far reaches of **Fifty-Fifth-land**.*



Thanks, and **Videmus Omnia**, Max
(Contributions may be,..... well, very likely will be, edited for content, readability, and spacing.)

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E-4 OPERATIONS REACH ANOTHER MILESTONE

The E-4 aircraft and its operations passed a milestone in January this year of having been on ready alert for 35 years. Originally based at Andrews AFB, MD, unit personnel and aircraft moved to Offutt AFB, NE, in November 1975 as part of the **55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing**.

It began as the National Emergency Airborne Command Post (NECAP) and served during the Cold War with the *Nightwatch* battle staff teams. Its mission during those times was to provide the president a safe location to conduct wartime operations in the event of a nuclear attack.



After the end of the Cold War, the mission changed and expanded in 1994. The E-4B aircraft is now the National Airborne Operations Center (NAOC). Four E-4Bs are still based at Offutt. It supports the president, Secretary of Defense, and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“The mission focus expanded to satisfy national leadership, worldwide command, control and communications across the threat spectrum, not just nuclear,” according to **Colonel Martin Doebel**, NAOC commander, who has served as part of the E-4 mission for more than 17 years. He has witnessed the numerous technical advances and upgrade modifications made to the aircraft over those several years of change.

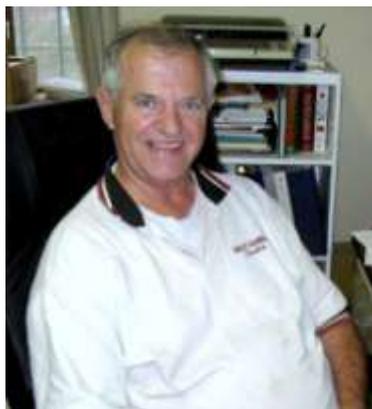
The standard alert crew of about 60 people is made up of the flight crew from the 1ACCS of the **55th Wing**; 21 joint-service battle staff members assigned to US Strategic Command; and is supported by maintenance, security, technical and communications personnel from the **55th**.

(Ed: This article includes information and material from one written by **Ryan Hansen**, **55th Wing Public Affairs**.)

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ANOTHER 55TH ALUM IS HONORED

Ralph Hueser, a former electronics warfare officer with the 55th SRW at Forbes and Offutt, and



a 40 year Bellevue, NE, resident, was recognized by the *Bellevue Leader* newspaper as the **Person of the Year for 2009** this past January.

Since he retired from the Air Force over 20 years ago, Ralph has immersed himself in service to his community and church. He has devoted countless hours and days to feeding and clothing those less fortunate in two parishes of which he is a member, deacon, and pastoral associate: St Mary's Catholic Church of Bellevue, and Holy Family Church of Omaha.

Hueser started a food redistribution program in 1989 providing to shelters and needy families. The program runs seven days a week, year round, ensuring that bread, produce and other food items get to numerous charitable organizations in the Omaha metropolitan area.

His compassion, dedication, selflessness, and hard work have inspired many others to become volunteers in supporting his efforts, thus spreading and contributing to worthwhile projects in leading by example. Well done, Ralph.

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COMMANDER'S SECRETARY RETIRES

Mary Krings retired from Civil Service to the US Air Force after 40 years on 2 February 2010. Beginning in December 1993, seventeen of those years were spent serving as secretary to 55th Wing Commanders, ten of them to be exact.

She was known affectionately as "Mom" to the many young execs, administrative personnel, and

others who passed through the Wing Command Section over those years.

But Mary was more than a functionary; she was a friend, leader, mentor, teacher, and role model. Her work ethic was second to none, which included attention to detail and commitment to excellence as she meticulously managed the myriad duties of her office, and beyond.

Her interpersonal manner and intellect enabled her to adapt to each new commander's preferences, deal with countless wing personnel, civilian and senior military leaders, all of which led to numerous contributions to the Wing's success during her tenure.

Mary has been and remains a good friend and supporter of the **Association**.



Association Board members congratulate Mary Krings (center) on the occasion of her retirement.

L to R: Michael Cook, Don Kelly, Bill Ernst, Max Moore, Jim Thomas, Robb Hoover.

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An interesting footnote to this story is that Mary's successor is **Melinda (Mel) Kelly**, wife of Don, and daughter of **Mary and Arlen Howe**, 55th lifers. How's that for continuity?

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COMMENTARY FROM WOLF SAMUEL, AUTHOR

Yesterday (14 May 2010) I did a book signing at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC; not my first, and hopefully not my last. The books on the table, while I sit watching America walk past, are *I Always Wanted to Fly* and *Glory Days*. They were books about men who fought for our and America's safety and security -

books about ordinary Americans who accomplished extraordinary things.

So, who stops and buys my books?

A Russian and his family visiting from Moscow, who wanted to learn more about American and British overflights of the Soviet Union. I talked to him about **Hal Austin** and his extraordinary flight; and he told me about someone in his family flying the MiG 15 and facing F-86 Sabers over Manchuria.

A nine year old Canadian boy told me all about his grandfather, 'a private, not a high ranking officer like you', he said to me. He wanted to learn more about the time when his grandfather went to England, and he told me all about his collection of WWII memorabilia - a nine year old!



There was the Florida motorcycle policeman whose father flew the P-47 in WWII, and who later flew for American Airlines, including an aircraft displayed in the museum. The son of a Bell Aircraft test pilot stopped to talk and pick up a book. His father flew the Bell P-59 Aircomet, our first jet, one hanging high over the crowds at the main entrance to the museum.

A ten year old girl, a little redhead, who kept coming back - the third time around she had her dad and older brother in tow, and she finally got the book that captured her imagination. 'My brother wants to be a pilot' she said. I told her that maybe she was the one who wanted to become a pilot.

There was the father who wanted a book inscribed for his son who was waiting to leave for the US Air Force Academy; and the Navy aviation cadet worried that the F-18 would be phased out before he got a chance to complete pilot training.

A **55th SRW** veteran and his family stopped by. We both had flown in the Wing at the same time at Forbes, but didn't know each other. Many a woman who wanted to share with me their father's or grandfather's experiences in bombers over Europe, or slogging through the snow in the bitter winter of 1944 to '45 in Europe.

Some come to the Air and Space Museum just to look and pass the time, but many come to meet their heritage, to better understand what their fathers and grandfathers accomplished

All of course wanted their books signed, often with a special comment about or for someone. Many had pictures taken with me, and many more came by just to shake my hand and thank me for my service to our country. .

When they do that, it is not just me they are thanking - they want to bond with someone who was there, when one of their own faced similar times and circumstances. They know that we have men and women serving in distant wars, and when they shake my hand they are saying 'we know and we appreciate what they are doing.' When they shake my hand and say 'thank you for your service', they are saying that to all who served and who are still serving.

America has a conscience, and I've learned that our people do not forget, but are proud of our achievements and sacrifices.

That's why I love to go to the Air and Space Museum and meet America's true heart.

Wolfgang Samuel, Fairfax Station, VA.

(From an e-mail, 15 May 2010)

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ASSOCIATION BX

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ASSOCIATION POLO SHIRTS/CAPS

These are 'must have' items for the reunions, and they look good on the golf course, for casual Fridays at the office, and any leisure time.

Give a big hint to the family and mayhap some generous loved one will give you one for whatever you have going: Fathers Day, birthday, anniversary, Christmas, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Kwanzaa.

Great gifts! The shirts and caps are **unisex**, so get one for your spouse, significant other, or other family members

There are currently two designs available. Both have the dual shield on the left breast, no pocket.

The former design is white with red collar and sleeve trim, navy blue front placket. They are

100% pre-shrunk combed cotton pique. This shirt's cost remains \$25 per shirt.



The newer all white design is 100% polyester micro pique, moisture-wicking and anti-microbial control. The cost of this version is \$30 per.

Be sure to state the design and size you want: S, M, L, XL, and XXL. We can order 3XL if the need arises; and yes, we have sold that size in the past.

The golf/baseball caps are royal blue with the dual shield logo on the front, and an adjustable back strap. They go for just \$7 each.

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

There are charges for priority postage to be added to the individual item cost, and the rates have increased thanks to the USPS: \$10.35 for one or two shirts; same if both a shirt and cap are ordered; \$5 for a cap only.

More ways to identify with your Association and "show the logo" at appropriate official and social functions.

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THE ASSOCIATION TIE

The Association's 'regimental' 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 \$25 per tie, including shipping and postage.

Order now! This item is a must have for the reunion banquets and other appropriate events.

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Anyone desiring to purchase shirts, caps or ties can contact Larry Utley at his e-mail OFFWEGO@cox.net; phone: 402-592-6627; or write 2409 Leigh Lane, also new, Papillion, NE 68133. Checks for the full amount of your order should be made to the 55th Wing Association.

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55TH FASHION PINS



(Shown larger than actual size.)

(Note: The new version is smaller at .5 by 1.25 inches than the one previously offered.)

The pins continue to be sold to Association members all over the country. They are particularly evident at official and social functions at Offutt and at 55th reunions.

You will want to acquire one for that special lady in your life to wear on any occasion. Gents, it makes a great birthday, anniversary accessory gift, or holiday stocking stuffer.

(Ladies, if the ol' dude doesn't take the hint, order one for yourself.) Classy, but inexpensive.

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, and an Association member and supporter, offers them and you can purchase directly from the store.

Send order 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 \$4 for shipping.

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REUNIONS

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BIG SAFARI ASSOCIATION REUNION 2010

This one is slated for **9-12 June, 2010, at the Silver Legacy Resort in downtown Reno, NV** (*seem familiar?*). Call for reservations at 1-800-687-8733, use the code SAFARI to get the reunion special rates.

The week's agenda includes a golf outing, tours, a lunch cruise on the MS Dixie II on Lake Tahoe; a Saturday morning symposium, followed by the membership meeting and the grand banquet that evening.

All the information you need and a registration form can be found at the BSA website, www.bigsafariassociation.org, or by calling **John Reynolds** at 903-456-3796.

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B-47 STRATOJET ASSOCIATION

The B-47 Stratojet Association's next reunion will be in **Omaha, NE, 23-25 September 2010**. The Holiday Inn Convention Plaza is the reunion center at \$85 per night.

Tours of Offutt AFB, Omaha's world class zoo, and the Old Market are offered. A dinner at the Strategic Air and Space Museum on Friday, and the Saturday evening banquet are featured.

Much more detailed info is on the web site: www.b-47.com The organization is for anyone who flew, maintained, supported and loved the B-47 Stratojet.



Those who wish to attend the reunion and/or join the Stratojet Association can contact Membership Chairman **Dick Purdum** at 13310 S. 26th Avenue, Bellevue, NE, 68123; Ph: (402) 291-5247; or e-mail him at dickpurdum@cox.net.

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SAC VETERANS REUNION

This group is picking up the baton from what once was the Society of **Strategic Air Command**, but it has a whole different makeover and administration.

This is one more in a series of reunions since the reformation. It will be held **25-29 August 2010, in Tucson, AZ**. The Doubletree Hotel at Reid Park is HQ and there is a special rate (group code SAC).



This reunion has been fully planned for some time with a schedule of events, registration form, and the whole enchilada.

(Yet another clever tie-in.....enchilada, Tucson, ...maybe not.) It is likely many of you

may already have received the information, and registration package.

Event Coordinator is **J. T. (Toby) Romero**. You can get all the info from him, request a registration package, whatever, by using any of the following contact info: e-mail: jtrome-25@excite.com; phone: 1-520-203-8809; or write to: PO Box 14223, Tucson, AZ, 85732.4223

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FUTURE 55TH WING ASSOCIATION REUNIONS

The next one will be **19-22 May 2011**, at the Holliday Inn in McKinney, TX, just north of Dallas. **Greg Smith**, chairman.

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September 2012, Colorado Springs, CO. **Sandy Feldkamp**, chairperson.

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Stay alert to the **Association** web site and future issues of the **Videmus Omnia** for details as they develop and come together.



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*Politicians and diapers should be changed often;
and for the same reason*

Talk is cheap because supply exceeds demand.

WHO SHOT WHAT



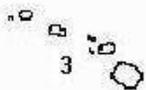
Graphics and official logos from various sources. Photo credits to: **Josh Plueger**, **55th Wing** Public Affairs for Tull Rd dedication, the Ball logo, MGen Andersen, Award shot, and Hall of Fame pix. Staff meeting and check pix, Ricky Mac, Ball cake cutting, Ball committee, Tull plaque, Tales pix, Krings group, and **55th** pin by Moore. *Mad Max* graphic by **Patricia Gros**; Hueser by **Debbie Coleman**, courtesy of the *Bellevue Leader*; **Association** map, Cook; **Association** shirt/cap, by Uteley; **Association** tie, Pizzo.

55TH WING ASSOCIATION GEOGRAPHICS

(as of 1 May 2010)



← 3
PACIFIC



← 1
GUAM

3 →
EUROPE

TALES MONTAGE



BGen Shanahan greets the crowd



Jim Thomas relates a WWII tale



Another large audience gives its rapt attention to the 'war stories'



Hank Dubuy regales



Jeff Needham 'there I was..'



Major Bullock wows 'em

