

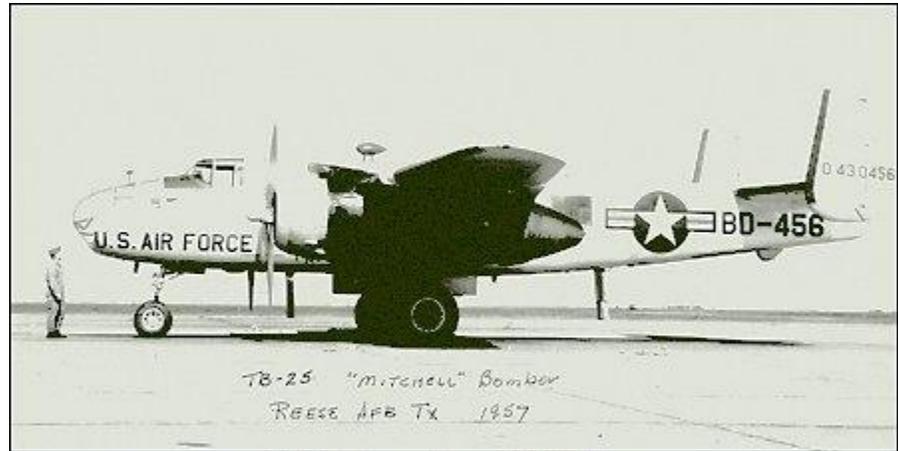
There were two times I remember when we touched the limits of getting in trouble as Aviation Cadets. Cadet Days-1 and Cadet Days-2 at Reese AFB, Lubbock, Texas in 1957.

Aviation Cadet Days -1, Reese AFB, Tx, 1957 by Jack Kovacs

One of the times involved our being accused of running a business on base and taking away business from the base barber shop. We, of course, were required to keep our apartments clean and neat at all times.

Friday evenings usually involved mopping and waxing the floors, preparing for

Saturday morning inspections. We found ourselves strapped for time and sometimes couldn't fit in getting a haircut for the inspection, so we bought ourselves a barber kit and gave each other trims on Friday evenings or Saturday morning. We even became good at using a barber's straight razor for trimming the back of the neck hairline. Well, eventually word got out, first to our neighboring apartments, then, even to some other dormitories about our hair-cutting expertise. Soon one or two cadets would knock on our door and whine about not having time to get a haircut, and ask one of us to give them a trim. Soon it became annoying, with many people coming over for a trim on Friday nights, that we decided to charge for the trim so as to discourage them from coming. It didn't. Our business was booming and the base barber shop complained to the military staff that something was going on to reduce their business; this led to an investigation of why, and eventually they found out about our trimming business. We were ordered to stop immediately. We had been making enough money on the side to buy our cleaning supplies for the apartment plus pop and beer. Since we were getting close to graduating, we sold the barber kit for what it cost us a few months before.



TB-25 trainer at Reese AFB 1957

Aviation Cadet Days-2, Reese AFB, Tx 1957 **by Jack Kovacs**

With graduation from B-25 Basic Flying Training school a few months away, we poor Aviation Cadets became aware the the initial uniform allowance [\$200] the Air Force provided was only enough to buy about half the clothing requirements for new officers, at least at the only military clothing store in Lubbock.

We found out that the minimum required uniforms cost about \$400 from a local Ivy League type store. So a couple of my classmates and I contacted a uniform maker in San Antonio [about 400 miles away] and asked him come to Lubbock to show his uniforms and take orders. He usually rented a connecting pair of motel rooms, filled one bathtub full of ice and beer for potential customers while they waited for fittings. Well, it worked out so good for the uniform maker that the impact on business was felt by the local uniform store and they complained to the base. Fortunately we weren't getting any freebies or kickbacks, so there was nothing that could be done to us. The San Antonio uniform maker had every right to come to Lubbock and sell his stock. It worked out well for us, since we were able to get more for our initial uniform allowance.



Christmas in the 38th SRS in the early Sixties by Jack Kovacs

One thing I remember while at Forbes AFB was something the 38th SRS did each Christmas for the underprivileged kids. Instead of the usual holiday squadron Christmas party, money was collected and pooled to buy gifts for some less fortunate kids who wouldn't have otherwise had much of a holiday. We insisted on anonymity for this activity. We had arrangements with one of the Sears stores in Topeka to open their doors to us two hours prior to normal shopping hours on a Saturday before Christmas. They gave us a 10% discount on all items; if I remember correctly we had about \$60-80 we could spend on each of the kids. Several of us, usually with our own wives, were assigned a youngster to take to the store to shop. We met the kids outside the store as a group. The youngsters were told they could pick out anything they wanted, but what was interesting was they selected needed clothing items, like underwear and socks, over toys. We usually managed to get them to pick out at least one toy. I'll never forget the happiness on their faces as they carried their goods in their arms when we left the store.