



Air Weather Reconnaissance Association

Volume 13 No. 1

May 2005

2004 - AWRA HAS A GREAT YEAR- 2005

by Bernie Barris, Editor

Looking back on the last half of 2004 and the first few months of 2005, it appears that we are doing well. A new President, Bob Tuttle, was elected at the 2003 reunion. Bob has been very active in soliciting ideas from the membership about how to make AWRA even better.

The Sacramento reunion was a great time for all who participated. Many familiar faces were there, plus a few long lost buddies. Major General Tom Aldrich gave an extremely informative talk at the reunion banquet, using a great collection of slides compiled by the Air Force Weather History Office, part of the AF Weather Agency.

Speaking of the history office, I had a chance to visit them at Offutt AFB this month. They have archive quality copies of most histories submitted by the various weather reconnaissance units over the years. The history office is in

the process of scanning much of their collection. Hopefully, this will make it even more accessible to researchers and the general public. Just as impressive as the histories, is the gallery of honor at the entrance to AFWA. Numerous displays of weather gathering equipment, photos of weather men and women at work, and a wall of honor listing all the crews who gave their lives conducting weather reconnaissance since World War Two. AFWA is now moving out of the "Martin Bomber Building" to a new facility. I trust that the history displays will get equal (or better) treatment at the new building.

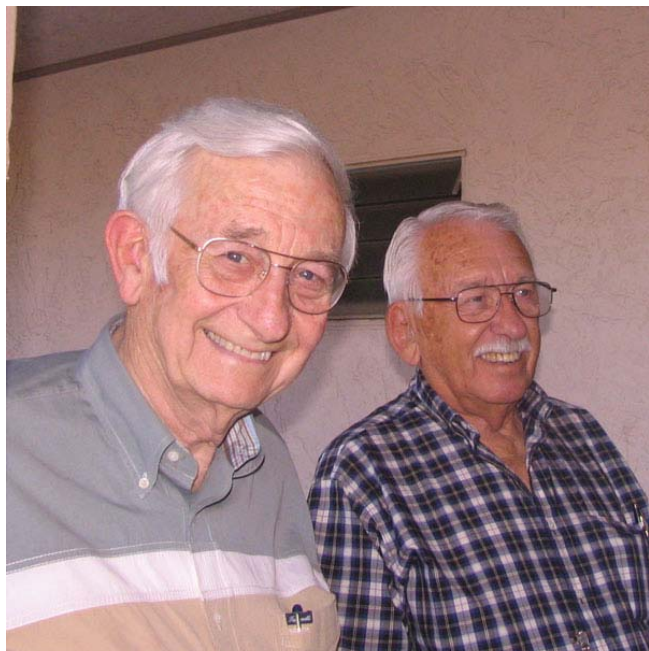
We are looking forward to a big turnout in Biloxi in October. Hank Turk has lined up a first class schedule for us. As of the publication date, the speaker at the banquet will be the 403rd Wing Commander. The 403rd Wing is the parent head-quarters of the 53rd WRS. Hank has also set up tours of Keesler AFB to include a WC-130J. The "J" is the latest in the long line of weather reconnaissance aircraft. If they pass the last few operational checks this spring, the ten "J" models should assume the entire reconnaissance load for the 2005 storm season.

When registering for the reunion, be sure to take advantage of the special room rates at our host hotel. We need to book a minimum of 50 rooms to get full benefit from the Palace, so tell them you are with AWRA.

In September 2004, I assumed the duty of web master for our site on the World Wide Web. If you have not checked it out, go to: www.awra.us

We have several pages of information about joining AWRA and what's going on with the association. We are also trying to post something new each month relating to our shared heritage. In order to keep this going, we need stories and pictures from you, our membership. Please take the time to look through your prints, slides, etc. If you have items you're willing to share, contact me through the web site, or feel free to call or write. See my contact info on the Directors list.

-Bernie Barris



Maj Gen Tom Aldrich and John Cooper enjoy the company of fellow AWRA members in the hospitality suite. General Aldrich gave a great talk at the reunion banquet. Thanks, Sir!

President's Corner

by Bob Tuttle, AWRA President

Greetings to all from Alaska! Once again we have had a very mild winter, which makes it even nicer to have chosen to purchase our retirement home in the Anchorage area. Last summer was the best I can remember in our 30 years of living up here. We actually had to invest in an air conditioner for the upstairs living area. Temps got up into the mid eighties and into the 90's in our living room. Oh well, enough of the personal stuff -- on to AWRA topics.

Once again I wish to thank Harald and Sharron Davis for the great job they did with the Sacramento reunion. Harald worked long and hard putting everything together while running a full time family owned business. Some last minute adjustments had to be made, as not enough people signed up for the wine country tour, and our scheduled guest speaker, Jerry White, had to bow out due to a mandatory gathering of USAF Historians, but, other than that, the rest of the events went well. The banquet food was excellent and the Hotel accommodations were very good. I also wish to thank Maj Gen Aldrich, USAF Ret, for stepping in and agreeing to take over Jerry's presentation. Between Bernie Barris and the General a modified version was presented and what a great job they did. Hats off to the General and Bernie.

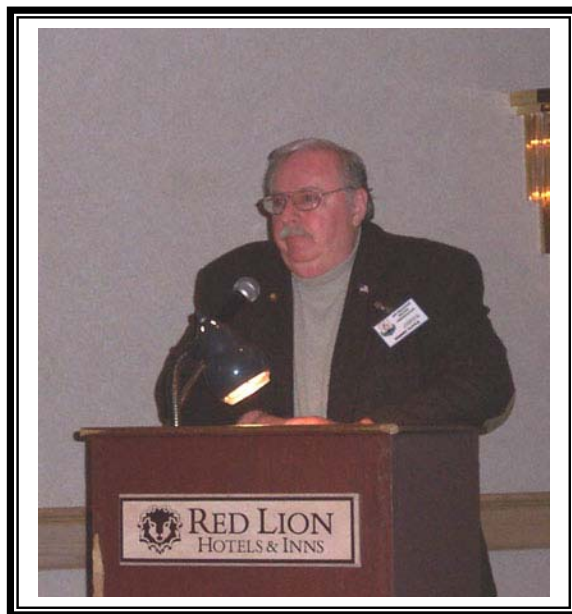
The one disappointing thing with the 2004 reunion was the attendance. The last reunion held in Sacramento had an attendance of 250 people for the banquet, where as this year we had less than 100. Lets hope that going back to the central part of the states (Biloxi) for 2005 will result in a larger attendance and hopefully some new members from the 53rd at Keesler. I would also like to thank those members who are regulars at our reunions. I'm asking that each and every one of you try to bring or talk a friend into attending this year's reunion. As our membership gets smaller and smaller and fewer people participate in our reunions it gets harder and harder to bargain for good rates and perks from the hotels in our chosen areas.

Discussions with Hank Turk, who is sponsoring the reunion this year, indicate that things are going well and most arrangements have been finalized.

Checking into transportation for Jackie and me indicates that we can expect to spend 12 hours or more traveling to Biloxi. Most flights take us from Anchorage to Seattle then onto Dallas, to Memphis or Atlanta and back to Gulfport; talk about seeing the USA. (I think Biloxi is still in the USA, but travel times and cost make me wonder.) Oh well, one must do what one must do!!

In closing, I wish to thank all of you who attended the 2004 reunion. Also a special thanks to those who volunteered their time to help man the registration desk and pitched in to get the rest of the things done to help make everything go so smoothly.

Hope to see you all in Biloxi in October!!!



AWRA President Bob Tuttle speaking to the guests at the 2004 Reunion in Sacramento.

Goals for the 2005 AWRA Reunion in Biloxi, MS -- 9-13 OCT

- **HAVE FUN !!**
- **EVERYONE COME !!**
- **STAY AT THE PALACE CASINO RESORT, THE OFFICIAL HOTEL**
- **FIND AN OLD WX RECON FRIEND AND BRING THEM ALONG**
- **REPEAT**
- **REPEAT**

Let's make it our mission to find and invite all of the active duty and reserve Hurricane Hunters who have stayed on the Gulf Coast. So, if you know one of the veterans of the 53rd or 815th, give them a call and get them involved. With your help, 2005 in Biloxi will be an reunion to remember!



CWO David Magilavy at work. Here we see David positioned in the nose of a WB-29. In the book [Flying the Weather](#) by AWRA Historian Otha C. Spencer, a WB-29 pilot said it wasn't hard to land the 29, he just watched David's body language... When David slumped down in his seat, it was time to flare for landing, so that's when he would haul back on the yoke. (See note about this book on page 5 of newsletter).

Air Weather Reconnaissance Salutes David Magilavy

The Air Weather Reconnaissance Association would like to send a tremendous "Thank You" to David Magilavy. If you read the fine print in last year's newsletter, you saw that David resigned his position on the AWRA Board of Directors, as well as his position as the editor of this newsletter and web master for the AWRA web site. David did a great job on all three activities, but felt it was time to concentrate on family and let others get a chance to excel.

David was one of the true pioneers of weather reconnaissance. He served as a weather observer and radiological safety officer with several Air Weather Service units and, as such, has a first hand feel for what the crews were exposed to.

Still a Strong Voice for Atomic Age Veterans

One of David's passions has been fighting for the rights and benefits due to our nation's Cold Warriors. Weather reconnaissance crews flew untold sorties through nuclear contaminated skies, yet the "system" has made it extremely difficult for them to obtain benefits for ailments that didn't appear until years later. David has nurtured many contacts in the atomic energy community who can verify that certain operations and locations did indeed result in risk of excessive radiation exposure. If you are in need of help finding out who to contact, David Magilavy may be able to point you in the right direction.

Contact him via E-mail at: david@dmagilavy.net

Thank You, David! Keep up the good work! We'll see you in Biloxi...



Now and Then ...

David and wife, Maureen, in their Tucson area home in 2004.

CWO Magilavy, Weather Observer, from the 513th Reconnaissance Sq (VLR) Weather staff photo, 1950



AWRA Officers		Board of Directors	
President **	Bob Tuttle 17444 Meadow Creek Dr Eagle River, AK 99577 (907) 694-4992	Ralph Ruyle (Chairman) 1502 W Mariah Way Fort Walton Beach, FL 325474 (850) 862-1571	
Vice Presidents	H. Pierce Bilyeu (See Directors List)	Bernard Barris 11019 Oaktree Park San Antonio, TX 78249 (210) 696-5072	William Burnette Currently serving overseas Contact via E-mail: william.burnette@telenet.be
	Roy E. Ladd 7150 Estero Blvd, Apt 707 Ft Meyers Beach, FL 33931	H. Pierce Bilyeu 6520 Randolph Dr. Boise, ID 83709 (208) 376-1494	Charley L. Cooper 10837 St. Xavier Lane St. Ann, MO 63074 (314) 428-4379
Secretary-Treasurer	Ralph Ruyle (See Directors List)	John H. Hug 1975 N Peartree Ave Meridian, ID 83642 (208) 898-0601	Arnold Jarvis P.O. Box 776 Elephant Butte, NM 87935 (505) 744-5722
Historian	Otha Spencer 4245 Spencer's Road Campbell, TX 75422 (903) 886-2356	John E. Lein P.O. Box 41288 Charleston, SC 29423 (843) 522-5796	David Young 3800 Vista Circle Dr Lancaster, CA 93536
Membership	Ralph Ruyle (See Directors List)	** AWRA President is voting member of Board of Directors	
Editor-Newsletter	Bernard Barris (See Directors List)		

The AWRA Newsletter is an unofficial publication of the Air Weather Reconnaissance Association. Address questions and comments to the Editor at the address listed above or E-mail them to: awra038@aol.com

2004 Reunion Attendees

Robert & Jackie Tuttle
Bob & Barbara Masterson
Donald & Millie Brown
H.P. "Bill" Bilyeu
Les & Melica Skinner
Billy L. Davis
Jim & Chris Bird
Gaylen & Marion Carnehl
Bob Thompson
Bruce & Pam Russell
Lee & Shirley Sullivan
Wayne Woodruff
Joe & Shirley Martin
Jim & Pat Farha
Warren & Ginny Arnault
Dick & Natalya Williamson
Al & Jackie Torbent
Fred & Barbara Masterson

Arnold & Betty Lee Jarvis
William Christian
Ralph & Libby Ruyle
Larry Johnson
Thomas & Virginia Aldrich
John & Dorothy Priestle
Wendell Phillips/Jackie Matthias
Clarence & Carolyn Miller
Jim & Harumi Reardon
Michael & Linda Uhlenhop
Kirk Parker
Bernie Barris
Joe & Donna Arnold
Frank & Inez Coons
Carl Campbell & Shirley Rickerts
Roger & Dorothy Minter
Peter & Mary Copeskey
Don & Bertha Lefebvre

Arnold Zimmerman
Harald & Sharron Davis
Don Austin & Ruby English
Eugene & Fran Wallace
Al Weeks
Charles Marquardt
V.M. "Robbie" Robertson
Bruce & Lily Ackert
Barry Granlund
Francis & Marilyn Marqua
Edmund Dews
Ed Fleck
Oliver Field
Richard & Connie Hall
Francis Burley
"Dusty" & Caroline Hoffman
John & Elaine Cooper
Bill and Willena Hendley

Above is a partial list of attendees at the 2004 AWRA Reunion of Members in Sacramento, CA. There were several last minute folks who came to the banquet. We apologize in advance if we missed someone.

AWRA Membership Roster

Where is the membership roster that usually accompanies the AWRA newsletter? Good question!

At the general membership meeting held in conjunction with 2004 reunion in Sacramento, several ideas were discussed relating to getting the word out about AWRA issues.

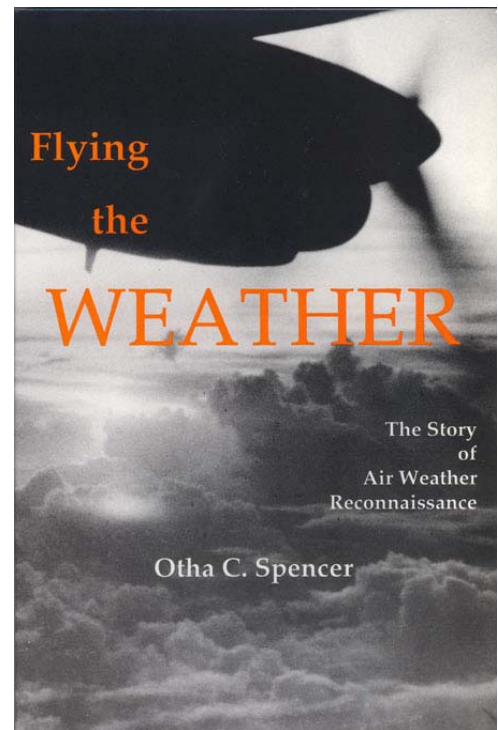
One thing that was agreed on was that we needed to be sure to spread the word about the next reunion as far and wide, and as timely as possible. This newsletter is the result. Many members did not receive last year's newsletter in a timely fashion. A big part of the delay was using bulk rate postage. It was decided that we would mail the newsletter using first class postage in the April – May time frame.

The membership roster will still be printed and distributed. It will probably be sent along with a second newsletter later this summer.

Other military veteran groups have gone to an online only distribution for membership lists. This would obviously save postage, but we need to hear how many members like this idea and how many non-computer folks we have before changing over.



Located in the middle of U.S. Highway 90, right outside the main gate of Keesler AFB, the Biloxi Lighthouse is a beacon calling AWRA members to come together for our reunion.



Flying the Weather is Still Available.

AWRA recently became aware that there are about 100 copies (new and uncirculated) of Dr. Otha Spencer's book available for sale. This book was originally written at the behest of AWRA and includes many first hand accounts by AWRA members. If you have looked for a copy lately, you already know that online book sellers are asking in the neighborhood of \$100 for used copies.

As a service to our membership, you can order a copy for \$20.00 (twenty US dollars). This price includes shipping and handling. Orders will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Any orders received after the books are gone will be quickly returned to the sender.

Mail a card with your address, along with check or money order, to:

**Country Studio
4245 Spencer's Road
Campbell, TX 75422-2292**

Flying the Weather is 242 pages packed with good information. It contains 30 photographs and illustrations. There are many personal stories from the men and women who have flown weather reconnaissance the past 60 years. There is also an excellent appendix with unit lineage, a bibliography and index that adds to the book's usefulness as a research tool.

This could be your last chance to get a copy. Don't miss out!

AWRA Web Site Draws Questions www.awra.us

If you haven't visited the AWRA presence on the World Wide Web lately, you are in for a pleasant surprise. New web master, Bernie Barris, of San Antonio, TX, is trying to generate interest, feedback, and questions from viewers. As a result of his efforts, we have had numerous inquiries from weather reconnaissance veterans and families.

One such question came from Ms. Andrea Stowers. Her father, Major Dale Richardson, was one of eleven AWS crew members killed in the crash of a WB-50D, tail number 49-315, on 31 Aug 1956. The aircraft had just left Eielson AFB on a Loon Special mission. Approximately one hour into the flight, the aircraft crashed onto an island in the Susitna river, about 35 miles NW of Elmendorf AFB. There were no survivors and no definite cause was ever determined. Ms. Stowers is trying to find anyone who may have been at the 58th WRS at the time of the accident, or possibly knew her father. She was only 8 years old at the time. Her sister Janet was six, and their brother, Dale, Jr., wasn't born until five months after the crash.



The accident aircraft (shown above) had recently been christened "The Golden Heart" in honor of the City of Fairbanks, known as the golden heart of Alaska.

If you think you may be able to help in their effort to get a better picture of their father, or perhaps could share what it was like during the transition from the WB-29 to the WB-50, please contact the web master at: awra038@aol.com We will put you in touch with the family.

Another feature of the AWRA web site is a monthly photo gallery, highlighting some aspect of weather reconnaissance. By far most popular update was the January feature about the WC-130 **Motorpool** rain making missions over SEA from 1967-72. The web master's favorite was the February tribute to a certain sports magazine's annual swimsuit issue. Find all of the monthly photo updates at:

www.awra.us/gallery.html

AWRA invites you to join us for a

"Day in the Bay"

A Leisurely Day Spent Enjoying the Quaint Seaside Town of Bay St. Louis

Located just west of Biloxi/Gulfport across the Beautiful Bay of St. Louis, so named by Sieur de Bienville in 1699, sits the scenic seaside artist community of Bay St. Louis. Currently more than 76 artists reside and create in this inspiring setting. On street after street you will discover Art Galleries, Antique Shops, Gift Shops, Sidewalk Cafes and much more!

En route to Bay St. Louis you will be entertained and enlightened by a narrated tour of the Gulf Coast Shoreline.

During the driving portion of your tour you will view many historic homes such as the "Monet-Boardman-Breath House" circa 1863, and the "Carroll Plantation Home" circa 1870, plus we will visit "St. Rose de Lima", the African-American Roman Catholic Church circa 1926 and home of the magnificent mural, "Christ in the Oaks."

Following your driving tour you will have free time to browse and shop to your heart's content and enjoy a delicious seafood meal fresh from the Gulf waters prepared by some of the finest chefs on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Even the simple "Po Boy" is fine fare when prepared by these chefs!

Sign up for this tour (Mon, 10 Oct) when you register for the AWRA Reunion in Biloxi, MS.

Cost: \$30 per person

Does not include meal

Tour Length: Approximately 5 hours

Includes travel time



The current patch of the 53rd WRS (AFRES)

AWRA is planning a tour of the 53rd during the 2005 Reunion – Don't miss it!

**Schedule of Events for AWRA Reunion
October 9-13, 2005**

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Sunday, October 9, 2005		
1:00 PM-10:00PM	Reunion registration/Hospitality	Hospitality Room
All Day	Hotel registration	Lobby
All Day	Personal Activities	Local Area
Monday, October 10, 2005		
8:00AM-10:00PM	Reunion registration/Hospitality	Hospitality Room
8:00AM-2:00PM	Bay St. Louis Tour	Departs from Hospitality Room
All Day	Personal activities	Local Area
Tuesday, October 11, 2005		
8:00AM-10:00PM	Hospitality	Hospitality Room
8:30AM-4:00PM	Keesler Tours**	Departs from Hospitality Room
<p>** Multiple Tours -- Sign up in hospitality room ** May be a slight fee for bus service if we can not get Keesler AFB Bus</p>		
Wednesday, October 12, 2005		
8:00AM-5:00PM	Hospitality	Hospitality Room
6:00AM-1:00PM	Fishing trip	Marina
** Exact time and boat name will be posted in Hospitality Room		
9:00AM-10:00AM	Board of Directors Meeting	Hotel, Room TBA
10:15AM-11:30AM	Membership Meeting	Hotel, Room TBA
6:00PM-7:00PM	Social Hour (cash bar)	Hotel, Room TBA
7:00PM-10:00PM	AWRA 2005 Banquet	Hotel, Room TBA
All Day	Personal activities	Local Area
Thursday, October 13, 2005		
8:00AM-11:00AM	Farewell Hospitality	Hospitality Room

Notes

- (1) The Keynote Speaker is scheduled to be the Commander of the 403rd Wing (AFRES). The 403rd is the parent wing of the 53rd WRS Hurricane Hunters, the only remaining military weather reconnaissance squadron.
- (2) Golf is available through many of the hotels, as well as at Keesler AFB. Tee times can be reserved, usually through the hotels and casinos.
- (3) There are about a dozen casinos on the coast with a wide variety of foods and gaming.
- (4) The week of October 2-9 is the 10th annual “**Cruisin’ the Coast**”, some 5,000 vintage, rare, muscle, and street rods will be cruisin’, mostly on Highway 90 in front of the hotels.
- (5) During the tour of the 53rd WRS the Dropsonde section will have 53rd items for purchase, such as license plates, patches, pictures, hats, shirts. If you are interested in shirts, please include sizes and styles of interest in a note with your registration. This will allow them to prepare a better selection.



Air Weather Reconnaissance Association

c/o Bernard C. Barris
11019 Oaktree Park
San Antonio, TX 78249-4440

Place
Postage
Here

IMPORTANT REMINDER!

The 2005 AWRA Reunion of Members
is coming up faster than you think!

It's time to make your plans to join us
in Biloxi, MS October 9 -13

PLEASE FILL OUT THE ENCLOSED
REGISTRATION FORM AND
MAIL IT IN TODAY!