



# Air Weather Reconnaissance Association

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## OUR DWINDLING PIECE OF THE GREATEST GENERATION

By Bernie Barris

Twenty-five years ago (1992 for those who are math impaired) a group of weather reconnaissance veterans got together to form AWRA. Most of the original officers and board members went all the way back to WWII. Sadly, the number of AWRA members with WWII service is dwindling. We honor the memory of our friends who have passed away, and cherish those who are still with us.

Occasionally, we have a very pleasant surprise and meet a true weather reconnaissance veteran who we did not know before. Here is the story about our newest AWRA Life Member.

A few months back, AWRA was contacted by Jack Wisnieski about his father, Walter, who served on B-17s with the 1st WRS and 3rd WRS in WWII. Jack shared information, including the photo of his Dad's crew (above). Walter is 2nd from left, in the back row.

Walter was born in 1920 and graduated from high school in 1938. He then attended Ohio University to study Education. At the end of his junior year he was recruited into the Army reserve program that would let him finish his degree before joining the Army Air Force.

**See Wisnieski continued on Page 3**

# President's Corner

by G.D. "Stoney" Faubus, AWRA President

Greetings from the Pres ~

Another year has gone by. We have lost some members and spouses and gained some new members. I hope the New Year has been kind to everyone. We had a great time in Dayton. I have been to the Museum many times and still enjoy the displays. The new hangar was pretty awesome, the Presidential Airplanes are a great addition to the main museum. Melva and I enjoyed catching up with old friends from our days at WPAFB. The hotel was FANTASTIC. The entire staff were so helpful, treating our people with respect and helping us through the reunion. I would like to say a special thanks to Bob Tuttle, for getting mobile scooters for all of us "old folks". The hallway by the hospitality room looked like the parking lot in the senior citizens center. (See photo below) They were a great asset on the museum tour.

I am looking forward to the reunion in San Antonio. I know Bernie has a great schedule for us. Hope to see as many of you that can make it.

Please remember to try to bring in new members. I know there are many folks out there that we need to enlist.

Thanks, and hope to see you in San Antonio!

Stoney



Stoney and Melva Faubus in 1979 at a 54th WRS Christmas Drop Planning meeting on Saipan.



## Wisnieski from Page 1

A few months later the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Over the Christmas holiday, Walter went home and, on Dec 27, 1941, married his high school sweetheart, Millie. He was 21 and Millie was 19. He then went back to Ohio U and finished his senior year, graduating in June 1942. He was not immediately called to active duty, so he went to work as a slagger in a steel mill. That fall, Millie came to see him with a letter that had come in the mail, ordering him to report to Fort Hays on Nov 11, 1942 for induction into the Army Air Forces.

Walter was sent as an Aviation Cadet to the University of Chicago to study Meteorology. He remembers that the program was headed by Prof Carl-Gustaf Rossby, a world famous Meteorologist/Oceanographer, originally from Sweden. The classes were large, several hundred cadets in a lecture hall. Cadet monitors would wander the aisles, making sure that the students stayed awake. They lived in the International House, which had been all female before the war. Now, one wing was being used to house the cadets. The cadets had PT on Amos Alonzo Stagg Field. Unknown to them at the time, Enrico Fermi and his team had constructed Chicago Pile-1 under the west viewing stands of Stagg Field. There, the first self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction was initiated in Dec 1942.

As his class neared completion, Walter responded to a bulletin on the information board asking for volunteers for weather reconnaissance. Volunteers were given flights over Lake Michigan in a DC-3. Very little training was provided, but they did observe clouds and surface winds. He was given orders to Kelly Field and took a train to San Antonio over Christmas 1943. After two whole days in the base weather station, he was told to report to Presque Isle, Maine. Upon arrival in Maine, Walter was told that the rest of his crew was on the west coast picking up a war-weary B-17 that had been used during the Aleutian campaign. After several weeks, his crew arrived and they started their operational weather reconnaissance flights over the North Atlantic. They were assigned to the 1st Weather Reconnaissance Squadron.

Their tracks would proceed east and northeast from their base. Walter would take a horizontal observation every 100 miles and hand the data sheet to the radio operator, who transmitted it to a land base using the WAF-2 code. The normal missions would be at 10,000 ft outbound and then at 500 ft back to base. Icing was a constant danger during winter months and Walter remembers hearing it rattle against the fuselage when shed by the propellers. His crew flew from several bases but most often they staged from Gander Field NF. On his days off, Walter took up skiing. Unfortunately, the new hobby resulted in him being struck down with pneumonia. The disease was very serious, and he lay in a hospital room for weeks with only visions of the care givers coming in with shots, etc. Thankfully, he did survive and recover. Meanwhile, his crew continued to fly with a new weather officer. As part of his recovery process, Walter was sent to Bermuda for a few weeks. There, he flew on unit B-25s conducting tropical storm flights. The crews would

"box" the storm, circumnavigating it CCW.

By January 1945, the B-17 portion of the 1st WRS was moved to Grenier Field NH. Ten weather officers, including Walter, were transferred to the 3rd WRS. This new organization would become the 53rd Recon Sq (Long Range) Weather in Jul 1945.

On 28 March 1945, 1st Lt Walter Wisnieski was sent TDY to Orlando FL to work with the Army Air Force Board. The purpose of this special project revolved around proper procedures for determination of drift by combined usage of radar and pressure altimeters.

After VE Day, Walter remembers very few flights being flown eastbound. The squadron had established a flight at McChord Field WA to conduct reconnaissance over the Northeast Pacific. Walter remembers one flight when he went with the squadron commander to visit the McChord unit. Walter stayed on at Grenier Field until Dec 1945 and was discharged from active duty in Feb 1946. He pulled Reserve base weather tours for two years in Pittsburg PA and was promoted to Captain before his final discharge in 1948.

Walter used the GI Bill to get a Masters in Education Administration. He taught high school and coached for seven years before becoming a high school principal for 22 years. He and Millie raised six children together, four boys and two girls. The two oldest boys were born during the war. They also lost a daughter shortly after her birth. Millie passed away in 1994 just after her 72nd birthday.

Today, Walter is a very spry gentleman who was 96 years old when Rosalind and I visited in March. (See photo below) On April 24, 2017 he celebrated his 97th birthday. When asked about his most memorable wartime flights, he recounted several search missions over the Greenland ice fields looking for downed aircrew. He said they found several aircraft, but never spotted any survivors. It was an honor to meet him and we look forward to more visits. Maybe we can entice him to attend the 2017 reunion.



<b>AWRA Officers</b>		<b>Board of Directors</b>	
<b>President</b>	<b>Stoney Faubus</b> 3024 Single Tree Ct Carson City, NV 89701	<b>Bernard Barris (Chairman)</b> 11019 Oaktree Park San Antonio, TX 78249 (210) 696-5072	
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<b>Historian-Archivist</b>	<b>Bernard Barris</b> (See Directors List)		
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Bernard Barris</b> (See Directors List)		

The AWRA Newsletter is an unofficial publication of the Air Weather Reconnaissance Association. Address questions and comments to Bernard Barris, the Editor, at the address listed above, or E-mail Bernie at: [awra038@aol.com](mailto:awra038@aol.com)



**AWS WEATHER MODIFICATION.** Over the past 70+ years, the men and women of weather reconnaissance have taken part in numerous missions involving attempts to change Mother Nature. Crews participated in Project STORMFURY, a NOAA-led effort from 1962 to 1983 that hoped to decrease the strongest winds in a land-falling hurricane, potentially saving lives and limiting destruction. Separately, success was achieved in efforts to open airfields that were closed by limited visibility due to ice fog. Beginning in the late 1960s, WC-130 aircraft equipped with dry ice crushers seeded fog in Alaska, Washington state, and Germany. Crews opened holes in the fog and were credited with allowing departures and landings that otherwise might have been cancelled or diverted. Also beginning in the 1960's were efforts to make it rain. Some highly touted successes were achieved. In the Philippines in 1969 and again in West Texas in 1971 AWS was credited with breaking long-standing drought conditions through seeding with silver iodide. Both of these operations were based on the highly classified Motorpool mission flown by the 54th WRS from Udorn RTAFB, Thailand. The photos above show two WC-130A and two RF-4 aircraft returning from the 500th Motorpool mission on 31 July 1968. Anyone who flew on Motorpool, or any other weather modification mission is encouraged to attend the reunion this year and bring any patches, photos, and stories. Our banquet guest speaker will be Dr David Steiner, a former 54th WRS navigator and veteran of the Motorpool missions.

## Welcome New Members

### New Life Members

Mark Daybell	54th 55th 56th	WC-130 WC-135 WB-57F
James Hauser	56th	WC-130 WC-135 WB-47 WB-57F
Kenneth Kaiser	54th	WC-130A/E
Bernard McKinley	54th	WC-130A
Charles Plott	54th 55th Det 2 9WRW	WC-130 WC-135
Clyde Sinclair	54th	WC-130
Jim Whelan	55th	WB-50D
Walter Wisnieski	1st 3rd 53rd	B/RB-17

AWRA doesn't mail renewal reminders to our annual members. It is incumbent on the member to send in their annual dues, or upgrade to Life Membership. For those annual members who want to become Life Members, please send \$30 to the membership chairman. Send to:

Bernard C Barris, AWRA Membership Chairman  
11019 Oaktree Park  
San Antonio TX 78249

If you noticed, all of our new members this year joined for Life. The subject of annual members was a discussion item at the 2015 General Membership meeting in Tucson. It was decided to raise the annual dues to \$15 per year, up from \$5. This was necessary to offset our rising costs, and also encourage new Life Memberships.

### Membership Roster

We keep the most current version of the AWRA roster online in the Members-Only area of the AWRA web site. You can also download color copies of the current and past newsletters.

Go to:

<http://www.awra.us/roster/>

Log in credentials are required. If you have lost yours, or not previously asked for one, send a request to the web master at:

awra038@aol.com Subject: Members-Only Area Request

If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact the Membership Chairman for a hard copy roster.

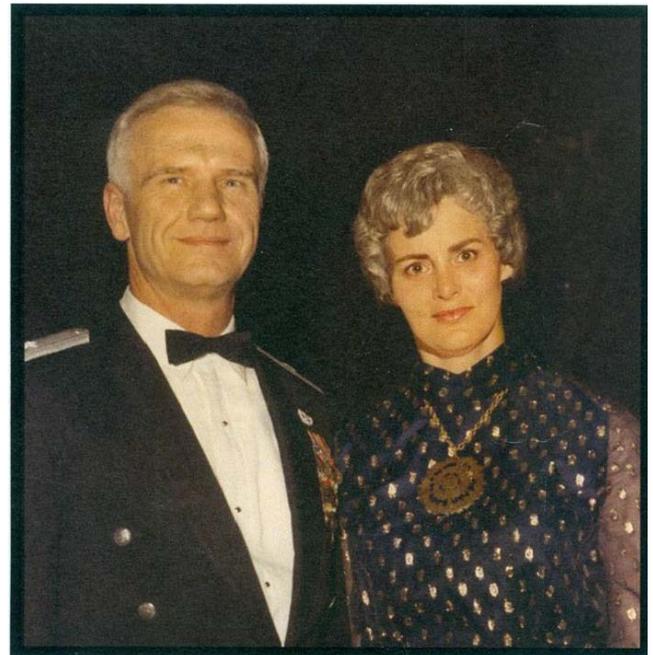
## TAPS

Sadly, over the past year, AWRA has learned of the deaths of several more members of our weather reconnaissance family. May they Rest in Peace.

Arthur Aronsen	2011	
Walter Alex	2015	
Raymond Kosanke	2015	
Richard K McNab	2015	
B/Gen Tedd Bishop	2016	
Gloria Braid	2016	Wife of James (D/96)
Arnold Jarvis	2016	
Francis Marqua	2016	
Jacqueline Tuttle	2016	Wife of Bob
Earl (Curt) Wells	2016	

Our lives are so much richer for having known them.  
We will greatly miss them all .....

The families of all of these men and women are  
in our thoughts and prayers.



BRIGADIER GENERAL TEDD L. BISHOP, USAF (Ret)  
FEBRUARY 4, 1926 - JUNE 12, 2016

VERA SHEPHERD PEARSON BISHOP  
JANUARY 13, 1929 - AUGUST 20, 2012

# SERIOUSLY SEASONED CITIZENS

Once again this Memorial Day we recognized all of our friends and comrades lost on active duty, as well as those who have passed away after leaving the service.

The term "seasoned citizen" is borrowed from one such friend, the late Colonel H.P. Bilyeu, who, when he heard the term "senior citizen", would always respond with, "No, we're not senior, just seasoned ..."

Thankfully, we still are lucky enough to have several of our really "seasoned" folks with us. For example, the lead article in this issue is about Walter Wisnieski, a B-17 weather observer from WWII who turned 97 years old in April.

Also born in 1920 (which makes him 97 this year) was John Hug, a long-time weather reconnaissance pilot who flew most of the aircraft used by weather reconnaissance. This includes (but is not necessarily limited to) the WB-29, WB-50, WB-47, and WC-130. I spoke to John on his birthday and he assured me that he can still take nourishment and is mostly upright.

Another friend turning 97 this year is Roswell Crozier. Then Captain Crozier was the Engineering Officer (aka Chief of Maintenance) at the 514th Reconnaissance Squadron (VLR) Weather, on Guam from 1947 to 1949.

He was also at HQ AWS. Both John Hug and Roswell Crozier retired from the USAF as Lt Colonels. After his active service, Crozier returned to Painted Post, NY, where he held many positions, including several stints as Mayor of Painted Post. In 2015, he finally insisted that they let him turn the job over to a younger individual. He was 95 at the time.

One of my favorite seasoned citizens is David Magilavy, an original founder of AWRA, and long-time Chairman of the Board of Directors. David's reconnaissance career was extensive, beginning as a weather observer on WB-29s. He was a Chief Warrant Officer and worked several special duties. He was one of the first Radiation Safety Officers trained in AWS, participating in numerous domestic nuclear tests. He also worked on several developmental programs, including early proposals to use the brand new C-135 as a weather reconnaissance platform. A relative youngster, David was born in 1921 and turned 96 back in February. I am sad to report that David has recently been diagnosed with cancer and is in home hospice care.

There are more "youngsters" out there, but the number is dwindling. We need to celebrate them while we can. Great job, noble servants!



**AWRA SEASONED CITIZENS.** At left are Helen and Roswell Crozier, taken outside their Painted Post, NY home in 2006. In the center is John Hug, taken at the pilot controls of the B-29 "FIFI" in 1992 when the aircraft was visiting Boise, ID. At right are David and Maureen Magilavy taken during the 2015 AWRA reunion in Tucson, AZ.

## Reunion News

The return to Dayton and the National Museum of the USAF was a great success! Thank you Bob Tuttle for all of your hard work putting this together. We had another great turnout, including a record number of MET/ARE troops. All of our various aircraft and crew positions were well represented.

This year, AWRA is coming back to San Antonio, Texas, AKA Military City, USA! Among the many bases in-and-around San Antonio is the "Gateway to the USAF", Lackland AFB, home of the only USAF Airman Basic Military Training Center. Lackland graduates a new class of airmen every Friday morning year-round (except Christmas week), and we will have a bus on Friday to attend the graduation and then tour the Airman Museum on Lackland.

On Thursday we will have a bus tour to Fredrickburg, Texas. Here we will visit the National Museum of the Pacific War, which includes the Nimitz Museum, named after Admiral Chester Nimitz, the senior US commander in the Pacific theater during WWII. Chester Nimitz was a Fredicksburg native. The town is also home to many unique shops and restaurants and folks can browse on their own.

We have chartered a 54 passenger tour bus (and guide) for this trip. Please reserve your slot ASAP as they will go fast!

Again this year we will have a flight suit contest. We started two years ago in Tucson, and hope to get more participants again this year.

Make your plans to attend the reunion right away! Fill out the enclosed form and send it in to Bernie Barris.

**DON'T DELAY, DO IT TODAY!!!**

## 2017 AWRA Reunion Tentative Agenda

### Wed, 11 Oct 2017

1200-2200 Hospitality & Registration in the Hospitality Suite

### Thu, 12 Oct 2017

0700-2200 Hospitality & Registration in the Hospitality Suite  
0830 Bus Departs for Fredricksburg TX  
1000-1430 Tour National Museum of the Pacific War  
Plus Lunch and Shopping in Fredricksburg  
1430 Bus Departs for Hotel  
1600 Arrive back at Holiday Inn

### Fri, 13 Oct 2017

0800-2200 Hospitality in the Hospitality Suite  
0745 Bus Departs for Lackland  
0900 Airman Basic Training Graduation  
1030 Bus Departs Parade Ground for Airman Museum  
1045-1145 Tour Airman Museum - Lackland AFB  
1200 Bus Departs Airman Museum for Hotel

### Sat, 14 Oct 2017

0800-1000 Hospitality in the Hospitality Suite  
0900-1000 AWRA Board of Directors Meeting  
1000-1100 AWRA General Membership Meeting  
1500-1600 3rd Annual Flight Suit Contest  
1800-1900 No-Host Social Hour and Group Photos  
1900-2100 Annual AWRA Banquet

### Sun, 15 Oct 2017

0800-1200 Departure Hospitality





**Air Weather Reconnaissance Association**

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

Place  
Postage  
Here

***IMPORTANT REUNION REMINDER!***

The 2017 AWRA Reunion  
will be held in San Antonio, TX  
from 11 - 15 October 2017

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

Also, call the Holiday Inn and make your reservation!