

## A Report From Our Historian

Historian John Bessette has been working with the Air Force Safety Center at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico, and has obtained the basic data from all the fatal accidents involving our KB-29s and KB-50s, plus all the non-fatal accidents which resulted in aircraft write offs.

He reports: that basically, from 1953 until 1965, we had 13 fatal accidents in which 14 aircraft were lost (two KB-29s and 12 KB-50s). Killed or missing were 90 air and ground crew, two passengers, and one civilian (a Hayes employee). Thirteen other aircraft (all KB-50s) were lost with no aircrew fatalities, but one of these resulted in 15 civilian deaths.

Over a stretch of 12 very active years, given the age and complexity of our airframes and the heavy operational load we put on them, this is a very good safety record. Nevertheless, we remember and still mourn the 93 of us who paid the supreme sacrifice in our units, back when we were all airmen, and young.

FYI: "Basic data" includes the crew list and a narrative "history of flight." This gives the basic story, but any material imputing the analysis and conclusion of the board is not released.



### *Passing of a Lady*

*She's a mighty hunk of metal,  
With four recip's and two jets.  
Her purpose has been altered,  
But she displays no regrets.  
She was born to be a bomber  
And in her younger days:  
Was the pride of all the Air Force,  
With her many winning ways.  
Tho she never was embattled,  
As her life span was unfurled,  
Gaining prestige, setting records,  
Flew nonstop around the world.  
At an age when most fine ladies  
Should retire to ease their pairs,  
She became a flight refueler,  
For the modern fighter planes.  
She was fancy, fine and flirty,  
In her busy youthful years.  
But she grew mature and settled,  
Fighting off defeat and fears.  
When the modern faster bombers,  
Had replaced her in the line,  
She applied for other duties,  
Being too proud to resign.  
It was back to basic training,  
Just to learn another skill.*

*Tho to hob nob with youthful talent,  
Was somewhat against her will.  
Her age was in her favor,  
As she started back to school,  
She'd take no wooden nickels,  
Razor sharp, nobody's fool,  
With all her training finished,  
She was fully qualified  
To match skills in competition,  
And have others point with pride,  
Working like an eager beaver,  
Having checked in all her guns,  
Flying recon, watched weather,  
Flight refueling one-O-ones.  
Now it seems her days are numbered,  
But there'd be no great surprise,  
If she leaves us with a promise:  
Like the South, some day to rise.  
Sitting on the ramp serenely;  
She is still considered great,  
Looking queenly tho retiring,  
Not a minute out of date.  
She's our gal, and there will always  
Be a place in Memory Lane  
For the pride of all the Air Force,  
The B-50 Aeroplane.*

*(submitted by Bob Cleckler)*

## Update on Plans for the Fall 2003 MiniReunion — “A Taste of Wine Country— California”

By Natalie Hill

Nate and I have just returned from a trip to California prior to our TAC Tanker Tales going to press. We flew to Sonoma to visit Joyce and Tom Grey, and with their assistance were able to check out the local hotel rates and facilities, visit the local attractions, and get the ball rolling for our next reunion. Needless to say, we are really pleased to report that we have been successful in setting the date, and finding a fabulous location for our headquarters. Our original plan was to be centered in Fairfield, which is between Travis AFB and the Wine country of Napa and Sonoma. We talked with three large hotels and were able to lock in a great rate for the end of September 2003 (which is their peak season, but great weather-wise).

The chosen hotel is the Doubletree in Rohnert Park, with the rate of \$95 for our stay of Sunday thru Thursday (9/28-10/2). The other rates were \$107 and \$179 per night. We also went out to Travis and lined up a luncheon for that Tuesday at the new Officer's Club with reasonable menu choices. That day we plan to have a tour bus take us to the Jelly Belly Factory and Busch Brewery first and the Travis Air Museum afterward.

On the other days of the reunion, we will be providing optional tours of the wineries, shopping experiences and an opportunity for those golf lovers to try out the 36 hole course around the hotel. There is a lot of history in Sonoma with several events during this part of the year that would be fun to see. Tom and Joyce took us around to several superb wineries with fascinating grounds and architecture. This allowed me to gather up a bundle of "wine" type door prizes and decorations for the banquet at the hotel on Wednesday evening.

We have a lead on a couple of transportation companies to bus us around and they were contacted regarding prices and sizes of their busses. We will mail them our itineraries and see who has the best price.

So, consider this your first installment on the 2003 Mini-Reunion. As you know we don't plan on a Memorial Service or a Business Meeting, but want to focus on reuniting you with your friends from the past and meeting other folks who had the KB-50 as part of their past. Put the date on your calendar and please join us for A TASTE OF WINE COUNTRY-CALIFORNIA 2003. (see Addendum story on Page 4)