

55TH WING BIRTHDAY BALL 2008

The 55th Wing will hold its 30th annual Birthday Ball, Saturday, April 5, 2008 at the Qwest Center Omaha. The ball is the Wing's largest formal social function each year. The gala event is open to all active duty ranks, retirees, and by invitation to community leaders. Brigadier General James Jones, the 55th Wing Commander, will host the event. The theme this year is *"Honoring the Heritage, Dominating the Day, Forging the Future"*. The theme recognizes the Wing's varied missions through its past, in the present and into the future.



The ball celebrates the 67th anniversary of the 55th Wing from its roots in the activation of the 55th Pursuit Group at Hamilton Field, CA, in January 1941. Then its heritage through the 55th Reconnaissance Group, which stood up at MacDill Field, FL, in Strategic Air Command in February 1947; then the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing from 1950 to 1992, at Barksdale AFB, LA, Ramey AFB, PR, Forbes AFB, KS, and Offutt AFB, NE. The ball was originated by then-Colonel (now, retired BrigGen) Regis F. A. Urschler, commander of the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, in January 1979. His intent was to connect the wing's foundation, history and heritage to the active duty personnel and missions. That tradition continues today.

Captain Kim Arnold and Lt Leo Cruz of the 55th Contracting Squadron lead the 2008 Ball committee. More details will be forthcoming as they develop. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend. Last year's Ball was attended by an all-time record crowd of 820. The guest speaker is legendary Nebraska coach Tom Osborne, currently athletic director at UNL, and Dave Webber, sports personality from WOW-TV in Omaha will once again be the master of ceremonies for the event. The program will include Wing Hall of Fame inductions and presentation of this year's winner of the 55th SRW Association's Award for Excellence. The Nightwing ensemble of the Heartland of America Band will provide musical entertainment.

There is a tie-in with the Omaha Hilton just across the street (with a skywalk) from the Qwest. The code is WBB to get the special Ball rate of \$119, plus taxes and fees. For reservations, call 1-402-998-3400.

On Friday, April 4, the afternoon before the Ball, the eighth annual edition of the *"Tales of the 55th"* will take place at the Airman's Leadership School building to kick off the weekend activities. This function is sponsored by the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association, with President Col (Ret) Jim Thomas is the organizer and emcee for the event. Co-sponsors are the Strategic Roost of the Association of Old Crows, and the LeMay Flight of the Order of Daedalians. Doors open at 1500 for social time and viewing the mission and historical displays. The program is to begin at 1630. Speakers from various periods of 55th history will relate personal experiences. The function is attended by a growing number of active duty, retirees and guests each year. A nominal donation is requested at the door.