

A Question of Influence

Robert S. Dudney's editorial [*"Beyond the F-22 Problem," March, p. 2*] and Rebecca Grant's article [*"Why Airmen Don't Command," March, p. 46*] lament the decline in Air Force political clout which they claim limits command opportunities for the service's most senior officers and constrains its acquisition programs. This seems wrong for two reasons. First the Air Force isn't that powerless, and, second, it has been the champion of the cause of its own limitation.

It should not be surprising that the ground combat services, the Army and the Marine Corps, fare relatively better when the nation is engaged in ground combat as it is in Iraq and Afghanistan than when it is not. This happened also during Korea and Vietnam. The budget share for at least the Army always fades when the wars are over. If the Air Force wants to know what it really feels like to be fourth in line most of the time, just consult with Army leaders who face constant poaching from the marines, the National Guard, and special operations. The nation's aerospace giants may be seeking some of the Army's business these days, but only after maxing out at the Air Force and Navy tables first. The Air Force surely isn't that unaware of the division in the R&D and procurement budgets.

The Air Force has been a champion of jointness, which helps stymie interservice rivalries and the opportunities for the Air Force to assert the Billy Mitchell thesis. In the supposedly bad old days before Goldwater-Nichols, the Air Force not only dreamed of but actually achieved the 50 percent mark as its budget share. With jointness comes the notion that marines should be in charge of strategic forces and naval officers in charge of ground combat. This is a brew of the Air Force's own making. Again, ask the Army about joint command billets.

But I do not worry much for the Air Force's future. When we lose our taste for counterinsurgency, which we surely will, the advantages of long-range strike and air attacks will again come to the fore.

Moreover, the combined force air component commander's post is likely to be the seat of power in future wars. Central control of fires is a conquering argument and one the Air Force successfully makes. How often is the air boss a naval officer or a soldier?

Harvey M. Sapolsky
Cambridge, Mass.

I found the article [*"Why Airmen Don't Command," March, p. 46*] quite fascinating. After I finished it, I referred back to the editorial. Robert S. Dudney highlights the question of why the Pentagon doesn't take the Air Force seriously: "Why, on an issue of supreme importance to the Air Force, does the Pentagon find itself unable to agree with USAF's leadership?" I would suggest the answer to that question can be found in the conclusions drawn by Rebecca Grant in her article: "Get in the game."

SMSgt. Jim Gordon,
USAF (Ret.)
Laurel, Md.

In response to the article, I must say that once again Ms. Grant misses the point in her zealous promotion of USAF. If you start with Air Force doctrine, we ourselves hold that airpower must be commanded by airmen, and that the JFACC will usually be an Air Force officer, because we supply the preponderance of the air forces. To think, then, that the command of very "ground force heavy" commands like EUCOM and CENTCOM will frequently

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Letters

fall to anyone other than a ground combat commander is a bit naive. Secondly, if you examine the education and training of Air Force officers, we (understandably) promote "air mindedness," and the command and control of air and space assets. However, unless you deliberately educate and train our airmen in the command and control of ground forces (as part of a balanced joint education), you will not create a large pool of airmen who are prepared to lead ground-centric operations. Lastly, in the very same issue, on p. 54 ["DOD Senior Leadership"], anyone can see the results of how we do business. By my very simple count of the photographs there, a USAF officer commands three of the 10 combatant commands (TRANSCOM, STRATCOM, and NORTHCOM). The remaining commands score as Army, two; Marines, one; and Navy, four. Politics will always play a role (perhaps a rereading of Clausewitz is in order). But instead of blaming Machiavellian politics, as does Ms. Grant in her conclusion, we might profit more by re-examining how we develop leaders to be true joint warfighters.

Col. Thomas Huizenga
Bagram AB, Afghanistan

Rebecca Grant's article asked [an important] question. While her conclusions were certainly valid, I believe she may have missed a key factor in our modern Air Force. Unfortunately, USAF leadership is too focused on the instrument of airpower, the airplane, than the actual warrior's application of airpower. USAF generals for the most part are pilots and they grudgingly (if ever) remove themselves from their first love, the airplane. To become a general, these officers spend a monastic existence in the presence of their airplane and crew, assuming they are in a crewed aircraft. Many of these officers never experience any other life than that of an operations squadron, group, and then wing commander. Many never learn how to motivate their subordinates because as a rule, they are usually serving as highly paid technicians flying their airplanes.

If all line officers are considered "airmen" why do we segregate them as rated and nonrated? Why do we overlook officers who have mastered many key elements of airpower just because they can't fly an airplane? Why do we advance officers who have only mastered flying an airplane and haven't a clue where the gas, technicians, ammo, security, parts, infrastructure, or computer support come from? While

I believe pilots can and should have key input to air operations, I cannot conceive of a single reason why other officers could not be in a leadership position soliciting that input.

If being a "good stick" was vital to knowing about airpower, Giulio Douhet, an artillery officer, was a dismal failure. His seminal book, *Command of the Air*, in 1921 should have been overlooked and never incorporated into the curriculum of the Air Corps Tactical School. Fortunately, our early airpower pioneers got their start as Army officers and then transitioned to aircraft—many had a distinct appreciation of the concerns, limitations, and unique characteristics of the Army. Perhaps this was the reason they didn't throw out Douhet's theories and built Eighth Air Force and orchestrated the strategic bombing campaign against Hitler's Germany.

Maybe we're grooming the wrong people for leadership? I deployed as ADVON for a hostile entry NEO and was also tasked with briefing the CONOPS to a unit assigned to provide CAS. I was wearing the uniform my CG—an Army two-star—sent me in: a sanitized flight suit with only rank on it. My briefing was well-received and the unit immediately went to work refining their task. I was welcomed into their squadron and given the combination to the cipher lock of their ops center. Four days later, the mission was scrubbed by the NCA and I reverted to wearing all prescribed badges and patches. I was no longer welcomed in that ops squadron because I was nonrated. Until they saw my lack of flight wings, they never questioned my briefing or competence.

I believe it's clear what is wanted in regional commands: a broad knowledge of military, social, and economic concepts; employment of a vast spectrum of military forces; an extensive knowledge of military theory (and not just airpower) and history (from both sides); a willingness to assemble your forces based on the situation at hand and resources available; and a warrior's heart. You can find a FedEx pilot with tons of hours, but does he have the other qualities?

Lt. Col. David J. Wallace,
USAF (Ret.)
Kokomo, Ind.

Rebecca Grant really makes the case for something I have argued for a number of years—joint promotion processes at the flag and general officer level.

Since implementation of Goldwater-

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Nichols over two decades ago, the services have individually wrestled with how to meet their requirements for "jointness." While serving on the Joint Staff during Desert Shield/Desert Storm, I saw firsthand how difficult it was to conduct that campaign following the principles of jointness as directed by Goldwater-Nichols. We've come a long way since then and certainly the ability to fight jointly is much improved.

Another positive step towards truly institutionalizing jointness would be to create a promotion system for flag and general officers at the two-, three-, and four-star level. Officers can and should be selected for flag rank within their respective service, but beyond that, senior leadership needs to think and act with a more "purple" perspective. Though officers might be assigned to joint positions, my experience shows that when a policy issue needs to be addressed, the majority leans towards siding with the perspective of their respective service. Perhaps it's their cultural upbringing, but it could also be the knowledge that crossing their service could adversely affect their promotability within their service.

Promotion based upon a joint system, and conducted by a joint board, would work to eliminate that problem and ensure that all services have equal opportunity to command regional combatant commands based upon their joint qualifications vice a particular service affiliation.

Capt. Frank Roberts,
USN (Ret.)
Virginia Beach, Va.

As military personnel, we should all be concerned about the lack of procurement of documented USAF aircraft needs and the filling of high command positions by USAF personnel. The failure of qualified USAF officers to lead in the command positions such as CINCPAC has undoubtedly been a detriment to getting USAF Pacific aircraft requirements funded and also continues to degrade the Air Force's ability to compete weapon system requirements vs. other services.

As far as the CINCPAC position, the regrettable charade by certain Senate Armed Services Committee members definitely prevented a long needed Air Force commander to head up the CINCPAC position. In that position, the well-qualified USAF person could have highlighted Pacific Theater aircraft requirements and also the needs of the other services. Don't forget that the combined use of arms of our services did us well in Desert Storm, but we also

have the reality that USAF flew some 80 percent of the key combat sorties vs. 20 percent for our US Navy/Marine brethren.

If and when we become engaged in a large crisis or conflict involving China and possibly Russia, we will need all our USAF documented aircraft requirements to carry out the commander's mission statement and to daily meet

the air sortie requirements for the combat theaters.

Lt. Col. Sid Howard,
USAF (Ret.)
Oklahoma City

As usual, Rebecca Grant hit the nail on the head. I particularly appreciated her detailed review of the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing of Gen.

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out what was happening regarding the KC-767 sweetheart deal with Boeing. Since General Martin had been over Druyun from July 1998 to January 2000 as the principal deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Senator McCain rightfully took the opportunity to ask General Martin how Druyun's deceit/deception could have gone unnoticed by the Air Force leadership. What General Martin said in response was truly amazing: (1) He (Martin) was not an expert in

contracting; (2) he (Martin) questioned if Druyun actually committed the crimes she stood accused of; and (3) he (Martin) had never seen Druyun act in an inappropriate manner while he worked with her. Perhaps General Martin was just incompetent in that acquisition job, but when he couldn't acknowledge Druyun's guilty plea in federal court nearly a week earlier, any rational observer would have questioned his ability to command.

I consider the whole Darleen Druyun

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Gregory S. Martin's nomination to command US Pacific Command.

Regardless of anyone's personal politics, Senator McCain's intransigent pettiness cost the nation the capable, honorable service of General Martin when he subsequently withdrew his nomination and prematurely retired.

As a "disclaimer," I am not related to General Martin. It was my privilege to be the USAFE director of personnel (2000-01) when he was the commander, United States Air Forces in Europe.

Col. Frances C. Martin,
USAF (Ret.)
Interlachen, Fla.

Ms. Rebecca Grant does a major disservice to not only your readers but to the reality of the confrontation between Sen. John McCain and Gen. Gregory Martin on Oct. 6, 2004. Just five days prior to this confirmation hearing, Darleen Druyun had finally come clean regarding all of her lies and told her federal sentencing judge that she had steered lucrative Air Force contracts to Boeing for her and her family's financial gain in the form of jobs. On top of that, the Air Force leadership at that time had been doing its level best to stymie the efforts of Senator McCain in finding

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episode the greatest single blemish on the reputation of USAF since its founding in 1947. Yet revisionist commentators such as Ms. Grant are imparting a whole new spin on things (i.e., Senator McCain simply didn't want an Air Force general in command of the Pacific).

Ed Slana
Fairhope, Ala.

I read the subject article and I offer the following analysis from a retired enlisted perspective as to why our "leaders" don't command. In my 30 years in the Air Force (1976-2006), I had the rare privilege of working directly for general officers and working closely with several others. All were great men and managers, but not all of them great leaders. Let me explain. In the Air Force for many years, an officer who was considered "general officer material" was a pilot (there are several exceptions but they are not the norm) and more specifically a fighter pilot.

One has to ask how much leading a fighter pilot does in the cockpit as a young pilot. Not much is the only answer, and it shows as they matriculate up the ranks to a point where they

finally begin to lead a large group of people, normally as a group/wing commander. They have honed their skills as managers of time, space, and of course money, but not people. This is where I believe they fall short on leadership. You don't lead things, you lead people, and it takes years of study and hands-on practice to become a great leader.

Change is needed; maybe the answer is a two track system—pilots forever and pilots to leaders. Until our Air Force gets this message, I don't think these "command" opportunities will become more plentiful. I thoroughly enjoyed being in the Air Force and I admire the men and women I worked for and always will, but change is needed.

CMSgt. D. B. Barton,
USAF (Ret.)
Montgomery, Ala.

I am constantly amazed that the Air Force thinks so highly of itself. To answer the question of why airmen don't command is very simple. The vast majority of airmen don't deserve to command at that level.

Until recent years, most airmen had seen very little actual combat, if any

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at all. I consider combat being when you hear the bullets passing by your head, not shooting over the horizon at a target you never see. The Air Force doesn't teach officers to command at the level the article talks about. And, with the ingrained culture throughout the Air Force, the vast majority of airmen plan on getting out and retiring instead of planning on serving well beyond the traditional 20-year career. In other words, it's been my experience that most airmen lack the dedication to go all the way.

Quite simply, the Air Force needs to quit whining and crying and just grow up. The Air Force is over 60 years old now, and it's still looking for its identity.

I'm sorry if an airman has to go on convoy duty with the Army. I'm sorry if airmen have to suck it up and go out into the field with members of the other services. But when you raised your hand and took the pledge, you knew what you were getting into. The vacation is over, folks.

Joseph Carroll
Robins AFB, Ga.

Protracted Nuclear War

Actually, the notion of protracted nuclear war predates the Reagan Administration [*Protracted Nuclear War*, March, p. 56]. The Carter White House and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown conducted an extensive review of nuclear policy in 1977 to 1980.

Ambassador Leon Sloss was the author of the study that was ultimately sent to the White House. You will find many references to this study and the content of the resulting Presidential Directive 59 in the press archives of that time period.

The Reagan Administration adopted and later amplified this doctrine by including ballistic missile defense.

Col. J. E. Scholz,
USAF (Ret.)
Vienna, Va.

Ground Force Taskings

Otto Kreisher's article "The Ground Force Taskings Go On" in your March 2008 issue of *Air Force Magazine* [p. 42] brought back some very vivid memories of my 1965 tour in Vietnam.

In 1965, I was a C-47 and C-54 airborne radio operator, AFSC A29372, assigned to the 33rd Air Base Squadron, Tan Son Nhut AB, South Vietnam. As an NCO and an aircrew member, I was used to a certain way of life that normally included air-conditioned sleeping quarters and no additional duties.

One day after I had returned from an in-country C-47 supply mission, I was told to report to the squadron first sergeant. Upon reporting to our

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first sergeant, I was informed that I would be “pulling guard duty” at the Caravel Hotel in downtown Saigon the very next day.

When I protested to our first sergeant that (1) I was an aircrew member and therefore shouldn’t be performing guard duty except when it was to guard the aircraft I was flying on, and (2) the Army was responsible for the security of Saigon—not the Air Force—I was told to be at the squadron orderly room at 0600 the next day.

Upon arriving at the squadron orderly room the next day, I was issued an M-16 rifle and four clips of ammunition and then, together with about 10 other airmen and NCOs, I was driven to the Caravel Hotel in downtown Saigon.

My post was on the roof of the Caravel Hotel and I remained there, quite alone with no food or drink for the next eight hours, when I was relieved by another Air Force NCO. The only “enemy” that I encountered during my eight-hour shift were rather large Vietnamese rats running rampant on the roof of the hotel.

After performing this additional duty four times during a 60-day period, I was finally removed from the Caravel Hotel guard duty roster when I failed to report for my appointed guard duty shift. You see, the day before my shift I was sent TDY to Thailand on board a C-47 and our aircraft had a serious maintenance problem that required both the flight mechanic and me to remain with our aircraft for the next seven days.

Needless to say, I was never assigned to guard the Caravel Hotel again, nor was I assigned any other additional duties during the remainder of my tour in Vietnam.

At least someone in my chain of command recognized that taking an aircrew member out of his primary AFSC to perform guard duty in downtown Saigon, just was not the smart thing to do.

CMSgt. Ken Witkin,
USAF (Ret.)
Fort Washington, Md.

The Air Mail Fiasco

Note that in your article “The Air Mail Fiasco” in the March issue, there is an error on p. 65. In the middle column on that page, it states that Maj. Gen. Oscar Westover “died in a crash when trying to land an AT-17 in a crosswind in 1938.”

In fact, Major General Westover was killed while piloting a Northrop A-17AS on Sept. 21, 1938 (as he was attempting to land at the Burbank, Calif., airfield). The Cessna AT-17 Bobcat, a twin-engined advanced trainer, first entered

the Army Air Corps around 1940. So the AT-17 did not yet exist in 1938.

Lt. Col. Ed Sienkiewicz,
USAF (Ret.)
Robins AFB, Ga.

“The Air Mail Fiasco” story: Of the solutions the Air Corps looked to [in order to] gain “instrument flying” training, John Correll left out one of the more historical points of that story—the Air Corps’ purchase of Edwin Link’s Blue Box Trainers (simulator), Link’s first military sale. Link continued to upgrade and enhance his trainer over the years, selling over 10,000 “Blue Boxes.” Most WWII aviators trained in them—and we know the rest of the story.

Col. Tom Spada,
USAF (Ret.)
Charlotte, N.C.

A Study in Stripes

I enjoyed the article “A Study in Stripes” in the March issue [p. 66]. When I enlisted in the Air Force in January of 1951, the Air Force still used the Army rank structure. After basic training, I was a student and then an instructor in the Career Guidance School at Lowry Air Force Base. I was a one-striper (private first class), but then got promoted to corporal. That meant I could eat in the NCO Mess. I went to breakfast the day after getting the two stripes sewed on and the mess checker greeted me with, “Good morning, Corporal.” George Patton was never prouder of a promotion. I was then sent to Long Beach Municipal Airport [Calif.] to work in the orderly room of a reserve training unit. I got promoted to a three-striper. I could answer the phone, “Orderly Room, Sergeant Edwards.” Then the rank structure changed and I had to answer, “Orderly Room, Airman Edwards.” I immediately applied for Officer Candidate School.

Col. Kenneth W. Edwards,
USAF (Ret.)
Corvallis, Ore.

The Force Was With Her

Congratulations are certainly in order for Jennifer Sinsel, on being chosen as AFA’s National Teacher of the Year for 2007 [“The Force Was With Her,” *March*, p. 71]. I would like to point out that she is also a member of NASA’s Network of Educator Astronaut Teachers (NEAT) as well. NEAT comprises 200 finalists for the 2003 educator astronaut class. Their mission is to target exactly what you mentioned in the article: a lack of interest in science as well as mathematics, technology, and engineering. All NEAT teachers are invited to NASA space

centers each summer (since 2004) to participate in seminars and behind-the-scenes tours of NASA facilities. All of us work to bring wonder to science and build motivation for today’s students to study these fields.

As local school districts continue to fight for funds in a time of increasing costs, it is extremely important for NASA to keep helping us by providing professional development and resources and materials.

Congratulations again to Jennifer and a big thank you to NASA for the NEAT Program.

SMSgt. Casey Teliczan,
USAF (Ret.)
Cedar Springs, Mich.

Classics

I reckon you’ll get more than just this reference to your stating that the “max range” of the P-38 Lightning was “450 mi”—especially when the Yamamoto “raid” was 500 miles [“*Airpower Classics: P-38*,” *March*, p. 80]. We flew our F-5s 800 to 900 miles every day from San Savero, Italy, usually landing with a fair amount of gas remaining. We ran out of film before gas unless we got chased by the bad guys. The P-38 was the bird in which Charles Lindbergh refined the low RPM-full throttle cruise, which made fighter legs a lot longer with or without drop tanks. Your magazine gets better each year, and so does my memory of firing up sitting between those musical engines at age 20.

Col. David Winn,
USAF (Ret.)
Colorado Springs, Colo.

In many earlier publications, it always states that the Germans called the P-38 the “Fork-tailed Devil.” I just want to report that the Germans I knew, and that included myself back in the early days, called it the “Doppelschwanz Jaeger” (double-tail fighter). Devil (Teufel) might have been used by the Japanese, but it is not a common word in German except for the religious connotations.

I was a young teenager at that time, riding my bicycle to school along a country road, dropping into the next ditch when I heard the very distinct noise of the Lightning’s two engines. The GIs must have been bored at times because they had great fun using their Lightnings and their Mustangs in strafing lone bicycle or motorbike riders or single cows in fields. We were envious at times. I have flown other things since then, but I still wish I could have flown a P-38.

Hans J. Mueller
Caracas Venezuela