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Nuclear Deterrents

It appears that Deputy Defense Secretary [William J.] Lynn III is as confused concerning the Air Force's "Top Job" as many others in Washington ["Verbatim: Top Job for Air Force," April, p. 43].

The "Top Job" to be accomplished by this service is to provide nuclear deterrent missile and bomber forces to Strategic Command, which are protected and ready on a moment's notice if needed. Without this protection, the tactical military forces would be able to do nothing meaningful.

Charles W. McConnell
Rose Hill, Kan.

Giving Up the Ghost?

It is obvious that the senior leadership in the USAF has basically given up ["Washington Watch: Calibrated Ambition," March, p.8]. Now, not only do we have to do more with less with our right-size Air Force, but we are obviously openly embracing mediocrity. Those program managers who are successful "are going to be heroes." Heroes? For doing their job well? This must be what [Gen. Norton A.] Schwartz was referring to when he summed up the theme of the reshaped Air Force as "calibrated ambition." The job was too hard, and we didn't think we had the resources or the best people, so we just decided not to do it. "Aim High—Air Force" is officially dead.

The more I read, the angrier I got. So now, not only are we pulling back the throttle on F-35 production (and if it's in that much trouble, it should be fixed) so we will have less aircraft to go around because, of course, we still have to retire as many aircraft as we possibly can (all you pilots take note—enjoy flying your sims because you'll be lucky to sniff the inside of a cockpit), but we are also planning to use commercial satellite imagery for

strategic purposes and have our next generation long-range strike system shot out of the air if we have to send it up against a peer or near peer. Oh, I'm sorry, the Block B model "might" include new technologies, but it'll probably be off-the-shelf stuff that anyone has access to. Hey, China and Russia, please don't try anything until we can upgrade our bombers to Block B in 2025 because, after all, we'll probably be buying the systems from you. And if you really make us mad, we'll send our 70-year-old bombers after you. Of course, we'll never be able to reach you because we had to ground all our tankers years ago. We are actively striving to weaken our international posture and position.

Yes, we have money problems. I work in CE, and ACC is openly telling everyone that there is no money, and there will be no money. I get it. When your budget shrinks, so should your spending. However, this organization has a proud tradition of doing the impossible without whining about how we got there or how much work it took. So this all begs the question: Where is the leadership? It seems to me that everyone is so afraid of [Defense] Secretary [Robert M. Gates] that no one is openly standing up to this sickening nonsense.

Do you have a comment about a current article in the magazine? Write to "Letters," *Air Force Magazine*, 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209-1198. (E-mail: letters@afa.org.) Letters should be concise and timely. We cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We reserve the right to condense letters. Letters without name and city/base and state are not acceptable. Photographs cannot be used or returned.—THE EDITORS



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AFA's Mission

To educate the public about the critical role of aerospace power in the defense of our nation.

To advocate aerospace power and a strong national defense.

To support the United States Air Force and the Air Force family and aerospace education.

We did not get to this point by hanging our heads and rolling over. We are the best at what we do in every task that we are asked to do. Heck, we are even doing jobs for the other services that they don't have the in-house expertise for anymore. So let's get our tails out from between our legs and again start acting like the winners that we are.

Chris Kruschke
Tucson, Ariz.

Noise Pollution

I just finished reading the article in the March edition titled, "Getting on With the Neighbors" [p. 44]. Both bases mentioned have been around for quite some time—according to you, 70 years in the case of Luke. They were originally built in sparsely populated areas. Since then, urban sprawl has mostly surrounded them. People built/bought houses near them because of the low housing prices. Yet, they now complain that the jet noise lowers these very same low prices. Reminds me of a situation here in Las Vegas a few years back, where people built/bought houses near a pig farm not that far from Nellis, again because of the low prices, then went to court because the farm smells of pigs. Guess it just goes to show that Forest Gump was right, "Stupid is as stupid does."

SMSGt. Dave Caron,
USAF (Ret.)
Las Vegas

Smart Bombs in Vietnam

Concerning the availability, or lack thereof, of a sufficient combination of accuracy and power to destroy such targets as the Thanh Hoa Bridge, and that precision guided munitions in Vietnam wrote "the book" on ground attack, I would change that to say that the precision guided munitions used in Vietnam added to the book on ground attack [*"The Emergence of Smart Bombs," March, p. 60*]. The book went through stages of frustration until the P-47 Thunderbolt was first converted, in Italy, and flown as a fighter-bomber in December 1943. Real accuracy was later combined with the power of two 1,000-pound bombs carried on the wings of Thunderbolt fighter-bombers. This was demonstrated on May 7, 1944 by the 365th Fighter Group ("Hell Hawks"), Ninth TAC, Ninth Air Force. Eight Thunderbolts, each carrying two 1,000-pound bombs, with an eight-to-11-second delay fusing, attacked the Vernon railroad bridge across the Seine River. They went in below bridge level and released their bombs at point-blank range. The entire north span of the bridge collapsed into the river. Total munitions expended—16 1,000-pound bombs. This technique, accuracy, and

destruction continued throughout the European Campaign.

Bridge destruction was not complete until a substantial portion was dropped in the river. The bridge shown in the article would be considered "badly damaged," and revisited for destruction.

Frank Luckman
Abington, Pa.

Future Bomber

In the April 2010 issue, "Future Bomber," the letter from Lt. Col. Tom Garcia (Ret.) gave me a chuckle with his fighter bias: "Classifying an aircraft as being nuclear capable or not nuclear capable really has no meaning. ... Anything is nuclear capable" [p. 8]. He tried to make the case that because he could deliver nuclear weapons with his F-84F, a C-130 could do the job. With all due respect, I must offer some enlightenment. Without EMP hardening and testing, electronics, flight-control computers, avionics, etc., today's aircraft would fry after detonation. These protections alone, not even considering weapon delivery systems, are huge cost drivers in developing aircraft for carrying nuclear weapons.

That factors into the decision as to whether USAF will want a bomber (or fighter) that is capable of carrying, delivering (somewhat more accurately than rolling one out the back of a cargo hold), and surviving nuclear detonation effects.

He mentioned that he flew the F-84F, that had a nuclear bomb delivery system, so that they could carry *one* bomb. The first F-84s were *not* nuclear capable. In fact, the first straight-wing F-84 that was "nuclear capable" was the F-84G. The model he flew was a newer swept-wing design with a nuclear delivery capability (something he is trying to argue doesn't exist). I also suspect that since this aircraft was designed to deliver nuclear weapons, it was EMP-hardened, too (something previous versions were not). This means the statement that there's no meaning to an aircraft being "nuclear capable" is based on his experience flying a "nuclear capable" fighter. I guess the unspoken point was that we don't need any more bombers, since anything can do the job. That's just not true. Since the ultimate mission of USAF is to destroy targets on the ground, it needs a survivable vehicle that is capable of accurately delivering *loads* of both conventional and nuclear ordnance. The argument then becomes, should it be a nuclear capable bomber, fighter, or unmanned vehicle. The question of "nuclear capability" is a big deal.

Lt. Col. Randy Rose,
USAF (Ret.)
Warrensburg, Mo.

I greatly enjoyed your story on the U-2 shutdown. There is a part of the story that is not generally known within the US. I was reminded of a book I bought some 45 or 50 years ago written by the Soviets entitled *The Trial of the U-2*.

Although the rocket exploded well to the rear of the airplane, the blast effects combined with the fragility of the airplane caused it to break apart and the Soviets gathered all the parts together and examined it and its cameras in great detail—seemingly almost taking it apart bolt by bolt.

My memory was jogged about the Soviet book when I read “the CIA failed to prepare an adequate cover story for any captured pilot” and further in the story, “CIA Director Allen W. Dulles and deputy director of plans Richard M. Bissell Jr. had assured Eisenhower that no U-2 pilot could survive a shutdown at the design altitude of 70,000 feet.” How could Dulles and Bissell be so sure?

To reassure the pilot, Powers was provided with an E&E kit, hunting and camping equipment and a poisoned needle by which to commit suicide if captured.

Power’s U-2 had an ejection seat. The airplane was equipped with a destructor unit placed near the cockpit containing 1.4 kg of hexogen explosive. It had a safety catch that was mechanically pulled when the ejection seat, or other equipment separated from the airplane when pilot ejected.

Quoting from the book—“It was impossible to establish the time lag of the explosion since no timing mechanism was found in the wreckage.”

Maj. Charles W. Hinton,
USAF (Ret.)
Satellite Beach, Fla.

Wow! I was beginning to think that few readers had an opinion about anything of interest until I read the just-received April edition of *Air Force* [Magazine.]

I found it quite interesting to read the rather emphatic replies regarding the health care plan just passed and signed. I am an Air Force trained physician assistant, retired in February ‘89 after 25 years of active duty and since then practicing in the civilian world in an HMO since January ‘89.

I am approaching my 67th birthday in June of this year and so very grateful for the opportunities I enjoyed in USAF; the truly meaningful “free” education I received as well as for the retirement and health care benefits my spouse and I enjoy, though we have neither required nor used the services of a military outpatient facility nor the available prescription services since we have excellent coverage through

my HMO, from which I will retire at the end of this year.

On many occasions, I have almost been embarrassed to step up to the reception desk at one of my appointments and have the receptionist review my BCBS/ND, Medicare Part B and Tricare-for-life coverage with another person standing behind me listening to this litany of coverage.

I’ve kept politics and insurance issues as separated from my professional life as possible. I’ve used coding of professional charges strictly based on “presenting problem” rather than on the “bullets” I could account for or the “minutes by the clock spent with the patient” that would increase the dollar-value of a patient encounter. I believe that the majority of my colleagues are as ethical. Does my HMO “ding” me for conservative charges? Not in the past 21 years and I continue to be a valued member of the staff.

Tort reform could help reduce the cost of health care. I’ll say no more on this since it will be seen as a self-defense issue for the medical profession in the US except to say that nationalized health care, in its truest form does not consider tort an issue of value.

Capt. Edwin A. Novak,
USAFR, (Ret.)
Akeley, Minn.

I really enjoyed the article about bringing F-4s out of the boneyard for use as aerial targets. However, I think you missed an opportunity to mention the hard work performed by the men and women of the 309 AMARG at Davis-Monthan AFB, Az. AMARG takes an aircraft from the desert and brings it to flyable status including a functional check flight before turning it over to the contractor. This herculean effort is what makes the whole program a success.

Col Michael O’Halloran,
USAFR (Ret.)
Colorado Springs, CO

I noted that information in two captions of photos in your March 2010 magazine needs a correction.

1. In the caption of the F-15 photo on p. 24 it says the aircraft involved are F-15E’s from the Louisiana ANG. That LAANG unit flies F-15C/D Eagles. No F-15E Strike Eagles are assigned to ANG (or AFRC) units.

2. The caption of the A-7D drawing on page 80 states the aircraft belonged to the 345th TFW. The numbers are right, but the sequence is not. It should be the 354th TFW. Please also note that the Wing itself was never stationed at Korat, but that it was ‘Hq 354th TFW (Advanced).’

Theo van Geffen
Utrecht, The Netherlands

The Air Force and Department of Defense (DOD) have already taken over seven years just attempting to evaluate proposals and award a contract to replace the ancient 50 year-old KC-135R In Flight Refueling (IFR) tankers. To add another military era perspective on just how flawed the process has been, it has taken twice as long as WWII lasted when literally hundreds of new Army Air Force aircraft models (fighters, bombers, transport aircraft, etc.) were designed, source selected, contracts awarded and test models were actually flying in usually less than two years elapsed time. The outstanding WWII P-51 “Mustang” fighter took just six months from being sketched-out by a couple of North American Aviation company executives in a Washington DC hotel room and presented to the British representatives and US Department of War (predecessor to today’s DOD) to its first flight. I would also guess that to date we have spent over \$ 25,000,000 taxpayer dollars on the KC-X process and in these seven years the Air Force and taxpayers have not bought even one ten cent rivet or washer and the first flight of KC-X/KC-45A is still at least four years away at best. This is all due to gross mis-management by Senior DOD and USAF leadership, not technical issues.

Perhaps a new tanker requires a quantum leap in technology development thus requiring a long amount of time to make a proper decision but I sure don’t think this is the case. In fact I think selecting a new tanker actually is a very low technical challenge and a low risk program. Here is why I say this. Multi-engine refueling tankers using both the flying boom and probe & drogue methods of IFR have been going on regularly for over 62 years. Some specific Air Force aircraft that have been performing this mission for many years are: KB-29 (1948), KB-50 (1949), KC-97 (1950- 1977), KC-135 (1960 - today) and KC-10 (1999 - today). Also in this mix, but only with probe & drogue IFR method, are USAF, USMC KC-130 and Navy KA-6A. Total quantity over the years is probably over 2,000 aircraft and perhaps 10 million + in-flight refuelings. There are also foreign designed/modified aircraft from England, Holland (MDC-10) and USSR/ Russia that have been performing IFR missions for many years. Also, both the Boeing and Northrop Grumman/ EADS (Airbus) and tanker proposals are based on their respective civil airliner platforms that have millions of hours flight experience.

The Air Force started the replacement program of the KC-135 in 2002 as

a high priority need. This source selection and contract awarding process has been a disaster since then. The first effort in 2002 was a cockamamie idea of "leasing" rather than the traditional process of buying new tankers from Boeing based on their very successful 767 civilian airliner platform. Basing the tanker on the existing 767 platform is a great idea but leasing them would have been a financial disaster for the Air Force and taxpayer. Fortunately for both the Air Force and the DoD, Senator John McCain very publically, through Congress got the financial pitfalls of leasing scheme out in "the light of day" and this procurement method died quickly. The second attempt involved submitting a standard Request for Proposal (RFP) to the industry. Two manufacturers submitted bids, Boeing and Northrop/Grumman/EADS (Airbus), which became a very rancorous and lengthy process. It turned out the Chief Pentagon procurement official (a civilian) was feeding Airbus proprietary information to Boeing for personal gain. This DOD Contracting Officer and an executive VP at Boeing were subsequently convicted in Federal Court of felony crimes and served prison times. The award to Boeing of course was "thrown out" and the selection process had to be started all over again. The third try was with the same two bidders and after a lengthy and drawn out process they submitted new proposals. Northrop/Grumman/ EADS won the bid with their Airbus A-330 civil airliner as the basic platform. Boeing, as the loser, lawfully protested the award to Airbus. The DOD Inspector General (IG) and the Government Accounting Office (GAO) thus became involved and ruled that the Air Force and DOD had grossly mis-managed the selection process and threw out the award to Airbus. Back to "square one again." The DoD/Air Force again worked up a new RFP which supposedly had all the many faults corrected from the earlier failed proposal but they also changed a number of technical specifications for the tanker in the process. Airbus when they received this entirely new RFP said that their earlier winning proposal exceeded required aircraft and technical performance values but now it would no longer be cost effective for them with revised RFP changes this time. They therefore on March 8, 2010 notified the DoD and Air Force that they would not be submitting a bid this time. Now, by default, it appears the Boeing 767 civilian airliner based tanker is now the winner. The tanker source thus was not made on superiority technical merits, on cost or delivery criteria grounds but by default as noted. Late news flash: The DOD

and Air Force now may be considering allowing just EADS (Airbus) and without their earlier Northrop/Grumman partner participating a chance to re-bid!

From a personnel stand point, I feel that the Boeing 767 base-line aircraft is actually the best refueling tanker platform but this has come about for all the wrong reasons. I only hope that the Air Force will now get the new tanker combat operational quickly. Two other foreign nations, Japan and Italy, are today actually flying their KC-767 tankers. The USAF, may be in four more years making their first flight on a KC-767/KC-45.

MSgt. Norman E. Jukes,
USAFR (Ret.)
Burlingame, Calif.

After reading the Letters section of the April 2010 issue of the *Air Force Magazine*, my immediate reaction was to write to the organizations headquarters and demand a prorated refund of my life membership dues and cancellation of my membership. I am truly disgusted at the number of high ranking officers holding a clearly socialistic viewpoint who have written in to support the Obamunist takeover of one sixth of the US economy including the manufacturing, banking and education industries which are all falling with this Communist makeover of the United States. Realizing that these people must be in my age bracket or slightly younger, I understand that they have attended, and are products of, universities staffed with predominantly leftist professors who had molded their viewpoints at an impressionable age. Have they forgotten that we have all taken an oath to support and defend the Constitution?

SMSgt. William E. Powers,
USAF (Ret.)
Tucson, Ariz.

Listed below are corrections to picture word descriptions contained in the March & April AFA Magazine issues:

March 2010 Issue, p.24, F-15 picture:

1. Picture contains two F-15A or two F-15C jets because there are no Conformal Fuel Tanks (that the F-15E flies with) on those jets.

2. All F-15E jets are assigned to the active duty force; no F-15Es are assigned to the ANG.

April 2010 Issue, p.24, MQ-9 Reaper picture:

1. Load crew is NOT loading an AGM-114 Hellfire Missile onto the Reaper; they are loading a GBU-12 or GBU-49. Thanks.

Keith A. Ebert
Langley, Va

I find the letters to the editor sup-

porting ObamaCare, especially the ones stating that it will reduce costs, a little short on facts, math and logic. First, one third of the US already gets its medical coverage free through Medicaid or Medicare. Second, ObamaCare will add another sixth of the US with subsidized care. A little math will show that this means one half of America is paying the insurance for the other one half of America. Third, one half of America is not poor. What we have is half of America getting a free ride at the expense of the other half. While this is certainly going to reduce costs for 1/2 of America, it is definitely going to raise them for the other half. Everyone should pay their fair share except for the very poor (already covered by Medicaid). Furthermore, adding additional government deficit spending before the economy has recovered is a recipe for the economic stagflation of the 1970s.

William Thayer
San Diego

I enjoyed the excellent *Airpower Classics* review of the A-7 Corsair II in your March 2010 issue of *Air Force Magazine* [p. 80]; however, the A-7D depicted—#70-0970—was assigned to the 354th TFW, not the 345th, as stated. Keep up the good work,

Col. Rodney B. Beckman,
USAF (Ret.)
Monument, Colo.

I have been a member of the Air Force Association for more than 35 years now. Regarding "The Health Care Debate" It was refreshing to see such diverse comments from *Air Force Magazine* readers. I was pleasantly surprised. And, it was even more refreshing to see the majority of readers' comments in support (which included persuasive justifications) of the recent passage of one of the most significant pieces of legislation in decades which, I also believe, will enhance rather than hinder our national defense posture over the long term. "Ignorance Conveys Consent." If you turn a "blind eye" to this health care problem ... expecting it to go away or correct itself ... just the opposite is true. You've only reinforced the behavior (broken health care system) of those who exploit the system, at American taxpayer expense, and have given a "green light" to those "perpetrators" to continue exploit us. If it was *Air Force Magazine's* intention to "incite" critical thinking and lucid comment on one of our time's most important issues, you've succeeded beyond my wildest expectations.

MSgt. Randolph E. Whitmire,
USAF (Ret.)

Rochester Hills, Mich.

Bedcheck Charlie was still active in June/July 1953 in the Seoul area. I know since I was at Kimpo and have a picture of two of my crew standing next to a bomb crater which bisected a ramp triangle on the 67th TRW side of the field (no damage if I recall correctly). It was about 20' wide and 5" deep. It was also this time period that Guy Bordelon became the Navy Ace mentioned with five kills of three different type of prop planes. Those raids got me in trouble more that once for going under my bed instead of to a trench.

Maj. Robert L. Etter,
USAF (Ret.)
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Just read "Letters" in the April issue of AFA magazine. I can't say strongly enough how much I concur with the well written letters disagreeing with the "ObamaCare Vs Defense" editorial. There is an obvious political position in the editorial. Of course we all are concerned about the costs of the new health care law but it will take years to work through all the problems. As understood by all the writers, saying "no" and doing nothing would be the worst way to approach our nation's financial problems.

Brig. Gen. Milton E. Nelson,
USAF (Ret.)
San Antonio

It seems that few of your respondents regarding the ObamaCare debacle (April 2010) got the point: this grossly, overwhelmingly expensive, so-called, "health care bill" is nothing of the sort. It is, instead, a brazen attempt by the Leftist-Socialist segment of our "governing" bodies to gain even more control over the daily lives of Americans.

The Democrats have wanted and dreamed of this for decades; ever since FDR. Now, they think they have it, and unless we "correct" this extravaganza in November of this year, and in 2012, we will be stuck with it.

This is what they want: they are trying to nearly bankrupt this Nation's economy so they can install their own form of European-style socialism. Ironic, isn't it: much of Europe is trying to divorce themselves from this failed ideology, and we are stumbling along towards it. Luminaries such as Vladimir Putin and Fidel Castro have applauded these attempts--Putin saying, in effect, there is no reason for us to force America towards socialism, they're doing it all by themselves; and Castro applauding the Democrats' actions. Should that not be alarming enough?

As an aside, does anyone out there know exactly where, in our Constitution,

it says that health care is a "right?" I'll answer that: NOWHERE!

Some of your respondents quote statistics about deaths due to "lack" of health care, others "high expenses," yet I wonder if any know that most States--if not all--mandate health care for school-age children. Additionally, those--some four or five million, if memory serves--who do not want health care, are mostly young adults and instead elect to pay for it as needed

And what about those who, if they deny this care, will be fined (imprisoned?) for that denial? And will be investigated by America's new Gestapo, the IRS? And which agency will be in the process of hiring five or six thousand agents for that purpose!

Yes--our health care system does need overhaul. It is--and can be--expensive: research always is. Yet, why are other non-Americans crowding our medical offices to seek rapid solutions? As in the Prime Minister of Nova Scotia, recently, for a heart procedure? That he couldn't get in enough time to save his life in Canada? Examples abound.

Yeah, sure, there are solutions. Number One, and most egregious, TORT REFORM! Did anyone note that there are no such provisions in ObamaCare? Second, MEDICARE FRAUD! If those two difficulties had been addressed, we could fund health care for all at a fraction of what we are, or will be, paying.

So: those orange Kool-Aid drinkers amongst us think this is a "good thing" and can be solved by "government." Uh-huh. Just how much did the US Post Office lose last year? Somewhere around \$8 billion, if memory serves. And what about that icon of management efficiency, the IRS? I defy anyone to name a "government agency" that is the embodiment of fiscal competence: and yes, I include the military!

Given that our debt--mostly held by China--is around \$14 trillion--yep, trillion--what happens if or when they call in their markers? Or use black-mail--which has been and is being slyly attempted? Sure, I know we're joined at the hip, but is this what we want, beholden to some rigidly communist empire?

The ones I fear most for are our children and grandchildren, who will wind up being taxed and "inflated" to the max--for that, according to numerous economists, is the only way we can get out from under this egregious debt. Will they have it as good as we?

Beware: there are already rumblings of a VAT--"Value-Added-Tax"--such as is rampant in socialist Europe, to the tune of 16-20%. And that is a tax on EVERYthing, folks, instituted by the federal government, on top of what most States already impose. Swell.

God Help Us.

CW4 James P. Fazekas,
USA (Ret.)
Smyrna, DE

I really enjoyed the article in the April 2010 issue of *Air Force Magazine* "Commissioned In Hanoi" [p. 56] in which Leo Thorsness told the story of the battlefield commissions of the three enlisted POWs, SSgt. Arthur Cormier, Amn. Arthur Neil Black, and SSgt. William A. Robinson.

As the article pointed out, Black, Robinson, and Cormier were crewmen of rescue helicopters shot down in 1965. They were in two separate episodes that involved attempted rescues of F-105 pilots. Here's a summary of their stories that might be of interest to your readers.

Robinson was the Flight Engineer and Black the PJ of an HH-43B, "Duchy 41," that was shot down by automatic weapons fire during their attempted rescue of F-105 pilot Capt. Willis E. Forby, "Essex 04," downed by AAA on 20 Sept 1965. Both these men and their pilot (POW Capt. Tom Curtis) and copilot (1Lt Duane Martin, a POW who was killed by the Pathet Lao) were awarded the Air Force Cross for this mission. Forby, who was on TDY to Takhli with the 334 TFS from Seymour Johnson AFB, also became a POW.

Cormier was the PJ on CH-3C "Jolly Green 85" that was downed on 6 November 1965 while searching for F-105 pilot Lt. Col. George C. McCleary, "Oak 01", hit by a SAM and KIA the previous day. The helicopter pilot (Capt. Warren Lilly) and copilot (1 Lt. Jerry Singleton) also became POWs. Their Flight Engineer (SSgt. Berkeley Naugle) was rescued by a Navy helicopter. Col. McLeary was commander of the 357 TFS and was on TDY to Korat from McConnell AFB.

This is the background to the story "Commissioned In Hanoi." Thanks very much for publishing this uplifting article.

Lt. Col. W. Howard Plunkett,
USAF (Ret.)
Albuquerque, N.M.

I was astonished at the number of letters supporting Obamacare in your last issue. It appears that the supporters of the government takeover of our healthcare system organized a letter-writing campaign. The blizzard of bogus statistics supporting their position was mind boggling. Of course we all know that there are lies, damn lies, and statistics. The fact is, no one dies in this country because of a lack of health care. Even illegal aliens have no problem getting taken care of. The wild numbers thrown around about uninsured are just that. The real

number of uninsured is probably less than 10 million out of about 300 million people, and those people refuse to buy health insurance because they don't want to buy it.

We have the best medical care system in the world. It could sure be improved by injecting some free market ideas, like letting insurance companies sell health insurance across state lines and stopping states from dictating one-size-fits-all policies. The Obama plan will increase costs and decrease service. It will be the Post Office running your medical care, and God help us when it comes to pass.

J. J. Cook
Rockport, Tex.

The Air Force has been trying to get new tankers since 2003, and after two false starts, it appears that Boeing will now build them as a sole source supplier, which is a nightmare come true for the Air Force. Boeing holds all the cards affecting cost, schedule, and performance. Teams of USAF cost analysts will descend upon Boeing to scrub their proposal costs, but it will amount to an exercise in futility when compared to head-to-head competition.

Credit is due Northrop who recognized they couldn't win, because the RFP requirements reflected Boeing 767 specifications, but they didn't continue the protest game in the interest of USAF needs. As a taxpayer, I dislike what happened, but a remedy still exists. The contract to Boeing should require that Northrop be furnished Boeing data, and be licensed to build the 767, much like the Navy shipbuilding lead/follow yard concept. Competition during production routinely results in higher performance at lower costs with steeper learning curves achieved by both suppliers. Studies show cost savings will range from 10 to 50%.

By having two suppliers, the Air Force should get their tankers in half the time which is vital, because in recent years, depot maintenance work doubled and overhaul costs tripled on the KC-135.

During WWII, Consolidated Aircraft designed and built the B-24 Liberator bomber. To satisfy the Army Air Corps needs, Douglas Aircraft, North American Aviation, and Ford Motor Co. were all licensed to build the B-24. Ford operated the largest aircraft assembly plant in the world producing 650 B-24s a month.

Some would still like a contract split whereby USAF would have two unique planes, the Airbus and the 767 in their inventory, but this makes no sense at all. By building one plane, the 767, multibillion dollars would be saved in life cycle costs because pilots, maintainers, trainers, and logisticians need

only learn how to fly, repair, overhaul, and stock parts for one type of plane. Remember the life cycle for the KC-135 now exceeds 50 years.

Executing this plan would give the Air Force more leverage by checking a sole-source relationship, and fostering competition during the production phase. It's a win-win!

The writer is a retired Air Force brigadier general who served as mobilization assistant to the head of contracts for headquarters Air Force Logistics Command, and worked 30 years in defense subcontracting, retiring from Litton/Ingalls Shipbuilding as manager of a procurement department.

Brig. Gen. Don Roth,
USAFR (Ret.)
Gulf Shores, Ala.

Your article "ObamaCare vs Defence" certainly caught the attention of a variety of people who offered their opinions. I appreciate you printing their letters. This is certainly a volatile issue, and I'm one who agrees that health care reform is necessary. It's the manner in which it was done that bothers me. Back room deals at the last minute, it's almost like some in government were threatened. It was made to sound good, but I think we were told what we wanted to hear. My 3 biggest objections to the whole thing:

- 1-It was shoved down our throats,
- 2-The legality of it, and

- 3-Congress, the House and the Executive branch are exempt from having to be a part of it. If it's such a good program, why are they exempt from the program? That's my two cents.

Harold Bachman
Adrian, Mich.

I appreciated John T. Correll's article "MiG Alley" in the April 2010 issue but was very disappointed that, after naming various aircraft (jet and piston-engine powered) used during the Korean War era, Mr. Correll failed to mention the B-26 (A-26) Douglas Invader. The Douglas Invader faithfully served during WWII through to 1970 in various capacities. Too bad that Mr. Correll ignored a very effective and reliable attack/light bomber powered with two P&W R-2800 engines.

Kindly advise Mr. Correll. Thank you.
Donald S. Mullins
Sycamore, Ill.

In 1965 I was operations officer of a tactical reconnaissance task force in Viet Nam. Our RF-101s did a superb job of reconnaissance in the Hanoi area.

The headquarters at Saigon tried to use drones to do reconnaissance work. None of the drones came back.

Taking the pilot out of the aircraft appears to be a life saver today and an economical method of flying over the "battlefield."

However, controlling those unmanned aircraft systems over the Middle East from Nevada with data links, may permit the enemy to control our vehicles one day when they develop the capability of overriding our data links.

Also, today, in the Middle East, the enemy has no fighters to shoot down our unmanned aircraft. When the enemy does have fighter interceptors, our unmanned aircraft will be sitting ducks.

And, what happens when the enemy has antiaircraft artillery?...or surface-to-air missiles?

We need to put the pilot back in the cockpit and stop relying so heavily on vulnerable unmanned aircraft systems.

Lt. Col. Tony Weissgarber,
USAF (Ret.)
San Antonio

The story "Emergence of Smart Bombs" by John Correll was excellent and I read it with much interest. Actually the idea of using a laser for target marking and weapons delivery was first proposed by the late David Salonimer of the Army Missile Command, Huntsville. He sponsored two small R & D feasibility investigation contracts in 1964. One was awarded to North American, Autonetics division (the company noted in the article for their later work in this field on Paveway guidance) and one to RCA Aerospace Systems, Burlington, MA. At RCA, principal investigator Michael Cantella was the first to demonstrate feasibility: first in the laboratory and later in an airborne implementation. The demonstrations involved use of a gated image system (image orthicon TV camera) for a receiver with a ruby laser target marker. The use of an IR laser that came as a successful later development, was not possible in this pioneer work since TV camera tubes have poor sensitivity outside of the visible spectrum. The RCA/Cantella airborne system was flown in a Piper Apache aircraft in early 1965 and demonstrated for a few days at each of several Army research centers, and at Wright Field to Air Force personnel. I know this to be accurate information having been involved directly with both Mr. Salonimer and Mr. Cantella in this technology achievement. Fortunately as frequently the case in technology breakthroughs, creative follow-on workers grasp, adapt and carry new concepts to great distances, as was the case with Col. Davis and those that came later. (Mr. Cantella has remained active to this day in IR military tech-

nology; a renown consultant for many years at MIT Lincoln Laboratories.)

Paul Seeley,
PE (Ret.)
Wellesley, Mass.

I thoroughly enjoyed your article on the venerable KC-135 in the April issue. One small note however - the caption in the heading photo has the first KC-135A rolling out at Renton in 1954. In fact, that took place in 1956. The first flight of the KC-135A was on 31 August 1956, with service entry in 1957.

The progenitor of the KC-135, the Boeing 367-80, first flew on 15 July 1954.

Jennings Heilig
Newport, Va.

I enjoyed reading John T. Correll's article on the MiG 15. For your information, I got to fly the MiG 15 eleven flights on Okinawa firing the guns and checking out the gunsights. Gen Boyd wrote in "Other Voices" in my book "Yeager."

As a resource that will be helpful re the MiG 15, I have attached the chapter re what we found out about the MiG 15, what Gen Boyd says about the MiG 15 and what he says about me after I tested it.

Not in this chapter in my book is: The US had dropped leaflets over North Korea (in Korean) that effectively said, "If you are interested in \$100,000 and becoming a US citizen, all you have to do is fly a MiG 15 to South Korea." One fellow did. General Chuck Yeager.

Victoria Yeager
Penn Valley, Calif.

Not to split hairs, but where you say two F-15s "conducted the first live-fire gunnery mission over a range in the state"...not true!

Elmendorf based F15s routinely fired on an acoustically towed target carried by other F-15s overland in the mid-80s. I recall we terminated the program due to relatively low training benefits and costs: we kept losing the targets from either being shot off or inadvertent burning of the cable when the tow aircraft pulled too many G's and/or tapped the burner; not that the tow pilots developed this as a technique :) PS The actual press release from the 3rd Wing said "their" first Alaska overland firing.

Maj. Gen. Mark Matthews
Baghdad, Iraq

I was delighted to find the article about Francis Gary Powers in the April issue of AFA Magazine. Even better was that I had recently met Gary Powers of Elizabeth, Colorado, a nephew of

our Air Force legend, and was able to give him a thrill when I presented him with my copy of the April issue. He plans to share it with other members of his family.

Keep up the great work,
Maj. Fred Beisser,
USAF (Ret.)
Parker, Colo.

In response to the letters you printed last month on the Health Care Debate.

One letter states "...the irresponsible course on health care is the one that does nothing." While I understand the position with respect to the inherent association to defense spending, I fail to understand how recreating the entire system is anymore responsible. I fail to understand how a Democrat majority in both houses would vote in a bill without reading it which is particularly puzzling when you consider the vast majority of these learned Senators and Representatives are lawyers. This is compounded by a President, who then signed this travesty into law, without reading it (which seems to be a trend). With respect, the irresponsible course on health care just happened.

Another says our health care system isn't a very good one. If that's the case then why do the VIPs of virtually every country on this planet come to the United States to get their medical treatment when they really need it? I will not argue that our system does not have problems as that would be a blatant falsehood. However, whatever problem(s) exist(s) within the health system should have been addressed individually. By replacing the system in toto there is no method to measure any success that may occur as there is no metric to measure it against (which may have been the point all along). Rule number 1 in analyzing and improving an existing business process is to change ONE thing at a time.

The arguments pursued in another letter addressed only reform of the insurance industry. However, the bill doesn't necessarily do that...remember, our elected representatives (who voted for it) didn't read it. You might also keep in mind that while the promises about the bill mention bringing some 34 million into the health care system there has not been one word on whether or not any of those folks (or anybody for that matter) will actually receive that care. An ugly scenario would be that while 20,000 Americans may not die due to "lack of access" they may still die from "lack of treatment" and that means status quo.

Does the health care system need reform? Yes, it does. However, I would argue that you cannot fix a problem without knowing what the problem is

and the only thing we've been told is "it's broke." So let me leave you with a tidbit I got from an officer that I once served under.

"Don't waste my time telling me there IS a problem, tell me WHAT the damn problem is and how you intend to fix it!"
MSGt. C J Messick,
USAF (Ret.)
Cibolo, Tex.