He served four years as Air Force Chief of Staff and another four as Joint Chiefs Chairman during a difficult and tumultuous period for the Air Force and Pentagon. Then, at retirement, he created an even larger legacy.

IN 1982, Gen. David C. Jones was credited with firing the first shot in the Department of Defense reorganization that eventually led to passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. After decades of failed attempts to increase jointness among the services, his "historic stand" in front of Congress—as described by James R. Locher III in *Victory on the Potomac*—was the new beginning of the daunting effort.

Years later, retired Gen. Colin L. Powell stated that the act "for the first time, gave the Chairman of the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] real power."

While Jones himself lacked joint tours in his career, that didn't diminish his recognition of the importance of fighting jointly. This belief served him well as he progressed through the military ranks, concluding a 40-year career as the nation's third Air Force officer to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

During Jones' tours as Air Force Chief of Staff and JCS Chairman, from 1974 to 1982, the military faced considerable challenges following the Vietnam War. According to a 1977 *Air Force Magazine* article by Air Force Secretary John C. Stetson, USAF was substantially decreasing personnel and aircraft and cutting flying hours by 50 percent.

Furthermore, the Soviet Union counterbalanced reductions in its nuclear weapons by increasing its conventional capabilities, which it used to invade Afghanistan in 1979.

Born on July 9, 1921, in South Dakota, Jones grew up in Minot, N.D. A stopover by Air Corps aircraft allowed him to talk with the crew, thereby planting his desire to fly. It wasn't until college, though, that Jones began flying through the Civilian Pilot Training program, which was reorganized after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Jones enlisted in the Army Air Forces' Aviation Cadet Program, eventually becoming an instructor, and then piloting the B-17 when World War II ended.

In the Korean War, Jones flew the B-29. He led his crew on several bombing sorties striking bridges, enemy troops, and railways with excellent results. He completed 29 missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross before returning to March AFB, Calif. He later commanded both a KC-97 and B-47 squadron before departing for Strategic Air Command headquarters.

LEARNING FROM LEMAY

At SAC, Jones delivered a briefing to Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, who was so impressed with it that LeMay chose Jones as his aide-de-camp. LeMay later wrote about Jones in an Officer Effectiveness Report: "He has the will and motivation to be one of our outstanding leaders in the future."

Jones paid back this opportunity by similarly mentoring many well-known

David Jones during Civilian Pilot Training at Grand Forks, N.D., in 1941. He then went into the Aviation Cadet program.

Air Force leaders, such as Gen. Wilbur L. "Bill" Creech, who said he "admired the way he [Jones] challenged and overcame convention."

Jones was then offered a vice wing commander position, but opted instead to become a wing director of materiel, responsible for maintaining nearly 100 B-52 and KC-135 aircraft.

After graduating from the National War College in 1960, Jones reported to the Air Staff, where LeMay was Air Force Chief of Staff beginning in 1961.

Colonel Jones' new job entailed establishing requirements for the B-70 Valkyrie bomber, a position that involved briefing the department's most senior leaders. During one presentation, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara remarked that it was "the finest" weapons system briefing to date. McNamara then informed Jones he intended to cancel the program.

Later, Congress summoned Jones to give the same brief. McNamara, though, had changed the text but not the charts, resulting in a disconnected presentation. When asked by Sen. A. Willis Robertson of West Virginia if OSD had modified the briefing, Jones answered truthfully. This began a face-off between Congress and McNamara about whether to keep developing or cancel the Valkyrie.

At the time, Harold Brown was one of the Secretary's "whiz kids" who worked with Jones on the briefing and took note of the colonel's virtues. In *American Generalship,* Edgar F. Puryear Jr. acknowledged that Jones likely lost an initial promotion to brigadier general because the briefing to Congress had defied OSD leadership.

After this controversy and four years in the Pentagon, Jones made another unusual career-broadening move. Tactical Air Command chief Gen. Walter C. Sweeney Jr. wanted Jones to lead the newly reactivated 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing, flying the brand-new F-4 Phantom. At the time, there were few transfers between bombers and fighters, due to different cultures and the needed piloting abilities. Recognizing this point, Sweeney directed Jones to train in the F-100 first because it was a challenging aircraft to fly.

Jones would later reflect on this move, stating, "I had already flown a lot in the B-52. … To go into … Tactical Air Command and into fighters would have been somewhat more risky, but much better … to learn a lot about the Air Force."

As wing commander, his biggest success was in rebuilding the unit from scratch while integrating the new Phantom. Jones finished his tour with an "absolutely superior" ranking from Sweeney, who gave him a remarkable endorsement. At the time, many in TAC viewed Jones as a "SAC-type," not welcome in a predominantly fighter-focused command.

JONES

By John Edwards

USAF photos

Jones transferred to Vietnam in 1969 as deputy commander for operations at headquarters, 7th Air Force. He was a leading architect of Operation Commando Hunt, the effort to disrupt enemy supply lines along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Jones oversaw the operational control of 17 wings and 10 groups and the tactical control of Navy and Marine aircraft.

While in Vietnam, Jones experienced firsthand the difficulty of integrating joint airpower without the authorities of a modern day joint force air component commander, or JFACC.

Returning to the United States, Jones assumed command of 2nd Air Force, where he had to lead the organization through the social challenges and racial unrest of the time. This issue became reality during a visit to Castle AFB, Calif. Jones recalled the base commander waking him at 2:30 a.m. to inform him that a group of black airmen had barricaded themselves in the service club, demanding that Jones see them.

After contemplating the situation, Jones determined he would meet with the airmen, against the advice of the wing commander. Harold W. Todd, Jones' aide at the time, who later became a major general, recalled that he feared for his boss' life.

Jones listened intently to the concerns of the 200 black airmen assembled. Before departing at sunrise, he reminded everyone of their military responsibilities and held a meeting later that same day to respond to their concerns.

Jones returned two weeks later to ensure the airmen had dutifully resumed their work and checked that the base's leadership had addressed the problems. When he discovered the base commander had not, Jones relieved him of command.

Jones was serious about leadership's active role in solving problems before they could affect the mission and made it a point to all his commanders about the importance of "open communications" in any organization. Many years later, Todd recalled that Jones was a compassionate leader who "genuinely cared for people."

Jones became vice commander of US Air Forces in Europe, focusing on reorganizing NATO's air forces. Then-Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger decided Jones was the right man to replace Gen. George S. Brown as Air Force Chief of Staff.

Jones returned from Europe in 1974 to become the ninth Chief of Staff of the Air Force, shortly before President Nixon resigned from office. The next year, North Vietnam invaded and overran South Vietnam, thus ending a difficult conflict that had consumed American attention, resources, and lives for more than a decade. Its repercussions would be felt for several years.

One of the hard lessons of the Vietnam War was the significant decrease in the US-enemy air-to-air kill ratio, which plummeted from 10-to-one during the Korean War to one-to-one in 1972.

A classified study named Project Red Baron identified several causes of the degraded kill ratio that Col. Richard "Moody" Suter would later use to develop the Red Flag exercise. Suter briefed the concept to Jones, who immediately recognized its value. Although the projected accident rates from such a program gave Jones and TAC commander Gen. Robert J. Dixon pause, they both realized the long-term benefits of such an exercise.

The first Red Flag occurred in November 1975. In a letter to the CJCS, Jones excitedly wrote, "Our first go at Red Flag ... was even better than we expected. ... I believe it holds great promise for a new era of realistic combat training and we are going to push it hard."

Although the Air Force's accident rate climbed the first few years of Red Flag, Jones remained steadfast in his support to continue the highly realistic exercise. In his book *Sierra Hotel,* C. R. Anderegg writes that the deputy chief of staff for plans and operations, Lt. Gen. Joseph G. Wilson, exclaimed, "At least we'll lose 'em doing smart things; right now we're losing them doing dumb things!"

Jones also oversaw improvements in the working relationship between the Air Force, Army, and Navy. This was timely as emerging concepts of air and ground integration would eventually result in the AirLand Battle Doctrine to oppose the growing Soviet conventional threat to Central Europe.

In supporting this effort, Jones set the tone for Air Force acquisition when he said in a 1975 *Air Force Magazine* interview, "Our first job … is to help blunt and stop the [Soviet] armored thrust." As a result, the Air Force would build the A-10 as a survivable tank killer,

Left: Jones in the Korean War, after receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross as a B-29 pilot. Center: Jones (fourth from right) and B-52 crew members at Barksdale AFB, La., where he commanded 2nd Air Force. Right: As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Jones meets with the Army's 25th Infantry Division troops in Hawaii in 1979.

the EF-111 to counter mobile Soviet air defenses, and the E-3 AWACS to provide a picture of the airborne battlefield.

In fighting the Soviet maritime threat, Jones formalized an agreement with the Navy for Air Force B-52s to conduct sea surveillance and, later, anti-ship missions with the Harpoon missile. Replacing the venerable B-52 was also a challenge for Jones, who was an ardent supporter of the B-1. However, the Carter Administration canceled the B-1, with Jones' acquiescence. Unlike LeMay, who had appealed to Congress after the decision to cancel the B-70, Jones stood by Carter's decision, stating, "If we in the military ever get to the point where one weapon system means life or death to this country, then we have done [it] a disservice."

Although some on Capitol Hill and within the Air Force attacked Jones for not fighting harder for the program publicly, by not challenging the President's decision, Jones exemplified the proper order of the civil-military relationship. More tellingly, Jones' position was pragmatic, as he was aware of top-secret programs in development that included the Air Launched Cruise Missile and what would become the F-117 stealth fighter program.

Yet critics of his decision continued to raise the issue when Carter nominated Jones to be the next JCS Chairman.

FLEXIBILITY, INTEGRITY

When Jones became the JCS Chairman in 1978, some wrote that he was a "political" general who would be pliable to an Administration determined to reduce military spending. Yet, in Jones, Carter recognized a leader who possessed the flexibility to adjust to the new national security environment. Furthermore, Harold Brown, who had wrestled with Jones over the B-70 program nearly two decades earlier and had witnessed firsthand Jones' integrity and professionalism, was now Defense Secretary. A good working relationship would be crucial as the Secretary and Chairman confronted the "hollow force" and continued threats abroad.

Soon after, Iranian students in November 1979 stormed the US Embassy in Tehran, taking dozens of Americans hostage. In planning the daring but unsuccessful Operation Eagle Claw rescue mission, Jones created a special group on the Joint Staff, because no organization existed at the time that could integrate the various units needed for it. Nevertheless, the April 1980 rescue was hampered by separated training, lack of established relationships, provisional command structures, and tactical complexity.

At the highest levels, Jones wanted a clear chain of command. He later recalled, "I told General Vaught [Army Gen. James B. Vaught, the overall commander of the operation] that his primary responsibility was to make the mission successful. If he needed help from us, ask for it. We would like to be kept informed but not at the expense of his performing the mission. I told President Carter that as I got information I would inform him. … I would not bug Vaught. The President didn't bug me."

During the operation, three of the eight helicopters were unable to continue the mission, and the rescue team commander recommended a mission abort. When the call reached Jones, he agreed with the field commander, then notified Carter, who approved terminating the effort.

Unfortunately on the return mission, one of helicopters crashed into a parked C-130, engulfing both in flames and killing eight personnel. Although the disastrous ending was not a direct result of the abort decision, the investigating board identified several issues that Jones wanted solved, to include breakdowns in planning, training, and coordination among all the services.

Realizing that fundamental organizational changes would take time and concerted effort, Jones established the Chairman's Special Study Group to examine joint problems within the military. The studies group concluded the JCS corporate body needed to be more joint minded and less service oriented, but the group's findings were not a mandate for the services to change. In fact, Locher wrote that two services were preparing to block Jones from implementing any of the study's recommendations, highlighting its potential to threaten existing service parochialism.

Further, the new Defense Secretary, Caspar W. Weinberger, had little interest in defense reform as he was focused on implementing President Reagan's military buildup. With little support from OSD and obstinacy by the services, Jones sought another venue to change the US military.

Left: At an Air Force Association event in 1975 Jones, then USAF Chief of Staff, announces an agreement between the Air Force and the Navy covering sea control missions. Below: The shift in favor of defense reorganization began with Jones and gained further momentum when Sen. Barry Goldwater (left) became Senate Armed Services Committee chairman. The Arizona Republican made defense reform a top priority.

On Feb. 3, 1982, Jones testified on defense reorganization to the House Armed Services Committee, where he dropped his "bombshell," as Locher put it.

Jones made five recommendations: Increase the CJCS' role, limit service staff parochial influence, ensure the JCS is fully staffed, expand the powers of the geographic commanders in chief, and improve joint duty preparations and rewards. After hearing Jones' testimony, Rep. Ike Skelton (D-Mo.) told him,"This seems to me to be a rather courageous thing for you to do. I think it is something that should get the utmost attention from this committee and from Congress."

After serving a four-year term as Joint Chiefs Chairman, Jones retired from Active Duty in June 1982.

In retirement, Jones avoided serving on the boards of major defense organizations, to maintain his integrity in fighting for defense reform. Nonetheless, his subsequent testimony and advocacy was attacked by some service chiefs and Secretaries who viewed reform as detrimental to service prerogatives.

Further pressure to change occurred in 1983 when the US intervened in Grenada, forcing the Pentagon to form once again an ad hoc combined joint task force. While successful, Operation Urgent Fury highlighted several deficiencies in joint operations—unfortunately, some that were previous lessons gone unlearned.

The after-action report did reveal the effectiveness of a small number of multiservice planners who had previous joint experience. With another military operation exposing weakness in joint combat, the push for reform was reaching an apex.

Finally, in September 1986, Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act that Reagan signed into law Oct. 1. According to Locher, Goldwater-Nichols "finally corrected the distortions of power and influence ... that [had] troubled US security for 40 years" after World War II.

Goldwater-Nichols passed its first test in 1989 during Operation Just Cause in Panama and faced a larger trial in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Reflecting on the success of integrating airpower from all the services in Desert Storm, the combined force air component commander, Gen. Charles A. Horner, stated the act had a "deep and far-reaching effect on our military."

Jones' accomplishments were somewhat overshadowed by the events of his era—the loss of Vietnam, the "hollow force," and Operation Eagle Claw, to name a few. Yet those challenges are not unlike the ones confronting the Air Force and the US military today.

Faced with internal fiscal pressures and external security threats, Jones worked assiduously to ensure the US military was trained, organized, and equipped to fight. He had a vision for what the military must do to better prepare for future conflicts. While he began the effort to make the US military operate more jointly, Jones should be remembered most for his deft balance of mission and people.

Jones stated in *Air Force Magazine* in 1978, "The real Air Force is our people—men and women, Active [Duty] and reserve, uniformed and civilian—living by an extraordinary set of standards and sacrifices, breathing life into the cold metal of our nation's arsenal."

David C. Jones died on Aug. 10, 2013, and was laid to rest last October at Arlington National Cemetery. The defense reforms that he initiated more than three decades earlier fundamentally reformed the Defense Department, interservice cooperation, and the very concept of joint operations. ■

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