

## Chicken or Egg?

As usual, the August issue of *Air Force Magazine* was a great read.

Since I did a tour in Vietnam in the F-100, I found the article "Vietnamization" very interesting [p. 60]. As usual for your august (pun intended) publication, the article was well-researched and very well-written. However, there was a tiny error that is commonly made. Part of a sentence from p. 62 states, "A-37 attack aircraft and F-5 fighters, both modifications of US Air Force trainers." I do believe that the A-37 was a modification of the T-37; however, this is not true of the F-5.

The F-5 was developed by Northrop as a lightweight, easily maintained, relatively inexpensive supersonic jet fighter. It was aimed at the foreign market. I believe it was called the N-156 by Northrop. Since the US was not really interested in the aircraft, the US government passed on acquiring any. This was a big turnoff to the many foreign nations interested in the jet. As I remember, no foreign governments would order an aircraft that the US government had no interest in. At that point, Northrop took that same basic design and created the T-38 and offered it to the US as a trainer. Well, we all know how well that turned out. This lit a fire under the F-5 concept, and something like 25 countries (not sure of that number) and USAF purchased some variant of the F-5.

Anyway, the point of this letter is that the F-5 did not evolve from the T-38, but the T-38 evolved from the F-5.

Charlie Friend  
Alamogordo, N.M.

## WRITE TO US

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—The Editors

*The aircraft began as a fighter project at Northrop in the 1950s. That design, the N-156, was adapted as a candidate to replace the Air Force's Lockheed T-33 jet trainer. As the T-38 trainer, the aircraft first flew in 1959 and entered service with Air Training Command in 1961. The F-5 first flew in July 1963 with first deliveries to foreign military sales in 1964.—John T. Correll*

After serving as a forward air controller in Vietnam flying the O-1 Bird Dog (and receiving the Silver Star for a mission assisting a squad of Army Rangers) my father (then-Lt. Col. Jim Gardner) later served in the Office of Vietnamization at the Pentagon under Col. (later General) William Moore.

Dad retired in 1983 as a major general and the Military Airlift Command chief of staff. It took a long time to engage Dad about his time in Vietnam. He would have enjoyed this article, but he retired from this life, passing away 23 July 2016.

Col. Scott Gardner,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Hanahan, S.C.

## Not a Pretty Picture

The article about Homestead Air Force Base's encounter with Hurricane Andrew hit my memory bank's home on several fronts ["When Andrew Hammered Homestead," August, p. 52].

Two days before the hurricane struck, I was an action officer on an advance team to work out the details of deploying a few B-52G bombers to Homestead from Wurtsmith AFB, Mich., for fighter intercept training and dissimilar airfield experience. Shortly before my team was to depart, we were notified by the Homestead command post their base was being evacuated and recommended we cancel our visit.

I was disappointed but understood the seriousness of the situation. I used to live in Homestead base housing as a dependent, attended high school and junior college, and met my wife, who was also a dependent, there. My part-time job at the base commissary as a bag boy funded the majority of my college education. These were my old stomping grounds. I looked forward to the opportunity to revisit the base and community and show my team around

while we worked on the planning for the future deployment.

My visit didn't happen until 1997 when my wife and I attended our 25th year high school reunion. A few of our friends shared harrowing and almost unbelievable stories of the hurricane and its aftermath. I was anxious to see the base, which my wife and I did on our last day there. The media coverage of the devastation caused by Andrew had shocked me. I was in for another shock when I saw what was left of the commissary, officers club, barracks, and other structures. Years had passed and the place still looked like a war zone. Wrecked buildings and piles of debris still littered the landscape.

Eventually, we drove out to the base housing area where an almost surreal scene met us. The neighborhood roads, a few big trees, and driveways were still there, but the houses and foundations had been completely removed. It was a ghost town without any buildings. My wife and I walked about in total disbelief where we had lived for years. Past memories and the reality of the present does not always paint a nice picture.

Maj. Robert Kadechka,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Tampa, Fla.

## INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

Aviall .....	27
Boeing .....	3, 11, 15, 41,
Bradford Exchange.....	109
DRS.....	13
General Atomics.....	35
Gulfstream .....	7
Harris .....	29
L3.....	21
Lockheed Martin.....	15
Mercer.....	64
Parker Aerospace .....	19
Pratt & Whitney .....	17
Raytheon.....	Cover II, 1
Rolls Royce .....	9
Sierra Nevada .....	Cover IV
Spirit Air.....	57
Textron .....	63
USAA .....	83
UTC.....	Cover III

AFA Monthly Giving .....	103
AFA Membership.....	78
Air Warfare Symposium.....	111



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## Take the Past Out of the Future

I'm replying to the editorial about Guard modernization presented in the August 2017 issue ["Editorial: The Bumpy Road to Guard Modernization," p. 4]. The editor again bemoans the fact that Michigan Air Guard units have an uncertain future and lists their past as evidence of "long-term instability." I couldn't agree more and say, "Welcome to the club." [In a previous letter to the editor, I] directly cited the turmoil caused by the lack of a coherent airpower strategy and the impact it has had on A-10 squadrons in Michigan and Indiana over the last 35 years. The continuing waste of taxpayer money at both the federal and state level is infuriating. The Guard is part of the solution and part of the problem and will continue to be as long as politicians continue to put local dollars ahead of national defense. One of our past CSAF continually tried to close excess basing and met with little success. Selfridge's 100-year past should not be part of the equation when the choices are as extreme as closing a squadron or giving it F-35s. The expense of maintaining a modern Air Force demands a financial strategy that provides for a strong national defense and not a "jobs program" manipulated by local, state, and national officials.

Dan Hamill  
Dowagiac, Mich.

My Georgia ANG wing endured moving 110 miles from Dobbins ARB to Robins AFB and converting from F-15A/B fighters to B-1B bombers in 1996, only to lose the bombers and be threatened with dissolution in 2002 before converting to the E-8C JSTARS. This latter conversion cost those of us in the weapons loading career field our jobs, and I eventually

transferred to neighboring South Carolina and retired from the highly stable 169th FW and its F-16CJs six years ago.

I wonder if those making these decisions realize that Guardsmen aren't interchangeable pegs to slot into moving holes. We have ties to communities, cross-train into new career fields only with difficulty, and hold a wealth of institutional experience that can easily be destroyed. I witnessed firsthand just how good an ANG wing can be if allowed to have some stability—and how fragile that excellence can be.

MSgt. Bill Brockman,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Atlanta

## ISR Review

Your article "ISR Explosion" (July 2017, p. 48) was an astonishing review of the enormous technological advances and extant capabilities now available to USAF planners, operators, and intelligence specialists. As one who remembers (not fondly) the bad ol' days of "green doors," arbitrary compartments, information restrictions, and even name-calling, I found your piece both mesmerizing and even a bit inspirational.

I know there are probably too many heroes (plus a few visionaries) to list for their well-deserved credit in pushing—or sometimes forcing—this revolution in USAF capabilities, but I wish a few had been named. They persevered even after being booed in some of the 1970s and 1980s nonattribution lectures I attended. The list would certainly include key leaders in OSD (you did mention Mr. Gates), CIA, and even a few of our friends in Congress.

Col. Evan H. Parrott,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Ashburn, Va.

## SENIOR STAFF CHANGES

**RETIREMENTS:** Lt. Gen. Michelle D. **Johnson**, Maj. Gen. Darryl W. **Burke**, Maj. Gen. Michael E. **Fortney**, Maj. Gen. Andrew M. **Mueller**, Maj. Gen. Margaret B. **Poore**, Maj. Gen. Thomas J. **Trask**, Maj. Gen. Timothy M. **Zadalis**, Brig. Gen. Robert G. **Armfield**, Brig. Gen. Ronald **Buckley**, Brig. Gen. Paul A. **Welch**.

**CONFIRMATION: To Be Major General:** Mark D. **Camerer**.

**NOMINATIONS: To be Major General:** Sam C. **Barrett**.  
**To be ANG Major General:** Anthony J. **Carrelli**.