

Whither the C-145

I always look forward to receiving the latest iteration of AFA's timely "USAF Almanac" and have relied on it as a trusted source for pertinent facts and figures throughout my Air Force career [May, p. 34]. Having been involved in a distant way with an Air Force special ops unit with a rich combat history, I was sad to read not long ago that they recently sent their MC-130s to the Boneyard, replacing them with a new airlifter identified only as the C-145A. I retired a decade or so ago and am no longer as knowledgeable as I once was, so I looked up the C-145A online. Imagine my surprise when I discovered this airplane to be nothing more than a Polish knockoff of a smallish twin-engine Russian turboprop. In USAF livery no less. Out of curiosity, I checked my new almanac when it came in the mail today only to find the C-145A conspicuous in its absence. Obviously it exists in the US Air Force inventory because I have seen images of it, and the unit in question has released that they soon will be flying it. So is this an intentional editorial omission on *Air Force Magazine's* part or do you not include foreign-built aircraft in the almanac by choice or, just perhaps, are you as ashamed as I am that we are flying this thing? It is bad enough that what was once the greatest air force the world has ever seen supplies new-build combat aircraft to nations that are our friends only when they want to be while our own crews are left to fly into harm's way in airplanes that are significantly older and more tired, but to think that we have reduced ourselves to acquiring and operating something like these one-off Antonovs just so that we will have something to fly, well, it boggles my mind. Please tell me I am wrong.

Col. Robert D. Coffman,
USAF (Ret.)
Rome, Ga.

■ *We did not include the C-145 in our USAF Almanac's "Gallery of Weapons" because although it is being flown by Air Force Special Operations Command and Air Reserve Components, it is not actually in the USAF inventory; it is in the US Special Operations Command inventory.*

AFSOC has, in the past, asked us specifically not to include the nonstandard aviation aircraft that it was flying but did not own.—THE EDITORS

In reviewing my recently received "2013 USAF Almanac," p. 79, I find it humorous that you placed Channel Islands ANG, home of the 146th Airlift Wing, on Catalina Island. The facility is actually on the mainland of California in Ventura County, next door to NAS Point Mugu, Naval Base Ventura County.

Another discrepancy I find is that Fresno Yosemite Airport, home of the 144th Fighter Wing is located farther south in the county of Fresno of the Central Valley of California. Your map-maker appears to have located it in Stanislaus County, two counties north.

Lt. Col. George B. Cardwell III,
USAF (Ret.)
Camarillo, Calif.

I just received my 2013 Almanac in the mail and found a small error on p. 100 ["*Gallery of Aircraft*," May]. The T-53s that the Air Force Academy now flies do not have any back seats, so accommodations should be "two, side by side" and not include the "plus three passengers." In order to meet contract performance requirements at high altitude in Colorado, Cirrus bid, sold, and delivered the airplanes without any back seats.

Just some trivia to pass along.

Lt. Col. Larry Brown,
USAF (Ret.)
Colorado Springs, Colo.

I am writing regarding the May 2013 issue listing Air Force aces ["*Guide to Aces and Heroes*," p. 119].

My brother George was credited by Eighth Air Force as a nine airplane ace as a result of four enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground. The magazine staff has told me that, for technical reasons, those four kills were not included in the May issue. Your printing of this letter is the least you can do to correct the list.

It was well known that ground attacks on enemy airfields were far more dangerous than aerial combat. One of my brother's reports describes flying at ground level [and] firing at an aircraft parked under trees. He could have been shot down by soldiers nearby. Unfortunately, I am sure there are other Eighth Air Force aces not named because of less than five air kills. Please do something.

Lt. Col. Robert Vanden-Heuvel,
USAF (Ret.)
Shalimar, Fla.

■ *We must use the official Air Force record for aces that is maintained by the Air Force Historical Research Agency. AFHRA acknowledges, as we do in the introduction to our aces listing, that the World War II Eighth Air Force did provide some data on air-to-ground*

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kills, but other numbered air forces did not. Consequently, the Air Force limits its official recognition of World War II aces to air-to-air victories.—THE EDITORS

Aardvark Add-ons

Thank you for including the F-111 in the "Airpower Classics" [May, p. 144]. Having served as a WSO in the D, E, and F models from 1983 to 1991, I've been waiting for it for some time now. There are a few statements in the article that are incorrect. Mr. Boyne writes, "The F-111 also had an advanced AN/AVQ-26 Paveway electronic system for flight at extremely low level, at night, and in poor weather." The F-111F was the only variant equipped with Paveway, which was an IR imaging system with a laser designator which allowed the F-111F to employ laser guided munitions which is mentioned in the Interesting Facts section about the 1991 Gulf War. The system which allowed all variants of the F-111 to fly at low level at night and in poor weather was the terrain following radar system which could be coupled with the autopilot. I also believe there is some confusion about the ordnance load capability as it is stated that the F-111 was capable of carrying up to 32,500 pounds of nuclear or conventional ordnance. The F-111 weighed in at ~50,000 pounds empty and carried 32,500 pounds of fuel internally, the maximum gross weight for takeoff was 100,000 pounds if I remember correctly so the maximum weight of ordnance would be just shy of 18,000 pounds. One more thing, all of the 20 mm cannons had been removed from all variants of the F-111 before my initial assignment to the F-111D at Cannon Air Force Base in 1983.

Lt. Col. Greg Nowell,
USAF (Ret.)
Stafford, Va.

■ *Reality splits the difference: The F-111's external weapons load was 25,000 pounds.*—THE EDITORS

Yes, Retraction

Reference to the letter in the May issue of Air Force Magazine from retired Maj. Gen. Ken Russell on the P-51H ["Letters: No Retraction," p. 12].

The P-51H was built with a retractable tail wheel in the 1944 time frame. A problem did develop with the failure of the tail wheel shock strut piston bearing retaining nut. There were cast aluminum nuts which caused this failure. The machined aluminum nuts fixed this problem. The easy fix was to keep them down. We flew the H model in the 82nd Fighter Group at Manchester,

N.H., in the 1947-49 time frame with negligible problems. I further checked with the P-51 experts at Stallion 51 Corp., Kissimmee, Fla., who have over 15,000 hours in Mustangs and they too verified this information on the H. Further, the P-51H morphed into the F-82. Tail wheels all retractable.

Col. Ray Kleber,
USAF (Ret.)
Goldsboro, N.C.

More Info, Stat

Buried in the back pages of my morning newspapers were these short blurbs of another "accident" that certainly deserves a lot more space than given ["Air Force World: Three Airmen Die in KC-135 Crash," June, p. 16]. You and I know the long history of the KC-135 that replaced the KC-97 back in the late '50s. Recent information from various sources reflects some serious aging problems with some of these aircraft and there was no indication of this one's age. I am sure the missing crew members' families were notified in due course as is normal, but we old tanker pilots deserve better than two small blurbs on the back pages of newspapers.

My suggestion: The Discovery Channel on TV carries a super great program called "Air Crash Disasters" in which commercial air crashes are fully covered, including background information on the aircrew and events leading up to the crash. I realize that many military crashes are classified and this would preclude having it aired on TV; however, in cases like this one, the general public is fully aware of much of the background data like the presence of the KC-135s in the Afghanistan area of operations, and the background data on this crash could provide valuable information for other pilots flying the KCs and commercial models of the same basic aircraft. Let's hear about the basics behind the event like crew rest, food diets, time in theater, living standards, pilot times, and experience, etc., not only in this magazine but in the "Air Crash Disasters" program on Discovery Channel.

Also of interest is the fact that "we the people" are all paying for it in the first place so essentially then WE have a need to know the full details.

Lt. Col. Rolland S. Freeman,
USAF (Ret.)
Longboat Key, Fla.

■ *Much of this information can be found in USAF's accident investigation reports. You can find the publically released reports on our website at www.airforcemag.com.*—THE EDITORS

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Educate the public on the critical need for unmatched aerospace power and a technically superior workforce to ensure US national security.

Advocate for aerospace power and STEM education.

Support the Total Air Force family and promote aerospace education.

Education, Shmeducation

I will tell you how to save USAF millions of dollars, right now, that can be put toward more important operational necessities like defending the United States [*"Moving Into Sequestration," April, p. 52*].

Close Maxwell Air Force Base! I realize bases can't be closed without congressional approval, so let's do the next best thing that will improve operational readiness and save USAF millions of dollars that it can now spend on flight training and operational flying, the real mission of the Air Force. Why are we cutting operational funding when we should be cutting all nonessential support funding for schools like SOS and Air Command and Staff College?

Close and dismantle the Squadron Officer School and the Air Command and Staff College. These schools contribute nothing to operational readiness and never have.

In fairness, War College and National Security Management have value for senior officers transitioning from "operational" to "strategic" roles and assignments, i.e., O-5 to O-6 and above. This is still necessary training for our senior leaders, but even these functions could be combined with the Navy or Army War Colleges. All that

is needed are three tracks, one each for USAF, USN, and USA. Thankfully the Navy has no equivalent to SOS and Air Command and Staff. If these two courses for senior officers are combined with Navy or Army war colleges, Maxwell has little use left.

Before I proceed further, this letter in no way is meant to disparage the many fine men and women of Maxwell Air Force Base who work hard every day and do their best at their assignments. We just can't afford that much money spent on support functions, especially now.

I have no idea how many millions of dollars are spent on SOS and Command and Staff either by correspondence or in residence but we obviously can't afford the schools when entire squadrons of aircraft have to stand down for lack of funds. Completing correspondence courses and then repeating the same courses in residence is a ridiculous waste of money.

The Air Force has not considered the increased manning that they must have in order to send our officers to these schools. If you consider a 20-year career, for every 16 aviators removed from the cockpit for 15 months (combined time in residence for both schools), you need a 17th. For example, when 16 pilots spend 15 months each

at these schools, the total time spent is 240 months or the equivalent of a 20-year career. That is where the extra officer comes in to replace months lost to nonoperational schools. That is a 9.4 percent increase needed in manning just to send these people to Maxwell. The figure is actually slightly worse than 9.4 percent when you consider the 17th officer must also waste 15 months of his or her career. That is huge and doesn't even consider the cost of the schools, the personnel it takes to operate them, and the facilities. Over years, this could add up to hundreds of millions of dollars in increased manning and infrastructure costs.

I am sure this letter won't sit well with some, but I challenge anyone who has attended these schools to tell me they are worth potentially hundreds of millions towards our operational readiness in defense of our country.

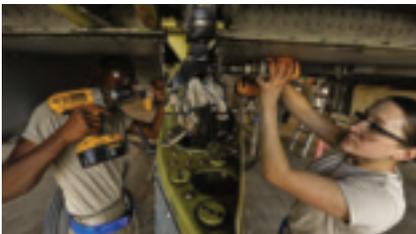
Save money, maintain the same operational readiness, and lower required manning more than nine percent by axing these schools. Closing them is a fiscal and operational no-brainer.

Please close these schools or make them voluntary only by correspondence.

Lt. Col. Charles Frazier,
USAF (Ret.)
Merritt Island, Fla.



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