

Feeder Force and the Candy Bomber

I read your article with great interest [*"The Feeder Force," January, p. 67*]. In 1941 I was not in college but working. Graduated from high school in 1939.

Mr. Robert Hinckley was head of the CAA then I think. He started a "Non-College CPT" program. In Utah, they had ground schools in Salt Lake City, Ogden, and northern Utah. Had about 120, all told, with ground school to pass the private pilot written. I was in northern Utah. After the test they awarded 10 flight scholarships for a private license.

I got one of them and did my flight training in Brigham City, Utah. Got my license in September 1941. Joined the Civil Air Patrol and did some search missions. I still have my Civil Air Patrol wings! I have a photo with Cub and instructor somewhere.

Joined the Army Air Corps in June of 1942. Put on reserve to attend Utah State University. Called to Active Duty spring of 1943. Put in pilot training pipe line. I got RAF wings and then Army Air Corps wings June 1944.

I was grateful that I could get in the program although not in college.

Col. Gail S. Halvorsen,
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Imagine All the People

Adam Hebert's suggestion that we reconsider the efficacy of the nuclear triad (*Air Force Magazine*, December 2013, p. 4) is both timely and appropriate. The arguments for looking at the future of our reliance on the deterrent power of land-based ICBMs, strategic bombers, and sea-based submarines is compelling in light of the age of these delivery systems and developing technologies. Plus the nature of warfare has changed from that which existed in World War II when atom bombs were developed.

But it may also be time we reconsider whether the concept of nuclear deterrence remains relevant in a world where the historic response to US nuclear arms development was an arms race, rather than intimidation into submission or inaction. This arms race, in turn, generated our MAD national security strategy based on Mutually Assured Destruction building a nuclear arse-

nal so large that we could absorb an enemy's nuclear attack and still have sufficient surviving nuclear warheads to annihilate the aggressors. Would we really ever employ nuclear forces to annihilate a sovereign nation we see as our enemy?

As an officer assigned to the Headquarters Strategic Air Command DCS for Operations in the early 1970s, I earned my "BS in SAC-ology." Peace was our profession. Peace through strength and deterrence.

I remember when SAC daily launched nuclear-equipped strategic bombers toward the Soviet Union while the Soviets launched their own bombers toward the US in a dangerous game of chicken, each looking for a weakness in the other's defenses.

The value to the US of the nuclear triad may not have been deterrence. Instead, the decision by the Soviet Union to build forces to defend against (or to neutralize and successfully attack the US despite a three-pronged nuclear force), coupled with the "space race," led to the economic destabilization and ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union. Our touting of our nuclear arsenal may be responsible for mobilizing enemies to spend more, not less, on nuclear weapons and focus on figuring ways to attack us rather than being deterred.

We should eliminate nuclear weapons from our national arsenal.

Space surveillance, precision navigation, guided munitions, and satellite communications allow us to engage an enemy with knowledge of the enemy threat and a precision unimaginable in World War II, when nuclear weapons were deemed necessary to ensure target destruction because guidance and delivery systems lacked the precision we enjoy today.

Our use of atomic bombs against Japan in World War II demonstrated to the world that we would employ nuclear weapons against civilian populations in war. Our national propensity to attack other foreign powers to advance our national security interests culminated in the bombardment of Baghdad in March 2003 on suspicion of the presence of weapons of mass destruction and communicated to the world that the US is a dangerous aggressor willing to ignore its own national security policy,

which stated that we would never attack another sovereign nation unless they first attacked us.

As the world's leading military power, we are clearly willing to do the unthinkable, including unilateral pre-emptive strikes in direct violation of the United Nations charter. No wonder terrorists are able to sell their hatred of the US to radical Islamists.

Suppose we took the moral high ground and stopped the development of nuclear warfare [and] retired and unilaterally destroyed our nuclear arsenal. Would this really place our nation in harm's way? Nuclear weapons had no role in deterring the Soviets during the Cuban missile crisis; they were deterred by the presence of US naval forces. Nuclear forces did not end the Vietnam War; this was brought about after intensive B-52 bombing strikes against Hanoi. Nuclear forces did not deter the terrorists who struck the World Trade Center. Nor has the existence of nuclear weapons ended conflict in Afghanistan or ended nuclear development in Iran or North Korea.

Can we believe US nuclear weapons will deter an enemy from poisoning our water supply, commandeering commercial aircraft to crash into iconic buildings on our homeland, interrupting our power grid, or making a cyber attack on our command and control systems?

By eliminating all US nuclear weapons, could we not then insist other nations follow our lead to make the world a safer place? Could we not focus our efforts and resources on rendering nuclear warfare obsolete?

Let's move forward and turn from our past as a nation that unleashed

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the atomic bomb, killing as many as 100,000 innocent noncombatants, including 3,000 Americans who were in Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945. Let's give up on our arrogant belief that we can create a lasting peace by initiating pre-emptive strikes on enemy nations.

Let's preclude the possibility of the enemy infiltrating our armed forces with a couple of undetected terrorists able to launch an ICBM or commandeer a nuclear-equipped bomber or submarine and start a nuclear holocaust.

Let's eliminate from our military budget all expenditures on the development and preservation of weapons of mass destruction in the mistaken belief that these weapons, whose employment could turn the entire world against us, will deter potential enemies from seeking to destroy us. History simply does not bear this out.

Col. Robert J. Sallee,
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The Times They Are A-changin'

While visiting my daughter (a member of AFA and an Air Force nurse for five years, married to a USAF major currently serving in Afghanistan), I was browsing through your December issue and read an interesting letter sent in by retired Maj. Paul Hooper

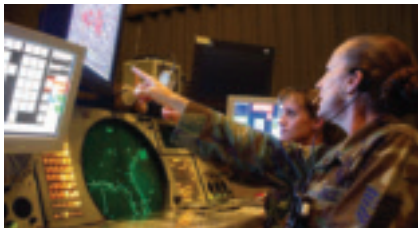
[*"Letters: We Make Both Sides Mad," December, p. 7*]. It seems he strongly resents the increased presence of women in USAF, and attributes this to "social engineering" and "insane policies." It isn't clear when he served on Active Duty but since he claims to be an AFA member for 30 years, I will assume he was Active during the 20 year period from which he has derived his statistics ('70-'90). I too was on Active Duty during that time frame ('72-'98). My first assignment was as personnel psychologist and test control officer at an Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station (AFEES). In this assignment I witnessed truly egregious sexist policies used in the recruiting of females to USAF. Females had to meet standards far above any male counterpart. They had to be a high school grad (GED need not apply); they had to score in the first category of the AFQT (two standard deviations above the mean); and the requirement that amazed those of us in the other services was the sending of full-length and close-up photos of USAF female candidates to somewhere at Lackland Air Force Base for review and approval. What purpose could this possibly serve since heights and weights were already a matter of record? The Air Force certainly wasn't reviewing photos

of male candidates. In my opinion, if policies ever needed changing it was to correct obviously prejudicial rules designed to eliminate fully qualified female candidates simply because they were female or, worse, because they didn't meet some "appearance standard." So the real reason that the number of females in the Air Force (and the other services) has risen is the elimination of discriminatory policies and the recognition that females can and do serve key roles shoulder to shoulder with men. Major Hooper and Colonel Sexton (another sexist letter writer) need to move into the 21st century. The bottom line: Female service members are here to stay. We need them, and they are pulling their weight everyday.

Col. Joel S. Dickson,
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I am replying to the November 2013 letter entitled "No Offense Intended, Ladies," [p. 10] specifically the sentence, "I would bet that there have been few clinical studies that address these issues." The following comments, while not taken from clinical studies, come from women in the military.

First, a 2013 article in *National Geographic*, by Anna Mulrine, states that



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“top US defense officials are actively studying other militaries around the globe that have already sent women to combat. The review includes researching the experiences of Australia, Canada, and other nations with whom American troops have worked closely in Iraq and Afghanistan. ... There are roughly a dozen nations that have opened ‘close combat roles’ to women.”

Second, there is the issue of women in primarily male units. Someone who has “been there and done that” is Kayla Williams, who wrote the book, *Love My Rifle More Than You*. Kayla was a young female in the Army and in Iraq.

Kayla has since been interviewed and spoken on the topic of women in combat and her experiences. Specifically, in an NPR interview, when asked about the idea that allowing women into combat units could put that unit in a “compromising situation” where emotions could get in the way of the task at hand, she replied, “I do not believe that that is a fair concern. I never saw that happen while I was deployed when we were in dangerous situations. I also find it a little absurd because we reserve our nation’s highest honors for troops who risk their own lives for the lives of their comrades. Why it would be a sign of valor for them to do so for their male comrades but somehow damaging to the military if they were to do so for a female comrade seems a little baffling to me.”

Lastly, from a more academic perspective, the University of Michigan houses the Women Veterans Project. This project is studying how deployment affects the mental, emotional, and physical health of US women and men serving in Iraq. The researchers are interviewing “2,200 Air Force women and men stationed in Iraq and other sites around the world. The goal of the studies is to determine the impact of various deployment experiences and family stressors on physical and mental health and on the likelihood that participants will remain in military service.”

Thus, in response to the issues of effectiveness of women, impact on fellow combatants, and relevant research, mentioned by the original writer, I hope my comments show that both inside and outside of the military, this issue is being discussed, although further research is needed.

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Who Really Runs the Show

“Life Flight” [December, p. 28] brought back many memories of airevac missions that I had flown as

a C-141/C-130 pilot and the deep admiration I had for the flight nurses and docs who crewed those flights.

1970: C-141s were flying “pipeline” missions to Vietnam and regularly bringing the wounded back to State-side facilities.

Our crew departed Yokota on Christmas Eve with several dozen critically wounded soldiers. As always, although the pilots were flying the aircraft, we knew that the real commander on airevac missions was the chief flight nurse—usually very authoritarian and opinionated (read: bitchy).

As we landed at Elmendorf, the staging crew picked up the airplane and pressed on. MAC had arranged for all the other staging crews to be home for Christmas, but our crew was designated to remain at Elmendorf until the next C-141 came through on the 26th.

On Christmas morning, the crew had a bad case of the blues since they couldn’t be home with their families. But as we were having lunch at the dining hall, we received a written invitation to join the flight docs and nurses at their dorm for a party and Christmas dinner. The previously described chief flight nurse was there and just as warm and friendly as one could imagine. Her crew even presented each of our crew with a Christmas present; mine was a book entitled *Alaska Sourdough*, which I still have.

The next day, we were alerted for an airevac on its way to Travis AFB, and sure enough, our chief flight nurse was back in her bitchy self as a no-nonsense, authoritarian commander of her mission.

Several weeks later: As tough and calloused as the flight nurses were, one of them lost her patient in flight; she came up to the flight deck and cried like a baby for quite some time.

Truly, these airevac crews are the angels of the skies! And to the “Sourdoughs” of 10-350 from Elmendorf, Christmas 1970, thanks for the memories!

Mike Winslow
Olney, Tex.

The C-130J medevac photos on p. 30-31 are eerily similar to the photos that I shot in 1969 or 1970 of my C-130E during a medevac mission. I never saw anyone work harder than med techs in-country. They literally jogged through our 12-hour days, in the heat. Medevacs were our most satisfying in-country missions. A few of mine were also quite difficult, technically. A heck of a lot better than our KIA missions, for sure.

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