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AFA's Mission

Our mission is to promote a dominant United States Air Force and a strong national defense and to honor airmen and our Air Force heritage. To accomplish this, we:

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.

About That Flight Suit ...

I was disappointed that you printed James Cheney's letter critiquing CSAF for wearing a flight suit during his meeting with the Chief of the Chinese Air Force [*Letters: Flight Suit*, September, p. 12]. There are many legitimate reasons for General Welsh to be in a flight suit. Did you check with his office for comment? Did you consider withholding the letter until you knew the facts surrounding the uniform chosen for the meeting? Printing a comment from CSAF's office would have boosted your credibility. As it is, you look more like the *Air Force Times* than the professional journal of the Air Force Association.

Jerry Allen
San Antonio

The person in that photo with me isn't the Chief of the Chinese Air Force. It's Major General Li, my escort officer in China. In Mr. Cheney's letter he writes, "I doubt that General Welsh just stepped out of his cockpit prior to the meeting." Actually, I had just stepped off the airplane we flew to China—General Li met me at the bottom of the ladder and we walked into their DV reception area at the airport, which is where the photo was taken. By the way, we had previously notified Major General Li through the defense attaché office that I would be in a flight suit when we arrived. He had also planned to wear one, but was held up in a meeting and ended up not having time to change before he came to the airport. We'd been traveling for about 15 hours at that point, and been on the ground in China for about 10 minutes. Mr. Cheney would be happy to know that when I actually did meet the Chinese Air Chief, and everyone else we met in China, I was wearing service dress.

Gen. Mark A. Welsh III,
Chief of Staff, USAF
Washington, D.C.

Knock Off the Hand-wringing

I have appreciated *Air Force Magazine's* efforts over the years to keep attention on the 1996 terrorist

attack on Khobar Towers and its political aftermath. Even so, 18 years after the attack, I was surprised to see another Khobar Towers article ("Keeper File: Khobar Towers, Before the Scapegoating") in your August issue [p. 33].

In response, I'd like to shed additional light on Secretary Perry's statement—particularly his lament about "prescribed" security measures not taken at the time of the attack.

After admitting that I had taken an "extensive set of security measures ... [that] undoubtedly saved dozens, if not hundreds, of lives," the SECDEF declared, "It is also undoubtedly true that significantly fewer casualties would have occurred if all of the prescribed security measures had been implemented by the time of the attack."

Nuts.

Fourteen days after the Khobar attack, Perry rushed to a damning judgment even before his own investigation team had shown up at Khobar Towers. The actual facts were these. Only three "prescribed" recommendations not been completed at the time of the attack. They were three of 39 recommendations in an OSI vulnerability assessment triggered by a car bombing in Riyadh (200 miles away) seven months before. The other 36—along with nearly 100 others that my wing had alone initiated—had been completed.

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. (Email: 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

To help your readers consider the validity of Secretary Perry's "if only they had" lament—and the stage it set—I'll describe each of the three open recommendations—and my humble assessment of their potential impact on our actual casualty numbers.

The first recommended that I disperse key personnel throughout the compound. Key personnel dispersal had begun before the attack occurred, but was not finished. I assess that completion of this recommendation would have had no impact on our casualty numbers.

The second recommended that I install a fire detection system in all of our Khobar buildings. Built of concrete years before the attack by and for the Saudis, our 33 high-rise buildings had not been so equipped. Since the 4404th Wing's "provisional" (temporary) designation meant we had no budget to manage, I built a Five-Year Facility Plan (to include installing the fire detection system) and sent it to CENTAF to work the funding. Although the 13th wing commander, I was the first to put together such a plan. Had a fire alarm sounded the night of the attack, I am doubtful it would have mitigated the casualties. On the contrary, reacting to a fire alarm could have further endangered airmen unknowingly rushing toward the impending explosion.

The third recommended that I install Mylar on the windows. While I also included Mylar in my Five-Year Facility Plan, this recommendation, if completed the night of the attack, could have had an impact on the casualty numbers. In considering that impact, I offer two references:

First, the room I was in at the time of the attack was about 800 feet away from the bomb site. The explosion blew away my room's windows and their frames, suggesting that Mylar would have resulted in fewer—but larger—pieces of shrapnel flying through the air.

Second, and perhaps reflecting the SECDEF's own perception of Mylar's impact, the Pentagon hadn't completed Mylar installation on their own windows five years later when the 9/11 attack occurred.

All other "recommended" or "prescribed" security measures had been completed at the time of the Khobar attack. No other military unit in theater had gone to the extent we had (rooftop lookouts, defense-in-depth entry points, double and triple Jersey barriers on our perimeters, etc.) trying to protect its people.

Regardless, on 31 July 1997, SECDEF Cohen accused me of failing to adequately assess the implications of a terrorist attack at my perimeter

and negated a promotion the President had approved, and the Senate had confirmed, over two years earlier.

Another useful comparison when considering SECDEF Perry's "if only they had" lament—and the punitive action taken by his successor against me 13 months later—is the effectiveness of our respective security measures at the time of attack.

Khobar Towers, Saudi Arabia, 9:30 p.m., 25 June 1996. From the time we knew something was awry outside our perimeter, we had three to five minutes to respond. The only reason we had any response time at all was because of a security measure (rooftop lookouts) we alone had initiated four months prior. Our lookouts acted quickly and

courageously to get people away from the area.

Pentagon, Washington, D.C., 9:37 a.m., 11 September 2001. With significantly greater surveillance capability and area control authority, Pentagon leadership knew for well over an hour that something was awry outside their perimeter. Thirty-four minutes before the attack, they watched on cable news the second hijacked airliner hit the second WTC tower. Eleven minutes before (and aware there were other hijacked aircraft airborne), they ordered all military bases in the United States to increase threat conditions to Delta status. Five minutes before (the max time I had to respond at Khobar), a Dulles Airport radar approach controller reported a hijacked aircraft

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The World's Sixth Sense



(Flight 77) was heading eastbound toward Washington, D.C., at a high rate of speed. In all that time, as evidenced by people still sitting at their outer-ring desks when the airliner struck the building, security measures taken by Pentagon leadership (to include the SECDEF) did effectively nothing to protect those working in their own headquarters.

Stoked by his predecessor's rush-to-judgment lament on 9 July 1996, Secretary Cohen's action against me the following summer proved to be a craven endgame, indeed.

T. J. Schwalier
Knoxville, Tenn.

More Than a Simple Hunter-Killer

When I receive *Air Force Magazine* the first article I read is your "Airpower Classics." This month's [August, p. 88] article about the Lockheed P-3C Orion is excellent. However, you did leave out that the P-3 is not only an outstanding hunter-killer, it also has several other roles. Just a few examples: Some have been modified into P-3 AEWCs, various electronic surveillance models, and some have been converted by Evergreen as aerial tankers for fire fighting. The list goes on but a lot are still classified projects.

MSgt. Levi Exline,
USAF (Ret.)
Simi Valley, Calif.

Joe Kittinger Is Not an Alien

May I suggest that your magazine, to which I am a longtime subscriber, stay out of the "UFO explanation business"? Three years ago, John Correll authored a long piece regarding UFOs [*USAF and the UFOs*, June, 2011, p. 68], which unfortunately included a discussion of the famous "Roswell Incident." I say "unfortunately" because, by simply parroting the thoroughly discredited Air Force's Project Mogul "balloon explanation" (see "The Roswell Report: Fact vs. Fiction in the New Mexico Desert," 1995), he embarrassed himself as a researcher/writer as well as your otherwise worthy publication. At the time, I immediately got an email off to your "Letters" department pointing out where Correll had gone astray, but you have apparently paid no mind to it and have continued on the same pathway. Now, I have your August 2014 issue featuring an article about the high-diving (in a parachute) Air Force captain, Joe Kittinger ("Kittinger" by Peter Grier, p. 62).

As a prelude to manned space ventures and potential ejections from high-flying aircraft, Project Excelsior was set up in the late 1950s to solve the problems associated with such eventualities. As the project's "go-to guy," Kittinger set

a decade's-long record (only recently broken) when he descended to Earth by parachute from the gondola of a helium-filled balloon almost 20 miles up. So far, so good.

Your Mr. Grier goes off the rails and into the deep muddy, however, when he tries to equate the little-bodies-with-big-heads said by witnesses to have been recovered from the Roswell UFO crash with a Project Excelsior balloon accident in 1959 involving Captain Kittinger and a fellow high-altitude, balloon passenger, one Captain Dan Fulgham. Instead of parachuting, this time they tried to land the balloon with the gondola they were in on the desert floor just north of the town of Roswell, N.M. In doing so, however, the gondola rolled over and landed on Captain Fulgham's head causing it to swell. The red-headed Joe Kittinger and the hapless Dan Fulgham were then transported to the base hospital at Walker Air Force Base (formerly Roswell Army Air Field) just south of Roswell for treatment. Using the Air Force's account of this incident in its discredited publication, "The Roswell Report: Case Closed," 1997, Grier repeats the tome's suggestion that Fulgham was the "alien" reported seen walking on its own into the hospital, and Kittinger was the "nasty red-headed officer" threatening a Roswell mortician that day. It is here that Mr. Grier commits the unthinkable—a fraud upon the readers of *Air Force Magazine* when he stated the following: "Capt. Joseph W. Kittinger Jr.'s high-altitude balloon flights probably fueled false rumors that space aliens in unidentified flying objects crash-landed [i.e., the Roswell crash] in the New Mexico desert in the late 1950s." How true, perhaps, but for one small detail. Not once does Mr. Grier mention to the readers that the alleged Roswell UFO crash occurred in the year 1947—not 12 years later in 1959 when the Kittinger-Fulgham incident occurred! *Air Force Magazine* can do better than this.

Thomas J. Carey
Huntingdon Valley, Pa.

■ *The Air Force's "The Roswell Report: Case Closed" concluded: "Air Force research revealed that the witness made serious errors in his recollections of the events. When his account was compared with official records of the actual events he is believed to have described, extensive inaccuracies were indicated including a likely error in the date by as much as 12 years."*—THE EDITORS

In the August issue, writer Peter Grier in the opening paragraph of his article on Kittinger says that on "Aug. 16, 1960,

Capt. Joe Kittinger sat in the open gondola of a helium balloon 19.5 miles above the New Mexico desert, looking at a vista only a handful of humans had ever seen." I would really like to know who that "handful of humans" were. The Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin did not make it into space until April 12, 1961.

Maj. Vern J. Pall,
USAF (Ret.)
Tucson, Ariz.

Your story on Joe Kittinger is great. He is the greatest! However, something is missing. As a former GIB (guy in back), am I the only one who wondered what happened to WSO William Reich?

Maj. Paul Giguere,
USAF (Ret.)
Manchester, Conn.

I was the information (now public affairs) officer for the 48th Tactical Fighter Wing at RAF Lakenheath when Col. Joe Kittinger was vice wing commander.

In those post-Vietnam War days the Air Force was investing a lot of time and effort into improving race relations. So early in 1977 when I read the security police morning report and saw that a cross had been burned in front of a barracks, I was very concerned and started thinking about what our public and command information responses should be. But someone else was way ahead of me.

At that very moment, Colonel Kittinger, acting in the wing commander's absence, strode into my office. He handed me a piece of paper and told me, "You will run this statement on page one of the 'Jet 48' (base newspaper) this Friday." He turned and left. Our editor tore up the front page and displayed Colonel K's statement very prominently.

That statement, under his byline, was just what the doctor ordered. It condemned the act, showed how it risked the wing mission by endangering good order and discipline, and concluded, "Those who did this will be found, and they will be punished."

Shortly after the newspaper was distributed, two security policemen turned themselves in. Apparently they'd intended the cross burning as a prank. Regardless, the incident quickly was picked up by the British news media, including the sensational London tabloids.

A court-martial would surely recharge press interest, so I coordinated an initial media attendance plan with our staff judge advocate. I PCS'd before the trial, leaving my successor the remaining can of worms. Then-Capt. Mike Gallagher, later CJCS Gen. John Shalikashvili's PAO as a colonel and now a San Antonio

city council member, had to impose a limited media pool on a large bunch of frustrated British reporters because the base courtroom was so small and probably never again would be so full.

All this was bad enough but it would have been even worse had more-timid souls tried to cover up the incident. Colonel Kittinger's prompt initiative and positive leadership stopped any such tendency in its tracks.

Colonel Kittinger also PCS'd before the trial, and I was proud to salute him as he strapped in to one of our last F-4Ds for a true fighter pilot's return to CONUS. He signed his departure Hometown News Release form with me on the crew ladder holding the clipboard. A great guy. His adventurous postretirement career is just what I'd expect.

Lt. Col. Mark R. Foutch,
USAF (Ret.)
Olympia, Wash.

Cover LaPlante

Kudos to our chief of acquisition, Mr. William LaPlante [*"Staying Stealthy," August, p. 29*]. His comments are the first in recent history from the highest offices in the Air Force which actually acknowledge—even if only slightly—the battlespace beyond the iron and the data that we've come to love so much: the electromagnetic spectrum. Multispectral low observability (i.e., "stealth") is itself an application of spectrum warfare, undeveloped as such for decades and unrecognized by some among us still.

Anti-access, area-denial environments themselves actually begin as spectrum contests, although the prevailing corporate narrative embraces a reality wherein iron and data will save the day on their own without warfighting consideration of the EMS and wherein stealth is something other than spectrum warfare ("electronic protection," in published doctrine). Just about any AF-trained EWO should probably tell you that any TTP or capability that's not dynamic is probably not one you should base an entire campaign on. So as with the current state of stealth ("static EP"), here we are.

Mr. LaPlante indicates a nuanced realization that we must win the spectrum domain first, deliberately and reliably, before we are entitled to depend on data-centric anything. The continuing free fall of Air Force investment in meaningful spectrum warfare material and operational expertise (!) has demonstrated decreasing awareness of that realization. Instead we opt for a cozy swim in its data packets and enclaves. Frankly, data should pay the spectrum rent. You don't get to own anything shared that you're not planning to defend and I suspect we're going to

be taken to school in the next major escalation. Expensive toys and all. In any event, please assign a security detail to Mr. LaPlante for the remainder of his tenure: He just demonstrated his value as a critical resource to the Air Force's future viability.

Lt. Col. Judge Bourque,
USAF (Ret.)
Stone Ridge, Va.

Early Jumpers

According to your article "Billy Mitchell's Parachute Plan," by Phillip S. Meilinger, p. 58 of the August issue of *Air Force Magazine*, the drop by German parachutists at Sola Airfield, Stavanger, Norway, April 1940 was the

first combat air drop by parachutists in a military action.

The first airborne "attack" was 12 March 1938 when German paratroopers seized and captured an airfield at Wagram, Austria, during the takeover of Austria.

Phillip R. Earles
Princeton, Ind.

Enemies for Hire

I'd like to drop a footnote to Walter Boyne's fascinating article, "Enemies for Hire" (June, p. 42), about the rise of commercial fighter vs. fighter enterprises conducting dissimilar air combat tactics (DACT) training for our fighter aircrews. At about midway, Boyne



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mentions that “Convair F-106s” were used by the Navy in its early DACT programs.

I wonder if Boyne acquired this tidbit of F-106 lore from a DACT program that was the subject of an *Air Force Magazine* feature article in the late 1970s about Langley-based 48th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS) F-106s starting up a regular DACT program with NAS Oceana-based VF 101 F-4Js from across the river. What distinguished this particular program was that in 1969 it was the first ever regularized Air Force-Navy DACT program—preceding establishment of both Navy Top Gun and Air Force Aggressors.

I know about this because I was involved as the 48th FIS point person, working under the direction of my ops officer, then-Maj. John Wotring. Together with my VF 101 counterpart, Lt. Cmdr. Jack Ready, we assembled the F-106-F4J DACT syllabus and flew the first missions over Virginia’s Albemarle Sound in a program that lasted for many years. We liked to think that we helped to start up modern-day DACT.

Lt. Col. R. D. Truitt,
USAF (Ret.)
Little Silver, N.J.

Here We Go Again

Just read your editorial from the July issue [*“This War Isn’t Over,” p. 4*]. “We may have to fight again to stabilize Iraq and protect Americans that remain there.” You were dead on target.

That didn’t take very long, did it? I am sickened by the inaction of the Administration both in dealing with ISIS and the Ukraine.

James Malecki
Pompano Beach, Fla.

Fast Study

From a very early age I had read everything written by Lindbergh [*“The Cloud Over Lindbergh,” August, p. 76*]. In 1970, ’71, and ’72 I was managing a drone contract for 1st Test Squadron, 13th Air Force. Our launch site was Wallace Air Station, more than 100 miles north of Clark AFB, Republic of the Philippines. We were assembling, testing, launching, tracking, controlling, recovering, and refurbishing BQM-34A drones.

About once a month I went to Clark Air Force Base to review our performance with 1st Test Squadron. On one of these trips I heard that the Clark Library had received a copy of a Lindbergh handwritten diary. I spent many hours reading this document. The content was very controversial. Since then the only existing copies I have found are printed and very sanitized. These shortened

versions have deleted much of the content.

Although covering a different subject, the information was every bit as controversial as the broadcast Lindbergh made from Madison Square Garden in 1940. The speech was carried live on WOR New York. Because it was Lindbergh talking, this kid was very interested.

John Ewing
Yuma, Ariz.

Lost Opportunity

As a Vietnam era C-130E pilot I read with interest Colonel Broughton’s article “The Vietnam War That Wasn’t” [*August, p. 68*]. During the early 1970s, I fully expected to receive orders to Southeast Asia but was concerned that during such an assignment my potential contribution would have been severely limited by the Administration’s micromanagement of the air campaign. I recall many discussions among my squadron compatriots about the limitations that those flying in Southeast Asia were experiencing. These limitations were confirmed by returning crew members.

While on the one hand it was enlightening to read Colonel Broughton’s article about the Joint Chiefs option to more effectively utilize airpower, and potentially shorten the war, I was also saddened. It was a real tragedy that so many lives were lost that could have been spared had the Administration not adopted the philosophy of gradualism. The lost opportunity to shorten the Vietnam War, because of micromanagement, will forever resonate in my mind.

Col. Jon S. Meyer,
USAF (Ret.)
Baltimore

Left Side Right

Thank you for your excellent publication! As a Life Member of AFA, I’ve been privileged to enjoy it for many years—well done!

I would like to comment, however, on the superb article “The US, Japan, ... and China,” in the June 2014 edition [*p. 32*]. On p. 33, the author states that “Japan annexed the [Ryukyu] islands in 1879 ... [and] retained control of the islands after World War II ended in 1945.”

Having spent a number of years flying tankers out of Kadena Air Base in Okinawa in the ’70s, I would like to make a minor historical correction to that statement. The US actually took control of the Ryukyus after World War II; President Nixon gave them back to Japan (at the time the technical term that was bandied about was reversion) on 5 May 1973. It was not a popular decision with the Ryukyuan—the mainland Japanese

imported several thousand police to help ease the transition (“one on every corner”).

The first choice of the local populace at the time was overwhelmingly for independence, followed by remaining under US control; “reverting” to Japanese control was a very distant third choice.

As that fateful day approached, the local shops started putting two prices on all of their merchandise—one in dollars that they’d used since World War I and one in the “new” incoming currency—Japanese yen (which, by the way, was about double the US price at the then going rate of Y300 = \$1).

It’s interesting that the last part of reversion, switching from driving on the right side of the road (US style) to the left side (Japanese style), didn’t actually occur until five years later—31 July 1978. For several months ahead of that date, all of us on the island (military and civilian alike) had to go through an additional traffic course and get the back of our 3rd Air Force driver’s licenses stamped (“Cope Switch”—I still have mine). Meanwhile, the local road construction workers were busy installing a new road sign abeam each and every existing one—but on the left side of the road! When these were installed, they were covered with a canvas sack, with a drawstring on the bottom to keep them from blowing away. Then, at midnight Sunday evening, 31 July, all the roads on the entire island were closed to all but emergency/official traffic, and the road crews went throughout the island, moving the canvas bags from the sign on the left to its twin on the right. Then, at 0600 on Monday morning, the roads were reopened, but with everyone driving on the left instead of the right (and using the newly installed signage).

And again, of course, with one of the several thousand imported mainland Japanese police on each and every corner to help ease the transition/help enforce the new traffic regulations.

But it worked! As a matter of fact, we learned so well that, when we PCS’d to Vance Air Force Base in 1980, and the main gate was entered by turning left, my wife quickly earned a reputation with the local gate guards—“Oh, yes, here’s the lady from Kadena who always turns into the left (outgoing lane!) instead of the right (incoming) one!”

Thank you for letting an old retired guy ramble on with his war stories about a minor historical correction to one of your outstanding articles.

Maj. Howard Deunk,
USAF (Ret.)
Vance AFB, Okla.