



Air Force Association

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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.

Red Flag

I enjoyed your article in the October issue, "Red Flag for the Future" [p. 42]. While the 414th Combat Training Squadron has been increasing the fidelity of its training for aircrew and cyber operators, they have steadily raised the bar for support crews as well. In the summer of 2012, I served as the expeditionary maintenance group commander for RED FLAG 12-4, and the common reaction among maintainers then was [that] launching simulated combat sorties there was really no different from generating training sorties at home station. Fast forward two years, and I arrived to serve at USAF's Advanced Maintenance and Munitions Operations School, whose instructors serve as tactical mentors for the deployed maintenance units. In addition to providing an initial training session at the beginning of each exercise, the AMMOS instructors provide simulated injects and help the participants work through the challenges of operating in a contested, degraded, and operationally limited environment. During each flag exercise, more than a thousand maintenance and logistics professionals are exposed to threats that are difficult or impossible to replicate anywhere else. This is just one example of how different units from throughout the USAF Warfare Center team together to provide responsive, realistic, and relevant training for US and partner nation airmen.

Lt. Col. Greg Lowe
Nellis AFB, Nev.

"Red Flag for the Future" is one of the best features I have read in *Air Force Magazine* in quite a while. John Tirpak has done a great job of describing this phenomenal aviation event, both in its technical detail as well as in its huge

scope and complex interactions. Red Flag's evolution and how important it has become to so many aspects of achieving the Air Force's missions is a story worth telling, and it has been told very well indeed in this feature.

I was also very impressed with Gen. Mike Hostage's comments in "Hostage's Warning" [October, p. 50]. Usually, messages from the top sound like sterile PowerPoint presentations. It was a welcome change to read the General's candid assessments in plain language and common sense context. It's encouraging to know that there is someone like this in command.

Also worthy of praise are "Not Just Night Witches" [October, p. 58] and "The Long Retreat" [October, p. 64].

I learned a lot!

Hank Caruso
California, Md.

Enjoyed your detailed article on Red Flag. I was surprised, however, that you failed to note that the exercise was the brainchild of Col. Richard M. "Moody" Suter! He was at Nellis when he dreamed it up and was thankful that

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McKinley Ending Tour; Search for New AFA President Begins

The Air Force Association has begun its search for a new President to replace Craig R. McKinley, who is retiring at the end of 2014 after more than two years in the position. A search committee has been appointed to identify candidates.

The Presidential Search Committee consists of George K. Muellner as chairman, with Michael B. Donley and Duncan J. McNabb as members and John A. Shaud as advisor.

Muellner is a retired lieutenant general and AFA's immediate past Chairman of the Board. Donley was the longest-serving Air Force Secretary, and McNabb is a former commander of Air Mobility Command and US Transportation Command. Shaud is a retired general and held the position of AFA Executive Director in the 1990s and early 2000s. All four have strong, long-standing ties to AFA.

Persons wishing to be considered by the search committee must submit their requests in writing or via electronic correspondence, to be received by Jan. 1, 2015, to the following:

In writing:

Presidential Search Committee
Air Force Association
PO Box 736
Arlington, VA 22216

Electronic correspondence: afapressesearch@gmail.com

“the powers that be” agreed to pursue it. As you note, it has done much for our fighter force. Unfortunately, Moody is no longer with us, but those of us who were privileged to know him and fly with him remember well his creative spirit.

Lt. Col. Bob Farland,
USAF (Ret.)
Hampton, Va.

Great to read your Red Flag report “Red Flag for the Future.” It is coming up on its 40th year! The first Red Flag was a 9th AF product flown 1974 or 1975. I was chief of plans in the 9th AF fighter tactics division and was given the project to develop a plan to exercise our fighter forces and the first exercise under 9th AF [Lt. Gen. James D.] Hughes. As I can best recall we had A-10s (attack mission), F-4s (air cover), KC-135s (refueling) F-100s (aggressor fighters), C-121 (exercise monitor), a SAR mission out of Homestead, and Tactical Air Control System (monitor and control operations). The target was at Avon Park Gunnery Range. The exercise was designed to put inexperienced aircrews in a high-threat environment as much as possible. It worked. As best as I can recall the scenario was our response to aggression in Iraq. I had my simple tape recorder on board the C-121 and recorded the activity. We had an air refueling problem, and the guys had to think on their feet. They did a great job and the mission was a continued. One of the A-7s dropped its bomb rack rather than bombs and

there were other problems and that was the purpose of the entire exercise, which was to place the troops into a high-pressure “combat” environment and monitor their reactions. It was a total success. When I played my tape back to General Hughes, he got a bit upset about the air refueling problem, and I stopped the tape and explained the whole purpose of the exercise and to listen to the tone of the flight leader—how he shuffled the flight through AR and continued on the mission! General Hughes really liked the tape. (I think I have the tape somewhere.) In the summer of 1975 I went to TAC HQ (9th AF HQ was then under the command of [Lt. Gen. James V.] Hartinger) and briefed the concept of our plan. It was adopted by TAC as “Red Flag.” Today’s plan has the same objectives as the original 9th AF plan but it has been expanded and improved to meet the changing combat environment.

Maj. Douglas J. Cook,
USAF (Ret.)
Madison, Ala.

Crush ISIS

I cannot believe our military leadership has become so politically correct as to believe what they are doing against the threat of ISIS is militarily effective [*Editorial: The Airpower Advantage in Iraq*, September, p. 4]. It’s an affront to the concept and application of airpower. I am reminded of the debriefing of an Iraqi Air Force general following Desert Storm re-

garding our air campaign. He stated that they all believed our precision campaign a failure. “Not enough casualties,” I believe was the comment. Then, “If you started to carpet bomb Baghdad with B-52s, we would have understood”—a testimony to how different the mind of those brought up under Islam think about the value of human life. If we want to defeat ISIS and MINIMIZE boots on the ground, we should have, immediately following the President’s declaration, begun air strikes, in addition to those precision strikes accomplished, to include massive carpet bombing of the ISIS headquarters in al-Raqqa turning it into rubble, along with other key leadership locations. The same approach could have prevented what is going on in Kobani. Had we run a few heavy bomber strikes along the outskirts of the town before it became infested, the attack could have been stopped cold. It’s time to wake up and stop limiting our approach to crushing these vile pests.

Col. John E. Frisby,
USAF (Ret.)
Henderson, Nev.

Let me ignore the argument that the campaign against ISIS should be a combined air plus ground campaign vs. air only. Let me make some observations on what airpower alone can accomplish:

1. US airpower can attack with little or no casualties. There have been 3,800 sorties in the campaign and no American losses. There were no [American] losses in the Libyan air campaign either. [Nor] were there losses in the 10-year no-fly zone against Saddam Hussein. In other words, airpower gives us the important option of attacking with little or no losses. For one thing, this has to be extremely discouraging to the enemy. Another important aspect is the effect on the American home front. The continual casualties from Iraq and Vietnam in earlier years were constant front page news. However, the no-fly zone wasn’t even noticed.

2. US airpower can respond quickly. We are talking hours not days, weeks, or months.

3. US airpower can be effective. Key leaders of the Khorosan Group and ISIS have been eliminated. The Mosul Dam was retaken with critical air support. In Libya, Khadafy was overthrown with critical air support. In the case of Kosovo, airpower alone was enough to end the battle. While airpower alone can accomplish much, US airpower (or coalition airpower) can be a powerful assist to indigenous ground troops. It allows the US the option to be “part of the solution” vs. “all of the solution”

and “all of the responsibility.”

4. Airpower takes no prisoners. In Iraq our ground troops were taking prisoners just to see them released from captivity a week later. There are no prisoners with airpower. There are no new candidates to put in Guantanamo. Whether the air attacks are in ISIS territory, Libya or Yemen, there are no prisoners.

William Thayer
San Diego

Don't Retire, Promote

I salute General Hostage for his honest and candid comments made during his speech sponsored by AFA [*“Hostage’s Warning,” October, p. 50*]. Military members want to hear the truth. The problems he addressed not only affect his command but the whole Air Force. He addressed the problems truthfully and did not sugarcoat the issues. Facts are facts. As the budget is reduced we lose our operational edge.

General Hostage’s approach—“I’m not going to ask them to do more with less”—is exactly what all our command leaders need to [demonstrate]. I’m sure his officers, NCOs, and airmen appreciate that type of leadership and work hard to accomplish what the general expects and give him 100 percent with what they have. More Air Force leaders should stand up and take the general’s approach.

If I had my say I would recommend that General Hostage not retire but be moved into a higher position where his talents would continue to benefit the Air Force mission. Short of that all I can say is, “Thank you, sir, for your dedication and service.”

CMSgt. William F. Eads,
USAF (Ret.)
Leesburg, Fla.

Sorry, I’m confused. As reported in the October issue of *Air Force Magazine*, did ACC commander General Hostage actually say, “I could not send an A-10 into Syria right now. They’d never come back. I would have to conduct three weeks of very significant [integrated air defense system] degradation before I could think about sending [in] a fourth gen platform, and I sure as heck wouldn’t send in an A-10”? Did he really say that? Correct me if I’m wrong, but is not the battle against ISIS the exact mission the A-10 was designed for? After all, Apache helicopters seem to be doing OK over there and they are a damn sight slower and less robust than an A-10. Is it possible that current Air Force senior leaders actually believe that sleek, pointy, and complicated

“Bones,” F-22s, and the elusive and benighted F-35 are better at close air support than airplanes designed for that specific mission? Have our leaders drunk so much Kool-Aid that they are convinced that our airplanes and crews are ineffective unless they operate in a completely unchallenged environment? And if the A-10 is so pitiful that it can’t survive over a modern battlefield, then why did he also say he’d keep 250 in the inventory if he could? I am old, retired, and often can’t grasp the bigger picture, but sometimes I read this stuff and just shake my head.

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

■ *General Hostage’s comments were made before it was known that Syrian air defenses would not attack US aircraft.—THE EDITORS*

Transfer the ground killing capable A-10 to the infantry.

As proven in Korea from January 1951 to June 1951, armor, artillery, [and] air-supported, highly mobile, properly armed infantry are capable of defeating in detail any massed army, conventional or guerrilla. In 1970 and 1971 the principle was again proven against the Soviet-supported North Vietnamese Army and their Viet Cong satrapy.

In today’s warfare, a combination of M1A tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, advanced artillery, AH-64 helicopters, and A-10 aircraft supporting properly armed and highly mobile infantry riflemen would defeat any army in the world.

In trade, give all of the useless nuclear weapons to the Air Force for overwhelming use without hesitation in the event that any enemy dares to utilize nuclear weapons of any size at any time or at any place.

Larry E. Brasher
Belton, Texas

Rather Damning

As a 33-year flight line maintainer, with the last two at [Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex], I must say I am surprised and dismayed that depot leadership would actually say the things said in this article [*“Depot Reduction,” October, p. 32*]. The part that really stands out to those of us from combat flight lines is that the focus began shifting to a format that established a RIGHT way to do aircraft maintenance. This only confirms our thoughts about depots: that everything we always feared about depots, was true!

Aircraft maintenance is not, and never was, an “art” form. We have technical orders that tell us all we need to know

when working on any aircraft, and if one uses the TO it shouldn’t matter what “movements in personnel” happen. There never should have been personality-driven maintenance in the depots. After all, people’s lives are in our hands whenever we touch an aircraft or any part of one. This article is rather damning, in my opinion.

Col. Frank Alfter,
USAF (Ret.)
Beavercreek, Ohio

I read the article “Depot Redirection” regarding depot maintenance at Robins Air Force Base, and I was very disappointed. I agree with the comments, for the most part, made by General George and other base leadership, but took exception to the fact that Autumn Arnett didn’t bother to discuss the issue with the AFGE Local 987 President Robbie Tidwell.

It is no secret that Robins Air Force Base depot has had its share of issues, but since his election, Mr. Tidwell and the officers of Local 987 have worked diligently with the ALC and the ABW to create a pathway for success not just on the flight line but across the installation.

Tidwell would have been happy to reiterate the fact that AFGE as an organization has long said that organic maintenance will always be cheaper and a better investment than contractor-performed maintenance.

Many civilian employees at Robins (and Tinker and Hill) have family members that are Active Duty, so they have a vested interest in making sure that the maintenance is done right and done well. The Boeings, Lockheed Martins, and Raytheon’s of the world have a vested interest also—their stockholders. The more maintenance they do, the longer it takes, and the more airframes they have to replace, the more their stock price goes up.

Investing in a community by employing people who live there builds a sense of pride in workmanship and an esprit d’corps that cannot be achieved through contractor-led maintenance, because the bottom lines are different. They are in different places.

JaLynn Hudnall
Warner Robins, Ga.

The Right Way to QDR

In “Aperture,” October [p. 12], John A. Tirpak, editorial director, summarized the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review. The QDR panelists, he said, believe “national defense needs should drive national defense budgets, not the opposite,” and recommended that Congress ask the Pentagon for a plan to build needed forces without undue

emphasis on budgetary constraints. Although I concur with this general statement, I would also add that national defense needs should be based on actual and projected threats posed by leaders and weapon capabilities of state and nonstate sponsored military and terrorist organizations. Rather than the QDR recommending that Congress ask the Pentagon, I believe this should be required by law. This is so basic to national defense strategic planning that it should not be overlooked inadvertently or purposefully by military planners or leaders and legislators of either political party.

Lt. Col. Russel A. Noguchi,
USAF (Ret.)
Pearl City, Hawaii

What About the C-74?

I was a little disappointed that Robert Owen, in his excellent article on the growth of MATS, didn't mention the C-74 [*"The Hearings That Revolutionized Airlift," November, p. 64*]. Only 14 were procured, but they provided essential airlift in the late '40s and early '50s. I know because I was a passenger on a C-74 in September 1951 from Westover to Tripoli, en route to my assignment to the Air Section, MAAG Indochina.

Col. Robert F. Myers,
USAF (Ret.)
Panama City, Fla.

Quite a Woman

The article "Not Just Night Witches" [*October, p. 58*] poses the question of who was the first female combat pilot. While there are other claims, the undisputed record of French aviatrix, nurse, competitive bicyclist (placing 10th as a "nonparticipant" in the 1910 Tour de France), athlete, and expert marksman Marie Marvingt demonstrates that she owns that honor. In 1909 she qualified as a balloon pilot and the following year became the third Frenchwoman to hold a fixed wing pilot's license. By 1912, she was developing the first air ambulance. Interrupted by World War I, she used her marksmanship skills on the front lines as a French sniper (Chasseur 2ième Classe [Soldier, 2nd Class] in the 42ième Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied). In 1915, she piloted a French bomber during an attack on Metz for which she received the Croix de Guerre (Military Cross).

She finally became a helicopter pilot in 1961 at the age of 86. Marvingt devoted much of the rest of her life to aeromedical evacuation and air ambulance work. She was an organizer of the First International Congress on Medical Aviation in 1929. Today this remarkable woman is honored by the Aerospace Medical Association with its annual award in her name.

A. J. Parmet
Kansas City, Mo.

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The World's Sixth Sense



Spartan Saga

John Tirpak's "The Saga of the Spartans" [*September, p. 40*] was a thoroughly researched and well-written account of the many twists and turns of the Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA) program. JCA was a sound concept that, unfortunately, fell victim to poor budget timing. The C-27J Spartan was selected for JCA because of the size of its payload, low operating costs, and ability to land in austere environments; its 11-month performance in Afghanistan proved it was always the right aircraft for the mission—which is why so many in the National Guard were sad to see the program end. The flexibility and capabilities of the C-27J that made it such a great fit for JCA were the same

reasons it was so highly sought by US government agencies when the US Air Force made the airplanes available. In fact, the demand between US agencies significantly exceeded the 21 available airframes.

Thank you for your tremendous piece of journalism and for writing the JCA chapter of the Spartan story. Now we move forward, enthusiastic about new chapters with SOCOM and the USCG. Alenia Aermacchi is proud to support our new customers and look forward to helping make the next part of the Spartan book a record of their success.

Benjamin Stone
President & CEO
Alenia Aermacchi North America
Arlington, Va.