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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.

Tell It Like It Was

John Correll's excellent disclosure [*"Opposing AWACS," September, p.88*] of the intense, unenlightened warfare against AWACS development was amazingly introspective and accurate. As a Boeing Washington representative, I was assigned the program just as it had failed its first DSARC review. A select technical task force was created to re-evaluate all the classified requirements and operational risks for the system, and it was approved for development. AWACS was viewed as a threat both to Air Force and Navy fighter autonomy in the battlespace—taking direction from a battle manager and requiring fighter protection. Plus, the range and fidelity of the new Doppler radar was doubted. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David C. Jones, having just come from his USAFE command, appreciated the game-changing potential in a continental conflict, so he "approved" of a "white-paper" movie we made of a Soviet command post anguishing over their fighters lost to AWACS-directed battles. When shown to congressional staffers, aerospace writers, the GAO, etc., a positive image began to replace the doubters. Senator [Thomas] Eagleton's opposition was based on possible reduced F-15 buys. Senator [William] Proxmire and Representative [Patricia] Schroeder were just looking for anti-defense budget targets. The other negativists did not appreciate the tactical force-multiplier effect of airborne C3.

When we were negotiating the NATO and Saudi AWACS buys, Grumman and the Navy insisted that the E-2C could do the over-land surveillance and air control mission, but of course it had neither the range, altitude, onboard electronics, or ground clutter radar discrimination capability.

Westinghouse proved the advanced radar capability, Boeing proved its system integration chops, and the Air Force proved its anti-jam and survivability

claims. The naysayers gradually faded as AWACS met its targets, and theater commanders asked for more and more air surveillance assets. AWACS became the must-have for Red Flag and crisis management airborne C3, worldwide. Thanks, Mr. Correll, for telling it like it was.

Theodore Smith
Fairfax, Va.

I just finished reading Correll's article and was stunned that he never mentioned either Gen. David C. Jones, commander in chief of USAFE, USAF chief of staff, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or Gen. Wilbur L. Creech, USAFE deputy chief of staff for operations and intelligence, commander, Electronic Systems Division, and, ultimately, commander, Tactical Air Command for some six years.

I spent over two years as Major General Creech's administrative assistant and much of that period was spent refining briefings to sell AWACS, which we accomplished. General Creech was then promoted to lieutenant general and sent to Hanscom. The program went forward despite the opposition of Congress. General Jones went on to be the CSAF and, in spite of great opposition, the CJCS. General Creech went on to be the commander of TAC.

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

Interestingly enough, I spent some five years, prior to my assignment to USAFE, flying EC-121s out of McClellan AFB, Calif., and in Vietnam.

AWACS survival happened only because of General Jones' and General Creech's efforts and, by the way, it has been one of the best systems our military has ever developed.

Col. William R. Phillips,
USAF (Ret.)
Houston

Not For Nothing, But I Invented It

Thank you for your fine article on Seek Eagle [*"Eglin's Middle Men," September, p. 94*]. It may sound like bragging (well, it is, a little), but I claim that I created Seek Eagle way back when.

It was 1965. I was a colonel on the Air Staff running a small staff section called Requirements Plans Group. The group was the catch-all and odd-ball team for Gen. (then Maj. Gen.) Jack Catton and his directorate of Operational Requirements and Development Plans, DCS/R&D.

General Catton received two major complaints (from Tactical Air Command and Air Materiel Command) that people were fastening things on the outsides of operational aircraft without knowing whether the things would fall off or shake the aircraft to pieces. Something had to be done.

It appeared that discipline and mandatory procedures would be required, so with the help of representatives of the two commands, my group put together a master directive establishing a compatibility office, with enough clout to work and enough details to get it launched.

I was about to send out an almajcom message inaugurating the process, when an older and wiser colonel told me that a program like that had to be given a code name in order that it might be referred to unambiguously in the future. So I went to the Pentagon code namers. They issued me the words Seek Eagle. We could then issue a directive, and we tasked the Air Proving Ground Command at Eglin to make it happen and keep it going.

They did and they have. And since then, the number and variety of things we have hung on innocent aircraft beggar comprehension. Without Seek Eagle it could not have worked.

All that sounds self-serving, but I must say that Seek Eagle was an idea whose time came, and the implementing directive almost wrote itself.

My thanks to Seek Eagle for its years of service, and thanks to AFA for publicizing their good work. God bless you all.

Brig. Gen. Geoffrey Cheadle,
USAF (Ret.)
Washington, D.C.

Guns, Schmuns

Amazing! In "Aperture" on p. 12 [*September*], it is finally recognized that the gun is no longer the primary weapon for air-to-air battle. Interceptor pilots from the late '50s were not recognized as "fighter pilots" because they didn't carry a gun. All the years since then the "true fighter pilots" fought with a gun. They were the "knights of the air" even though Eddie Rickenbacker, whom I met several times when I flew with the 94th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, agreed that if you needed to use a gun in an air battle you were losing. We've been fighting wars for years and the last use of a gun was in 1988. That's 26 years ago! How about an article about us fighter pilots flying using sensors, missiles, and rocket who were the future of the air battle, for once.

Ray Janes
Denton, Texas

Close Call

Thank you for publishing the article, "The Year of the Kamikaze" [*p. 54*] in the August issue of *Air Force Magazine*. In September 1945, I was on the crew of an empty Liberty cargo ship moored at a downtown pier in San Francisco. We did not know the war plan, but since then, we have learned that the invasion of Japan would have begun on Nov. 1. I am certain that my ship would have loaded military cargo and been a part of the invasion fleet. Reading your article brought back strong memories and the reality that my ship would probably have been destroyed.

Col. Paul A. Stagg,
USAF (Ret.)
Cambridge, Md.

Join Us, CAP

Just finished Issue 5 [*Wingman Magazine*]. It takes awhile to arrive here in Bangkok. Anyway, as usual, a very enjoyable read.

Re: membership decline. Yes, it is certainly dismal looking at the membership numbers. I believe the reason the association had such great numbers in the past was due to the command support of membership. In the ANG back then, we were told to belong to AFA and the National Guard Association. They sent around a computer printout with all the officers listed and whether or not they paid their dues. Demands followed and promotions would be affected. It was expected and you were criticized by command for noncompliance. Needless to say, it worked. I understand that is difficult to do nowadays.

As to an idea for today, might I suggest hitting the CAP up for members. They just became full-fledged airmen and should be willing to join. The few occasions I had to deal with these folks

they were always gung ho and really Air Force. A letter similar to Jimmy Doolittle's might do the trick. Besides the benefits you might emphasize the clout of more members with Congress and so forth.

Keep trying. Thank you for your efforts in everything.

Lt. Col. C. J. Clemens,
ANG/USAF (Ret.)
Bangkok

The More Info the Better

I have been an avid reader of *Air Force Magazine* for many years and enjoyed your July piece, the "Russian Airpower Almanac" [*p. 48*]. That information is important for the public to see. Providing so much information in such a limited space is a difficult task and it was done well.

Additionally, I believe there are a few categories that would serve readers well if they were listed uniformly:

- Unit and R&D cost
- Combat radius—some platforms listed range and ferry range, others listed combat radius
- Gun rate of fire
- Total number of aircraft produced

I will be starting Air Force Euro-NATO joint jet pilot training this year, so research of this nature is quite useful and interesting to me.

Randy Carey
Wichita Falls, Texas

B-1 Longevity

Your article about the B-1 [*"Airpower Classics," September, p. 116*] is incorrect. The longest B-1 combat mission was 23 hours long on 3 May 2004. A/C Mark Bennett, Copilot Mark Johnson, WSOs Mathew Farley and Mathe Clapp, C/S SLAM 53 out of Diego Garcia.

Lt. Col. Mark D. Johnson,
USAF
Deputy Director of Operations
8th Air Force
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Assumptions About Tankers

Thank you for the editorial on the KC-46 [*"Editorial: The Tanker Imperative," September, p. 4*]. I've followed the acquisition of this asset in my retirement. As former study director of the Tanker Requirements Study FY-05 (TRS-05), I cannot re-emphasize enough the need for tanker modernization. Hopefully we've seen an end to war plans simply assuming tanker support will be there, and instead continue to develop a robust tanker programming plan for the outyears. I wouldn't mind seeing a separation in deployment versus employment requirements, but at least seeing tankers become a priority is a step in the right direction.

Lt. Col. Scott Wilhelm,
USAF (Ret.)
Kansas City, Mo.