



## Air Force Association

1501 Lee Highway • Arlington, VA 22209-1198

Telephone: (703) 247-5800

Toll-free: (800) 727-3337

If you know your party's extension enter it or:

Press 1 to enter their last name.

Press 2 for Membership.

Press 3 for the Air Force Memorial Foundation

Or, stay on the line for the operator

Fax: (703) 247-5853

Internet: <http://www.afa.org/>

### Email Addresses

Events..... [events@afa.org](mailto:events@afa.org)

Field Services..... [field@afa.org](mailto:field@afa.org)

Government Relations..... [grl@afa.org](mailto:grl@afa.org)

Industry Relations..... [irl@afa.org](mailto:irl@afa.org)

Insurance..... [afa@marshpm.com](mailto:afa@marshpm.com)

Member Benefits..... [membership@afa.org](mailto:membership@afa.org)

Membership..... [membership@afa.org](mailto:membership@afa.org)

Communications (news media).....  
[communications@afa.org](mailto:communications@afa.org)

CyberPatriot..... [info@uscypatriot.org](mailto:info@uscypatriot.org)

Air Force Memorial Foundation.....  
[airforcememorial.org](http://airforcememorial.org)

### Magazine

Advertising..... [airforcemagsales@afa.org](mailto:airforcemagsales@afa.org)

Editorial Offices..... [afmag@afa.org](mailto:afmag@afa.org)

Letters to Editor Column..... [letters@afa.org](mailto:letters@afa.org)

### Change of Address

Requires four weeks' notice. Please mail your magazine label and first and last name to the Membership Department at 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209-1198. You may also update this information under the Members Only area of our website at [www.afa.org](http://www.afa.org), by calling our Membership Department at 1-800-727-3337, or emailing [membership@afa.org](mailto:membership@afa.org).

### 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.*

### Japanese Fringe

John T. Correll's article, "The Year of the Kamikaze" (August, p. 56) was well-written and accurate—up until the last paragraph. There he goes from fact to fiction, offering a somewhat veiled warning that the Japanese public's more favorable perception of the kamikaze potentially foreshadows a more militarily resurgent Japan. He couldn't be further from the truth.

Correll asserts that the popularity of the recent movie "The Eternal Zero" is an example of this change in perception. However, he missed the nuance of the film—the underlying theme of which is one that appears frequently in Japanese cinema—that the country was deceived and misled by its wartime leaders, yet the nation's soldiers individually devoted their lives to honorably defend their country. The film does not glorify the military or the kamikaze pilots—in fact it shows them as victims, forced to sacrifice their lives in what was clearly a futile endeavor.

Japan has some fairly high-profile personalities with very far-right views; Retired Gen. Toshio Tamogami (a former Air Self-Defense Force Chief of Staff) and former Tokyo Mayor Shintaro Ishihara are examples. They seek a return to a militarily aggressive Japan and offer revisionist views regarding the country's WW II atrocities. Yet their views are clearly on the fringe of Japanese society and not seen as credible by the general public.

There is no more clear evidence of the public's continuing commitment to pacifism than their opposition to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's current, very modest proposals to modify Japan's constitutional limits on collective self-defense. The most recent polling has these proposals being opposed by a large majority of the population: 53 percent against, only 29 percent supporting (*Asahi Shimbun*, July 20, 2015). The primary reason for nonsupport, whether accurate or not, is a widespread belief that these changes will increase the possibility of Japan being involved in a military conflict.

On a recent Sunday in late August, over 25,000 people demonstrated against these constitutional changes in downtown Tokyo, significant given the general apathy of the public over the past several decades to political issues. While Prime Minister Abe desires, and the US govern-

ment supports, a more assertive military role for Japan in Asia, the Japanese public clearly has other ideas, and one can't argue with their logic: As celebrated in September, Japan has remained at peace for 70 years. What other major industrialized country can make a similar statement?

Col. James D. Brophy II,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Tokyo

I wrote "The Kamikazes: Japanese Suicide Units" for the July-August 1994 issue of *Naval Aviation News*. It was part of that magazine's series of commemorative articles observing the 50th anniversary of World War II. I enjoyed John T. Correll's story. Many of his points agreed with my own, particularly that the overall effect of the kamikazes was "not strategically significant in the long run." Of course, sinking 33 Allied and damaging 286 ships was not to be ignored. I doubt that if you were in those crews, you would consider the suicide attacks insignificant.

My father was on his way to a destroyer off Okinawa in May 1945. He had left my mother in New York City, pregnant with me (I was born in early June, and she never knew exactly where he was.). He was standing at the bus stop at Alameda [Calif.], orders in hand, for a ride to the piers where he would catch a transport to Pearl Harbor and then out to his new assignment off Japan. At the last moment it seems, a jeep came up and its driver told him his orders had been changed. He was, indeed, going to Pearl, but had been reassigned to a top-secret shore unit making invasion maps—the ones to be

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](mailto: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

held by the amphibious units as they hit the beach during the actual invasion of the home islands late in 1945 or 1946. That was as far west as he got as the Japanese surrendered in August.

While writing my kamikaze story, I asked fellow researcher and author Henry Sakaida for information. He told me, "There were divided opinions about the kamikaze effort. Zero pilot [and top surviving Japanese ace] Saburo Sakai was initially for it, but later on, thought that it was a complete waste. There were others of higher rank who felt the same, but they had to keep their thoughts to themselves." Henry went on. "The scarcity of aircraft at the end of the war and fuel was very evident. Schoolkids went out in the mountains to gather pine cones, which could be processed to produce oil (fuel). Some of the biplane trainers used alcohol. They actually had plans to fly these biplanes in the final kamikaze raids."

If you can find a copy, *Kamikaze* is a memoir written by a very young Japanese army air force fighter pilot (Hayabusa/Oscar) who was saved by the Japanese surrender only a few days before he was scheduled to fly his own suicide mission. The book was originally published by Ballantine in the 1950s, but I think it has been republished since then. As an introduction to my article, I used the author's description watching his lifelong friend fly an obsolete Type

96 (Claude) fighter against Allied ships. It is a very personal account that is worth searching out.

Cmdr. Peter B. Mersky,  
USNR (Ret.)  
Alexandria, Va.

#### Arm Rasslin'

A few days ago I had a conversation with an Army friend. We were talking about close air support, and he opined that while the Air Force had "developed a few niches, its primary function remained to support the Army" [*Action in Congress*, June, p. 5]. After a few words of exchange, we decided to talk about golf. Later I began to think about missions and the services, and then it occurred to me that we are at it again, behaving like the "heavy equipment operators" a former CSAF suggested we'd become if we didn't elevate our thinking. There's going to be an A-10 vs. F-35 fly-off in 2018 to determine the best CAS solution (and hopefully achieve some muting of political criticism). This AF vs. AF contest—seeing which platform suits the needs of our sister service—seems like a pretty narrow act, likely serving only to perturb the service and its critics and the eventual recipients of CAS as well. Since CAS is a mission, why isn't this evaluation considering all the resources used supporting the ground commander and his forces? How and where do the Cobra and the Apache contribute? How

about the Predator and Reaper? Isn't the AC-130 a CAS resource, too? Seems like we actually have a joint investment in the mission. Wouldn't our joint future capability for CAS be better if we looked at the spectrum of mission resources rather than having an Air Force arm wrestling match in public? Not sure why 2018 was chosen as the start date for this comparison, but it certainly gives DOD time to open the aperture and examine the mission, and not just a couple of platforms.

Col. Steve Mosier,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Williamsburg, Va.

#### Spyplane Vs. Spyplane

Further clarification of the picture of the "A-12s secret CIA spyplanes," June 2015, p. 30. Colonel Mutch had it almost perfectly accurate [*Letters: No Lake Wobegone*, August, p. 5].

Following are some additional facts about these magnificent aircraft. Yes, the picture shows an aircraft with a second crew station and the A-12 was a single-seat aircraft. The picture is an SR-71. I can tell that by the tail No. 17964 (as seen in enlarged depiction). It is also true that the A-12 production was interrupted to accommodate the production of three YF-12s. After the YF-12s, the assembly line went back to produce a total of 15 A-12s, of which 12 were one-seat aircraft [and] three were two-seaters. One of the three was a trainer and the last two production



**CONNECT** across generations  
**SHARE** experiences  
**SUPPORT** our future leaders  
**JOIN** the Association of Graduates

The Association of Graduates is the alumni association of the U.S. Air Force Academy dedicated to serving our graduates and members, enhancing the heritage of this premier institution and enriching the cadet experience by funding programs otherwise not supported.

Memberships start at only \$60 per year and support the programs which help create the future leaders of our country.

[www.usafa.org](http://www.usafa.org)

[membership@aogusafa.org](mailto:membership@aogusafa.org)

719.472.0300



Career Services

Merchandise discounts

Travel Deals

Checkpoints magazine and more!



aircraft were A-12s designated as M-21s. These aircraft carried a reconnaissance drone on top of the aft fuselage. That program was known as "Tagboard." The second seat accommodated the launch control officer (LCO) who launched the drone at approximately Mach 3.2.

Col. Sam Ursini,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.

### JSTARS, the Transformer

It is great that the Air Force says it plans to keep its ISR iron triad ["ISR Iron Triad," *August*, p. 38] viable for decades to come. Unfortunately, these plans show that the Air Force still does not fully appreciate how the unprecedented capabilities of the E-8 JSTARS are transforming the way we defeat land forces.

Napoleon explained why a platform like JSTARS is so important when he said that "aptitude for war is aptitude for movement. ... Victory is to the armies which maneuver." Movement is how armies create the key advantages of surprise, mass, and position. But now JSTARS makes it possible to exploit the importance of an army's movement with its unprecedented ability to detect, locate, track, and target vehicles attempting to move throughout a large area, even when these vehicles move at night or in bad weather. Analysis and experience show that this capability is an extremely powerful force multiplier, allowing a relatively small number of attack aircraft to have an even greater impact than

previously would have been possible with hundreds, if not thousands, of attack sorties. Thanks to JSTARS, it is possible to put an enemy commander on the horns of a dilemma that has no satisfactory answer. If he attempts to move his forces, JSTARS targeting can inflict unacceptable losses; but if he attempts to reduce his army's vulnerability by not moving, he loses all the advantages that movement can provide while simultaneously allowing more time for his forces to be detected, located, targeted and destroyed.

Yet despite all the advantages that JSTARS' unprecedented capabilities provide, the Air Force's plans continue to show, as Col. Henry L. Cyr, the JSTARS wing commander, has stated, the system's mission is "not well understood." If the Air Force really understood the unprecedented advantages possible with JSTARS, it would not have prematurely stopped the system's production. Nor would it have failed to equip the E-8 with new engines that would have dramatically increased the system's performance, efficiency, and reliability. It is interesting that the Air Force says the E-8 fleet has grown increasingly expensive to maintain due to its age, when the E-3 fleet is even older and the Air Force has equipped many other types of old, but valuable, aircraft with new engines. So here we are in the midst of a war with ISIS without enough JSTARS

to provide adequate coverage of the areas where ISIS is operating, and the Air Force is planning to cut the size of the existing JSTARS fleet in order to save money for its replacement with a new, smaller jet that won't be ready to operate until 2023. I am truly amazed!

Lt. Col. Price T. Bingham,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Melbourne, Fla.

### Spies on Guam

The August 2015 *Air Force Magazine* article "Bombers on Guam" [p. 20] states that bombers have been rotating to Guam since 2004 as part of USAF's strategic deterrence mission.

Maybe not continuously, but it's been going on a lot longer than that.

During the summers of 1953 and 1954, I was a member of the 509th BW, flying the B-50D, with a nuclear mission, doing three-month TDYs to Guam in support of the Korean War.

I've always felt our wing was an important factor in establishing the truce. When the North Koreans and Chinese walked out of peace talks, our wing went to a very visible alert status. A few days later the talks resumed and we know the rest of the story. It's my belief that the (known) spies on Guam reported that the Americans were getting serious and maybe it was time to return to the table!

Lt. Col. George M. Gordon,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Stuart, Fla.

# AIRPOWER CLASSICS

**AIR FORCE MAGAZINE'S COLLECTION  
OF CLASSIC MILITARY AIRCRAFT  
FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

Hardcover • 136 pages • Giant 14.5" x 11.5" size  
Superb artworks • Printed on art paper in full color  
Classic fighters, bombers, transports, recon aircraft  
USAF • US Navy • USMC • RAF • Luftwaffe and many more  
Detailed specifications • Histories and interesting facts  
Sewnbound • Laminated dustjacket • Full index

**In stock, in time for the holidays!**

**Order Now!**

Call: **1-800-978-9278** or Order Online at: **www.afa.org/store**



**YOUR PRICE**  
only **\$39.95**  
plus shipping & handling

