

Life Savers

Enjoyed reading “A Rolling Bomb at Bagram” [September, p. 80]. I was very proud of these four airman and of their bravery. I was disappointed that for saving the two crew members and aircraft they were just awarded the AFCM. Seems to me that it should have warranted a much higher medal.

CMSgt. Ronnie Barham,
USAF (Ret.)
Burlleson, Texas

Stink Bombs Away

Enjoyed your posting on the VA-25 Skyraider “toilet bomb” story [“Flashback: Stink Bomb,” September, p. 94]. The CO, Cmdr. [Clarence Stoddard Jr.], the pilot on that mission, was shot down by a SAM and lost his life about a year later. There’s an interesting video available somewhere which shows the release of the toilet and its descent into a thick forest.

Capt. Zip Rausa,
USN (Ret.)
Vienna, Va.

What’s the Buzz?

That was a fine article on Buzz Aldrin [“Buzz,” September, p. 87], but I’d make two additions.

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The good news is that his Gemini space walk was a textbook demonstration of how to work outside in 0G and put the program back on track.

The bad news is that (as he confessed in the film “In the Shadow of the Moon”), to be ready in the event of an abort, he turned on the rendezvous radar during the Apollo 11 descent, overloaded the computer (it only had about 92K of memory), which alarmed, and came close to causing an abort.

Don Schmick
Johns Creek, Ga.

To Russia With Love, U-2

I found the article in *Air Force Magazine*, September, p. 102, on the Soviet airfield of Ramenskoye by Mr. Jeffery T. Richelson to be very interesting [“Target: Ramenskoye”]. During my 28 years in the Air Force, I spent most of my time analyzing photography from all of the resources that he mentioned. The U-2 was a very versatile aircraft, but prior to the loss of the U-2 aircraft with Gary Powers, [work had already started on] the world’s fastest and most reliable aircraft, the SR-71 Blackbird. This aircraft provided USAF with exceptional photography of most of the Soviet Union and China for nearly 20 years. To talk about the photographic coverage of the area mentioned has to include the spectacular aerial coverage that this aircraft provided for USAF and the nation. The pre-nomenclature “SR” stood for Strategic Reconnaissance. No aircraft or missile had the capability to intercept this aircraft on its mission. Thanks again for the article.

CMSgt. Ron Weaver
USAF (Ret.)
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Feeling Hot

I was a member of the Tactical Air Command Composite Air Strike Force (CASF) that participated in the Lebanon

Crisis of 1958. My military duties were POL flight line aircraft refueling. July 1958, two squadrons of F-100s from the 354th Tactical Fighter Wing along with C-130s departed from Myrtle Beach AFB—destination, Incirlik AB, Turkey. We set up a “non-air-conditioned” 30-man tent with the assist of our next door neighbors, Marine Corps fighter pilots. We got the refueling job done, did not lose any aircraft, and the mission was successful. I’m truly disappointed with Secretary James’ comments that the biggest recent hardship at Incirlik was the lack of AC that forced airmen to sleep on cots in their air-conditioned work places [“Forward Deployed: Anti-ISIS Operations From Turkey,” September, p. 14]. If this the biggest hardship airmen face today—no AC—then we should all regroup and get our USAF priorities in order.

David Ribbe
Nanuet, N.Y.

Flipped Miles

I noticed that the [“Infographic: The Mystery of the Raiders’ Range”] on p. 30 of the September issue primarily uses estimates by the Army Air Forces, historians, etc. Of all of the ranges shown, I believe that Admiral Nimitz’s After-Action Report (AAR) statement is probably the most accurate, as he had access to the navigation and captain’s logs of the USS *Hornet* and USS

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Enterprise. His distance would be in nautical miles, so if his AAR listed the distance as 650 nm, then the statute mile distance would be 748 miles. If the distance was 650 statute miles the the nautical mile distance would be 565 nautical miles. (BTW, your conversion of nautical and statute miles in paragraph 5 is backwards: 1 nautical mile = 1.15 statute miles so 700 nautical miles is the same as 805.5 statute miles, not vice versa as you have it.)

If General Arnold's 768 miles are statute miles, then Admiral Nimitz's 650 nautical miles converted to 748 statute

miles makes both within a three percent margin of error. Remember the USS *Hornet* was still moving and it took an hour to launch all 16 aircraft. Since her top speed was around 30 nm/hour (knots or kn) or 37.4 mph, she could easily travel 20 statute miles in that time.

Actually, I would say both Admiral Nimitz and General Arnold are the closest with the former using nautical miles and the latter his preferred statute miles.

MSgt. Dennis B. Swaney,
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Oroville, Calif.

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To be Lieutenant General: Mark D. Kelly, Jerry P. Martinez, Robert D. McMurry Jr.

To be Major General: Jon T. Thomas.

To be Brigadier General: Kenneth P. Ekman.

NOMINATIONS: To be Brigadier General: Brian E. Hastings.

CHANGES: Gen. John E. Hyten, from Cmdr., AFSPC, Peterson AFB, Colo., to Cmdr., STRATCOM, Offutt AFB, Neb. ... Lt. Gen. Robert D. McMurry Jr., from Cmdr., AFRL, AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, to Cmdr., AFLCMC, AFMC, Wright-Patterson AFB. ... Brig. Gen. Charles L. Plummer, from Dir., Professional Dev., USAF, Pentagon, to Cmdr., AF Legal Ops. Agency, JB Anacostia-Bolling, D.C. ... Lt. Gen. John F. Thompson, from Cmdr., AFLCMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, to Cmdr., SMC, AFSPC, Los Angeles AFB, Calif. ☉



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