

A/TQ

AIRLIFT/TANKER QUARTERLY
Volume 26 • Number 3 • Summer 2018



“All the Time, Everywhere”
Celebrating the 35th Anniversary of
Worldwide Air Force Special Operations

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WHITE PAPER:
Airlift/Tanker Association – Creating a Professional Mobility Culture

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THE MAYAGÜEZ INCIDENT

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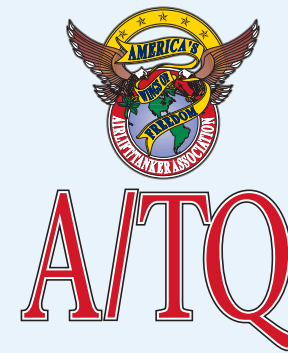
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AIRLIFT/TANKER QUARTERLY
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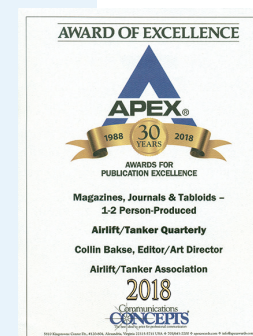
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS
FOR THE 2018 A/TA
Golden Anniversary Celebration
25-28 OCTOBER IN
GRAPEVINE, TEXAS!



On the Cover: An AC-130U "Spooky" gunship jettisons flares over an area near Hurlburt Field, Florida, home of the Air Force Special Operations Command. The flares are a countermeasure for heat-seeking missiles that may be fired at the aircraft during real world missions. The aircraft is from the 4th Special Operations Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Julianne Showalter, circa 2005).

The Penultimate...

...a late 17th century word derived from the Latin *paenultimus*, from *paene* 'almost' + *ultimus* 'last.'

My son Justin suggested using the word "penultimate" when I told him I was having trouble knowing how and what to write about my impending departure from the A/TQ. It's not often that one gets the opportunity to use a word they have never used before, but that is exactly what I have the bittersweet opportunity to do with this column, my *penultimate* as editor of A/TQ. Bitter in that, having produced the magazine for the last 30 years, I will miss learning about and relating the remarkable history of American mobility forces in a recurring, systematic way. Sweet in that I will not be facing a publication deadline every 90 days.

The main thing I want to express is my gratitude to the Association for letting me tell its stories for the last three decades. What started out as a simple client/service provider relationship grew into an on-going labor of love for me – the more I learned about America's air mobility saga, and the remarkable men and women who people the story, the more I wanted to learn about it, and the more I wanted to relate the story. While I will be leaving the A/TQ in the capable hands of Robert (Bob) Fehringer, as editor, and Alyson (Aly) Soden, as art director, I do not intend on leaving the air mobility community, nor the many great friends I have had the pleasure of making over the years – I may even submit a story for the new editor's consideration every now and then!

Now, on to other business. While the A/TQ doesn't have a "letters-to-the-editor" section I have, now and then, received letters from readers – *alas, usually correcting something or other*. However, some of the letter writers simply wish to recount their part in a story that appeared in the magazine. I would like to share a recent letter that does exactly that in relation to last issues cover story, *Eyes in the Skies*:

Mr Bakse,

As a young 2Lt I was assigned to the 56thWRS at Yokota AB, Japan in February 1970. Our unit had 5 WC-135B and 3 WB-57F aircraft assigned and we remained there until the unit was disbanded in early 1972. Our unit ranged from Yokota AB to such places as Howard AB, Canal Zone and down to Mendoza, Argentina and also deployed to Pago Pago, American Samoa. We also supported deployments of SR-71s from the US to Guam, while also flying "star catcher" routes.

I hope this can add to the wide operations of Air Weather Service.

Thank you,
Roger W. Hansen
Colonel, USAF (Ret)

Thank you Colonel Hansen for the letter, and thank you for your service!

And, once again, thank you to the Association for a very rewarding last 30 years!

Collin Bakse, editor

Chairman's Comments



Gen Duncan McNabb,
USAF (Ret)

I hope everyone is having a superb summer full of family, friends and fun. The Fourth of July celebration always vividly reminds us of our great national experiment in democracy and freedom, and the generations that have continued to risk all so

that our nation continues to be "that beacon on the hill for all mankind." Our mobility forces are one of our Nation's true asymmetric advantages in preserving our Nation's dream, and A/TA is an instrumental part in celebrating those forces and the great legacy we have been entrusted with...our Nation's strategic ability to move.

Our 50th Airlift/Tanker Association Convention, Air Mobility Technology Exposition and Air Mobility Command and A/TA Symposium is rapidly approaching...and it should be quite a celebration. The new Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center in Grapevine, TX is eagerly ready to host us on 25-28 Oct 2018. We plan to make our 50th convention truly spectacular and one of our best ever...all centered around our theme of "Heritage-Heroes-Horizons"...and registration is open.

We are very honored that our 50th Anniversary Hall of Fame Recipient is General (ret) Walt Kross. Not only is General Kross one of our greatest mobility leaders – instrumental in standing up the new Air Mobility Command that brought our airlift and tanker forces together as Commander in Chief of USTRANSCOM and Commander, Air Mobility Command – he has also gone above and beyond as the Chairman of A/TA from 2008-2013, laying a tremendous foundation for our next 50 years. Our A/TA President, Chief Kerver, goes into much more detail in his President's Message, but suffice it to say, no one is more deserving of this award.

We have an outstanding lineup of Senior DOD and Military Leaders invited to talk and visit with you including our Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (and former Commander of USTRANSCOM and AMC), Gen Paul Selva; our Secretary of the Air Force, the Honorable Heather Wilson; our CSAF, Gen David Goldfein; and, our Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Kaleth Wright. They will join our Commanders of USTRANSCOM and AMC as our featured speakers. Most of these

leaders have already confirmed and others have given us a tentative yes.

As I've said many times before, no one does Total Force better than the Air Mobility Command...and our top Air Force Total Force Leadership, Lt Gen Maryanne Miller, Chief of the Air Force Reserves, and Lt Gen Scott "Catfish" Rice, Chief of the Air National Guard have already confirmed they will join us again.

In honor of our 50th and to make sure we take full advantage of our superb industry partners and all the Air Force and military leadership (of all ranks) that will be coming together in Grapevine, AMC plans to have a full Industry Day on Thursday, 25 October. Additionally, we are well ahead of the normal number of exhibitors we have registered for our Technology Exposition. That said, there is always room for more, and if you are interested in joining us, please contact our Vice President of Industry, Cary Walgamott at IndustryVP@atalink.org or go to our A/TA website to register.

A quick shout out for the tremendous work by the 50th Anniversary Committee, led by Patti Cost, to get us ready for this celebration. What they have collectively done to get us ready for the 50th has been huge. A lot of the ground work is also done at our quarterly board meetings made possible by our outstanding Chapter and Wing hosts. I want to give a big thanks to the Pacific Northwest Chapter President, Maj Chris Halbleib, the 62AW Commander, Col Scovill Currin, and all the leadership from Joint Base Lewis-McChord for their great support for our Spring Board meeting in June. Also, thanks in advance to LtCol Kris Geis, CMSGT Mark Cozzupoli and the 105th Airlift Wing leadership team at Stewart Air National Guard Base, for agreeing to host our Summer meeting in August. These visits with our chapters and members are invaluable, and a heck of a lot of fun.

In closing, I really look forward to seeing you at the Grapevine Gaylord Texan Resort and celebrating A/TA's 50th Anniversary. Between outstanding speakers, excellent seminars, industry day, new Heritage Room, a much bigger corn hole (airdrop) tournament, and saluting our newest Hall of Fame Inductee, Gen Walt Kross – this will truly be a celebration to remember. Y'all come and collectively enjoy our great heritage and camaraderie, salute our superb mobility warrior award winners and their families and make some new history.

See ya there!

Warmest Regards,

Gen Duncan McNabb (Ret), Chairman

President's Message



CMSgt Mike Kerver,
USAF (Ret)

As we always like to say...where has the time gone? By the time you read this, we'll be within three months of our 50th anniversary Convention and Symposium in Grapevine, Texas!

Registration opened 2 July 2018, and I encourage all of you to attend this premier gathering of current and former Air Mobility professionals who deeply care about the Mobility mission and the exceptional Airmen who execute it! Registration for our 50th Anniversary gathering is easy – go to our website at www.atalink.org and click the "My ATA" link to establish an account (if you haven't yet), then register and make your hotel reservations.

On behalf of the Board of Officers, I'm honored to announce the selection of General (ret) Walter Kross as our 30th Hall of Fame inductee! A visionary leader of impeccable character,

Secretary's Notes



Col Mike Cassidy,
USAF (Ret)

Thanks to Pacific Northwest Chapter President, Maj Chris Halbleib, the 62AW commander Col Scovill Currin, and all leadership from Joint Base Lewis-McChord for their great support for our Spring Board meeting on Saturday, 9 June 2018.

Please go to our web site <http://www.atalink.org/content/> to see the full article on our visit to McChord, which includes some great



AIC Sara Hoerichs (62 AW PA) documented the Association's reunion with Col Joe Jackson (Medal of Honor recipient), his wife Rose and their son and daughter Bonnie and Dave, along with Mrs. Marion Cannon, the widow of CMSgt William Cannon, former A/TA President and Hall of Fame recipient. The pictures were taken at the intersection of Col Joe Jackson and CMSgt William Cannon Boulevards on McChord Field, Washington.

General Kross commanded both U.S. Transportation and Air Mobility Command from July 1996 through his retirement in September 1998. Serving a long and distinguished 34-year career, General Kross is a command pilot with over 5,700 hours across every airframe within the Air Mobility inventory. During his tenure at USTRANSCOM and AMC, General Kross introduced new readiness initiatives and processes, upgraded mobility assets and infrastructure, and trained, organized and prepared his airmen for the challenges presented by post 9-11 operations. A consummate team builder, General Kross' dedication, selfless service and innovation helped turn Air Mobility into a universally respected and indispensable component of America's arsenal, and he is a quintessential Air Mobility Warrior deserving of induction into the A/TA Hall of Fame.

This year's convention theme, "Heritage, Heroes, Horizons" celebrates not only A/TA's 50th anniversary, but also reflects General Kross' tireless commitment, distinguished achievements and unparalleled leadership to our Nation, our Air Force, our Air Mobility Command and our Association.

General Kross led A/TA as its Chairman from

photos. Below is a shot of the A/TA Board with Col Joe and Mrs. Rose Jackson and family, Mrs. Marion Cannon and Pacific Northwest Chapter members. It was wonderful to spend time with these heroes at the intersection of Jackson and Cannon Boulevards.

Thanks to Ms. Patti Cost, our Vice President for Programs and her program committee plus the 50th Anniversary planning committee for the terrific job ensuring our 50th Anniversary convention in Grapevine, Texas will be a great success. I hope to see you there, remember mark your calendars, 25 to 28 October 2018.

On Saturday, 11 August, we'll meet at Stewart Air National Guard Base, New York for our Summer board meeting. Thanks to Lt Col Kris Geis, CMSgt Mark Cozzupoli and the 105th

October 2008 through October 2013 and currently serves as a member of the Association's nominating committee. Gen Kross will be honored and formally recognized during the Hall of Fame Award Banquet held the last night of our convention.

The A/TA Hall of Fame was established in 1988, and formal induction is the "highest" honor the Association can bestow upon an individual or mission area demonstrating superior or sustained performance in the advancement of air mobility and refueling. Each year, the Association makes a call for nomination submissions between January and April. We know there are many deserving Mobility heroes among us and encourage you to go to www.atalink.org for submission requirements and package guidelines.

As a lasting tribute to his legacy and achievements, a bronze bust depicting General Kross will also be permanently mounted in the Mobility Memorial Park located at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and I look forward to seeing all of you in Grapevine for our 50th anniversary convention!

Best / Mike

Airlift Wing's leadership team for their support.

We'll keep our web site updated regarding upcoming meetings so please subscribe to make sure you see the latest. All members are welcome to join us at the Board meetings.

Our summer meeting will continue to focus on preparation for the 50th Anniversary convention and symposium. Additionally, the Board is always looking for ways to improve the value of A/TA for all our members and the local chapters.

Please, invite someone you know (Guard, Reserve, Active, Retired, Civic Leader, aircrew, maintenance, port, support, etc.) to join this great organization and get involved with your local chapter.

Thanks for all you do, every day!

Mike



HERITAGE › HEROES › HORIZONS

Airlift/Tanker Association to Celebrate 50th Anniversary in Grapevine, Texas, 25-28 October 2018

The global air mobility community will converge on Grapevine, Texas (Dallas area) from 25-28 October 2018 for the 50th Annual Airlift/Tanker Association National Convention, Air Mobility Technology Exposition and the co-sponsored Air Mobility Command and A/TA Symposium. The purpose: to preserve mobility culture encompassed within the theme of "Heritage, Heroes, Horizons."

The annual conventions and symposiums are much like family reunions, as well as a place to nurture personal relationships and spur professional development. The industry-focused Air Mobility Technology Exposition brings technology, organizations, and people together in a rich and educational exchange of information.

Symposium seminars on a wide range of subjects are presented annually to address key issues of air mobility, provide educational opportunities and enhance the professional growth of our members. Some seminars are dedicated to heritage and heroes, with many opportunities to share "war stories" with and from everyone, young and old. Young Leader and unit reunions throughout the years have revived and maintained long-standing relationships.

Attendees will hear "State of the Force" and special presentations from key leaders and witness the presentation of multiple awards recognizing individual and group accomplishments. Professional development of the force occurs from airman to 4-Star General, as the event provides an extraordinary opportunity to meet, greet and share personally with people of all ranks and backgrounds. The annual gathering of the global air mobility community is an event not to miss, a place to observe leadership in action and meet real-life heroes, plus hear their stories firsthand.

A/TA FOCUSED PRIORITIES AND CONVENTION THEME

Three major priorities currently drive activities in the Association: Supporting Mobility Airmen, Preserving Mobility Culture and Strengthening Mobility Bonds throughout the air mobility community – Active, Guard, Reserve, retired military, civilians, industry partners and businesses, plus civic leaders representing mobility communities from around the world. For the 2018 event, the Association will focus on preserving mobility culture via the overarching theme of "Heritage, Heroes, Horizons."

Beginning with an initial gathering in 1969, the preservation of air mobility culture has been a priority for the Association. From that first "reunion" to recurring annual conventions and local events, A/TA strives to preserve air mobility culture. Living legends and heroes continue to join and inspire us at our annual event, current leaders set the course to enable the mission, and our rising airmen gain professional insights and knowledge that will help them carry us forward to new horizons in the years ahead.

Generations of Air Mobility Airmen and Leaders Come Together Under One Roof

Convention attendees arrive from all over the globe, traveling from the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, the Pacific and Asia. Many past and present leaders join the celebration to share their perspectives on Air Mobility and salute current generations of Mobility Airmen. Among their ranks are active duty and retired participants from Airman to 4-Star General, including current and former Air Force Chiefs of Staff and Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force.

Hundreds of rising Mobility Airmen participate in the well-planned activities related to the convention. The vast majority of airmen, non-commissioned officers and officers attending come from operational units, functional areas and staffs throughout the air mobility community.

Also attending are industry partners, business interests, civic

leaders representing our air mobility communities, joint service partners and allied nation participants. A/TA chapters also send representatives. A legion of Association leaders, advisors and volunteers manage and expertly execute the event.

CONVENTION OVERVIEW AND EVENTS SUMMARY

Each year, the convention schedule is packed with activities and includes the following major elements:

- ★ AMC sponsored conferences, command forums and functional area meetings
- ★ A/TA business and convention coordination meetings
- ★ Social events and competitive fun
- ★ An Air Mobility Technology Exposition
- ★ Keynote speeches by major leaders
- ★ Professional development seminars and information briefings
- ★ Awards presentations and recognition ceremonies. For a full description of all the awards and the accomplishments of the recipients over the years, see the convention issues of *A/TQ*, available online at www.atalink.org.

Plus, this year, in celebration of our Golden Anniversary, there will be special events and activities held in the Heritage Room [see ad on facing page].

Air Mobility Technology Exposition – Strengthening Industry Partnerships

America's aerospace industry plays an integral role in providing air mobility technologies and capabilities, and A/TA's Industry Partners play a vital role in assuring the success of the Association. Their continued participation in A/TA and its annual conventions are invaluable to the Association and help it meet its objectives.

The Air Mobility Technology Exhibition hall typically features nearly 100 booths filled with displays from industry partners, defense contractors, service providers, retail products, community groups and non-profit companies, plus a number of military units and organizations. With daytime meals and evening receptions provided in the Exhibition Hall, the din of excited voices fills the air as participants meet and greet each other and experience firsthand the technological prowess of our Industry Partners and the possibilities for the future.

From long-standing partners and aerospace industry giants to newcomers, niche industries and civic representatives, there is more than enough information and displays to please everyone. Participants can touch and feel the exhibits, watch videos or fly a simulator.

Preserving Our Culture

Our annual conventions confirm that there are no other forums quite like them, nor a better place to connect, reconnect and celebrate what we all hold dear in our hearts: the mission of Air Mobility and the people who make it happen. Our passion for excellence, plus the desire to share and learn, is what unites the A/TA family and the global air mobility community together in a wonderful spirit of service, mission support, professional growth and patriotism. Relationship building at both the personal and organizational level has always been at the core of Association activities. Since its first reunion in 1969, the Association has truly grown to become "the tie that binds" our global Air Mobility Community together. This tradition will continue in 2018 when we gather to celebrate our 50th Anniversary in Grapevine, Texas, from 25-28 October. *See you there!* ■

AIRLIFT/TANKER ASSOCIATION 50TH ANNIVERSARY MOBILITY HERITAGE PROGRAM

CELEBRATING THE LEGACY, CULTURE, HISTORY & CUSTOMS OF AMERICA'S AIRLIFT, TANKER, AEROMEDICAL & MOBILITY SUPPORT OPERATIONS AND PERSONNEL

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JOIN US IN THE HERITAGE ROOM AT THE 50TH ANNUAL A/TA CONVENTION & SYMPOSIUM 25, 26 & 27 OCTOBER › 2100-2400 HRS

WHITE PAPER

Airlift/Tanker Association – Creating a Professional Mobility Culture

It started with the promise of a few mobility airmen—to maintain the bonds of brotherhood forged in the skies over South East Asia. It became the strength of many: The Airlift/Tanker Association—the premier organization of mobility professionals in the world’s greatest Air Force. When ten former members of the 834th Air Division hosted a reunion in 1969, they shared only a commitment—to support and advance airlift in the fight for freedom. For the next 49 years, those ideals launched an association that grew and expanded to become the dynamic force it is today.

The early days of the annual gathering were primarily classic reunions of their day. As time went on, the annual reunion was expanded to include a trade show and some speakers. In 1982, 300 people attended the day and half convention in St. Louis, which included 24 exhibit booths, a banquet speaker and the annual business meeting. The annual convention kept growing and expanding its professional development elements. By 1988, the first educational seminars were added. Although the seminars were primarily panels, the topics were of great interest to the mobility airmen – ops, personnel, retention.

In the summer of 1992, the then-Airlift Association board, proposed changing the name of the Association to the Airlift/Tanker Association. This paralleled the standup of Air Mobility Command which combined airlift and tanker forces under one operational command. General Ronald R. Fogleman, the new CINCUSSTRANSCOM and the Commander of Air Mobility Command, felt that expanding the Association’s horizons was important to help facilitate the cultural transformation to this new air mobility mission construct required as the tanker community moved to the new Air Mobility Command.

The combining of the airlift and tanker communities into a new Air Mobility Command also presented a rare and singular opportunity to establish a worldwide professional air mobility cadre with esprit de corps, pride, and an identity as the Air Force’s air mobility professionals. General Fogleman quickly recognized this need to create a core professional culture within the air mobility community, one that would have immediate and lasting impact, and serving as a necessary deterrent to languishing as one of second class airmen. He felt that it was time for the Command’s culture to change from “the trash haulers” or “those with spoons in their pockets” to one best described as the “new proud and professional mobility airmen” culture. To accomplish this, General Fogleman established four initiatives, one of which was for this newly-characterized Airlift/Tanker Association (A/TA) to become the center of gravity for providing air mobility professional development seminars, speakers, panels, and a central platform where the command leadership could talk to mobility airmen from across the globe.

Additionally, the command began to explore ways to fund attendance at A/TA, since prior to then, all attendees funded their own way. Thus, in Dallas in 1993, A/TA’s professional development seminar program began with 24 seminars.

Since then, these seminars have formed the basis for what has become the co-sponsored Air Mobility Symposium. Between 1997 and 2017, more than 38,300 mobility airmen attended the A/TA convention, the largest attendance coming in 2010 (3,180). One of the discriminators for the A/TA is the percentage of enlisted folks who attend and get to experience the pride and professionalism that comes from the seminars and presentations by the senior leadership of AMC, the Air Force, sister services and allies (15,500+ between 1997 and 2017). Other such organizations tend to have an attendee list that is very top heavy in rank.

During the same time, DoD General Council Office routinely referred to the A/TA conference as the ideal model of how to manage a conference in accordance with the Joint Ethics Regulation.

The “A/TA Convention” now consists of three distinct, measurable, and accountable elements: The A/TA Business Convention, the Mobility Technology Exposition, and the Air Mobility Symposium—the central, core, stand-alone dominant element. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, A/TA was honored that the Air Force Association (AFA), a national military association per OSD regulation, now emulates the A/TA format after observing A/TA for several years. Every AMC commander since General Fogleman has continued to find A/TA to be the best vehicle for them to talk directly to their mobility airmen on important professional matters.

Over the years, the symposium program consisted of between 36 and 44 seminars, depending on the number of attendees, plus 5 to 9 major address speakers. The seminars and other program activities focus on education, information, coalition and joint relationship development, retention, and morale development and provide an unmatched opportunity for Airmen to engage directly with their senior leaders or mobility heroes. The seminars range in subjects from current policy changes, to challenges in the field, to leadership development, to historical perspectives from mobility heroes like Medal of Honor recipient Col Joe Jackson. The exhibition hall also offers the Airmen the opportunity to engage with our industry partners directly and discuss ways to make our force more lethal and effective. We regularly receive feedback from our industry partners relating an inspiration to develop new capabilities based on discussions from Airmen.

For example, attendees had the opportunity to hear Medal of Honor recipient Col Joe Jackson discuss the events that led up to his heroic effort to save fellow Americans. They also heard famed Candy Bomber Col Gail Halvorsen talk about the Berlin Airlift. One year, there was a panel that included Col Halvorsen and a gentleman who was one of the kids in Berlin as Col Halvorsen dropped the candy. Other historical topics included mobility operations in Korea, planning and executing the return of the POWs from Vietnam, Operation Eagle Claw, and Operation Christmas Drop. And like all the seminars, the attendees are afforded the opportunity to ask questions of the speakers. Each year, there were seminars on current personnel issues such as the post 9-11 GI Bill, the new retirement system, changes to OPRs and EPRs, command chief master sergeants, and active and retired 4-Star panels. Routinely, there are seminars such as updates on the new KC-46 tanker and the new tanker bed down, technology changes like heads-up displays and fleet status.

Attendees are also offered an opportunity to hear from representatives of the Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force,

the Royal Canadian Air Force and the German Air Force about mobility missions in their countries. Sister Services have also presented seminars such as the U.S. Coast Guard presentation on its relief efforts after the Haiti earthquake.

As the important challenges and issues change each year, the topics at the Air Mobility Symposium change to provide the attendees with the latest information. Maybe it is Rated Force Management or certification under the Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) program.

Whatever it is, the topic can be addressed at A/TA. Survey data supports the importance of the seminars with feedback such as: How would you rate A/TA to other professional development symposiums you have attended? 74.69% above average or higher.

The major address speakers provide an excellent opportunity for both the speaker and the attendee. Over the years, the attendees have heard from numerous SECAF’s, CSAF’s, and CMSAF’s in addition to representatives from the U.S. Army and U.S. Marines. On two occasions the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has addressed the audience. The Deputy Chairman NATO Military Committee also spoke. For most attendees, this will be the only time they will have an opportunity to hear the senior leadership of the Air Force and DoD speak. And, the Symposium provides the one annual, singular opportunity for those senior leaders to address the mobility airmen about key DoD and Air Force issues.

The Total Force is also absolutely central to the Air Mobility Symposium. Since the beginning of both AMC and A/TA in 1992, The Chief of the Air Force Reserve and the Director of the Air National Guard have used this stage to communicate to not only their members, but to the Total Force. Additionally, the two have held commander’s calls with their respective airmen at the convention.

Importantly, the A/TA Convention differentiates itself by staying true to and building upon General Fogelman’s vision for professional development for the most mobility airmen. While most conventions focus on senior and mid-level managers, A/TA focuses on the younger airmen.

Every year approximately 50 percent of all attendees come to the Air Mobility Symposium for the first time. This is by design, since this exposes the rank and file to truly valuable Air Mobility Command-developed seminars, sanctioned speakers, and even training—while they are exposed to the Technology Exposition complete with learning outcomes. Consistently, we get feedback from Airmen stating the A/TA convention is the best “seminar” they’ve attended and that it provides the best-value opportunity to get an overall update on what’s happening in the Air Force and in particular, the Mobility Air Forces.

A Closer Look: Airlift/Tanker Association Symposium

The Airlift/Tanker Association Symposium serves as AMC’s premier professional development forum, and provides an unparalleled opportunity to invest our greatest resource – our Airmen. Originally formed by General William G. Moore, USAF, Retired (Bill); Major General James I. Baginski, USAF, Retired (“Bagger”); Major General Thomas M. Sadler, USAF, Retired (Tom); Brigadier General Malcolm P. Hooker, USAF, Retired (Mal); Colonel Robert F. Ellington, USAF, Retired (Bob); Colonel James L. Maturo, USAF, Retired (Jimmy); Colonel William Bailey, USAF, Retired (Bill); Colonel Kenneth Chatfield, USAF, Retired (Ken); Lieutenant Colonel Henry B. Van Gieson III, USAF, Retired (Hank); and, Major C. W. Scott, USAF, Retired – most members of the 834th Air Division in 1969 – A/TA has become an enduring body over the past 49 years, all with the goal of educating and advocating for America’s Airmen. AMC and A/TA continue to drastically reduce costs and maximize attendance.

Assessment: There is a notable bottom line regarding the A/TA Convention overall and the Air Mobility Symposium specifically: Best Value. The A/TA Convention stays true to Gen Fogleman’s vision of professional education through central, cost-effective activity. When one compares the per-capita cost of a mobility airmen attending the A/TA Convention with its multi-dimensional exposure to such a comprehensive program agenda to most, if not all of the other conventions/conferences and discrete workshops—then A/TA is arguably a best value bargain. When one remembers that AMC reduced and eliminated a number of smaller, stand-alone conferences and symposium—instead rolling them into the singular A/TA Convention/Air Mobility Symposium, then the best-value nature to the annual event takes on even more value. Moreover, A/TA and AMC have continued to “lean out” event costs each year. Over the last three years, working together, AMC and A/TA have reduced the per person cost as shown in the chart below. AMC and A/TA will continue to drive to maximize the return on this investment in our Airmen.

Historical survey feedback supports the importance of the seminars and effectiveness of the symposium. In recent feedback, 74.69% of participants rated A/TA as “ABOVE AVERAGE” or higher compared to other professional development symposiums they have attended. 78.86% assessed that the symposium performed “ABOVE AVERAGE” or higher in enhancing their professional development. Feedback from symposium participants reveals a contribution to revitalizing the Air Force squadron by inspiring an Airmen’s pride in mission, helping them discover new ways of doing business, and seeing how they fit into the bigger picture. The symposium consistently has a first-time attendee rate above 50%, and provides an unparalleled opportunity for junior Airmen to understand their role in the joint fight by hearing directly from sister service members, coalition partners, senior leaders, and industry partners. As one attendee noted: “Each keynote speaker spoke about topics that were relevant to our military and how connected we all were. Each speaker made me feel empowered and that as an individual I could make a difference.”

While always focusing on maximizing value, AMC and A/TA continue to reduce the per person cost for attendance. The 2015 Symposium cost \$3.6M for 1515 DoD attendees; averaged \$2,376 per person. By 2016, we reduced the cost per person to \$1,827 for 1177 DoD attendees (total \$2.15M). In 2017, we were able to optimize attendance with 1408 DoD members while further reducing costs to \$1,499 average per person at a total of \$2.1M. We continue to explore ways to maximize the return on this investment in our Airmen.

YEAR	COST	ATTENDEES	PER PERSON
2015	\$3.6M	1515	\$2,376.00
2016	\$2.15M	1177	\$1,827.00
2017	\$2.11M	1408	\$1,499.00



“All the Time, Everywhere”

Celebrating the 35th Anniversary of Worldwide Air Force Special Operations

This story features information from the Air Force Special Operations Command website including the article *Heritage of the Special Operations Professionals*



2018 marks the 35th Anniversary of the creation of Air Force Special Forces as a distinct branch of overall Air Force operations, when, on 1 March 1983, Military Airlift Command (MAC) activated 23rd Air Force at Scott Air Force Base (AFB), Illinois. The new numbered Air Force's responsibilities included worldwide missions of special operations, combat rescue, weather reconnaissance and aerial sampling, security support for intercontinental ballistic missile sites, training of USAF helicopter and crewmen, pararescue training, and medical evacuation – all vital components of America's Air Mobility mission.

Before 1983, Air Force special operations forces were primarily assigned to the Tactical Air Command (TAC) and were generally deployed under the control of U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) or, as had been the case during the Vietnam War, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF). Just as it had relinquished control of the C-130 theater airlift fleet to Military Airlift Command in 1975, TAC relinquished control of Air Force Special Operations Forces (SOF) to MAC in December 1982.

On 1 August 1987, 23 AF headquarters moved to Hurlburt Field, Florida. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), as we now know it, was born on 22 May 1990 when the Air Force elevated 23 AF to major command (MAJCOM) status. In addition to the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt, the 352nd and 353rd Wings were added overseas and the 193rd Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Air National Guard (ANG) was gained. Almost immediately after standup AFSOC participated in Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM in the Middle East in 1990-91.

Today, AFSOC, an Air Force MAJCOM headquartered at Hurlburt AFB, Florida, is also the U.S. Air Force component command to United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), a unified combatant command located at MacDill AFB, Florida. AFSOC provides all Air Force Special Operations Forces for worldwide deployment and assignment to regional unified combatant commands...

A Legacy of Venerable Service

Air Force special operations forces (AFSOF) have ebbed and flowed since they were established to support World War II (WW II) Allied Forces in the North African, Mediterranean, European, and China-India-Burma theaters. Air Force special operations forces were also very active in the Cold War, Korean War, and South East Asia (SEA) War, aka the Vietnam Conflict.

The earliest missions involved the Special Flight Section of the 12th Air Force's 5th Bombardment Wing in North Africa in October 1943. This small adhoc unit operated highly modified and mission unique bombers into France and other parts of occupied Europe. Later they evolved into the 885th Bombardment Squadron (Special) and flew out of Brindisi, Italy, into Yugoslavia.

The largest Army AFSOF effort in Europe was conducted by the 801st Bombardment Group (S) nicknamed the “Carpetbaggers,” and was based in England. They operated mostly long-range bombers backed up by medium bombers and transports.

The above units dropped supplies and parachutists to allied partisan and guerrilla units. They also air landed behind enemy lines to drop off personnel and supplies and recover hundreds of shot down allied aircrew.

In late 1943 the 1st Air Commando Group was organized and went into combat in March of 1944. Set up to perform a variety of conventional and unconventional combat and support missions deep behind enemy lines they used an array of aircraft including transports, fighters, bombers, light planes, gliders, and helicopters. They accomplished the first AAF behind the line night airfield seizure and combat rescue with a helicopter. All AFSOF units were disbanded at the end of WW II.

In the late 1940s, AFSOF units were regenerated to participate in a Foreign Internal Defense and Combat Advisory FID/CD role in the Philippines. During the Korean War in 1950-53, the Air Force regenerated adhoc special air support in multiple forms of air, land and sea assets to support United Nations Command operations. This involved the use of transports, medium bombers, helicopters and Air Rescue Service crash boats.

The USAF then activated three wings of the Air Resupply and Communication (ARC) Service specifically for unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency operations. They used a variety of aircraft such as transports, bombers, seaplanes and helicopters. The 581 ARC wing saw combat in Korea but at the end of hostilities the USAF shut down its AFSOF units.

The Air National Guard gained the AFSOF mission in the mid to late 1950s and then the USAF reestablished the Air Commandos at Hurlburt Field in the early 1960s. The modern Air Commandos evolved into USAF Special Operations by 1968 as they operated world wide but fought for the most part in the South East Asia War. At the height of the Vietnam Conflict, AFSOF had 550 aircraft and 19 squadrons with USAF crews flying most of the combat missions. Following the SEA War, most of the AFSOF capability was shut down except for the 1 SOW at Hurlburt, the Reserve 919 SOG at nearby

(Opposite) An AC-130U “Spooky” gunship jettisons flares over an area near Hurlburt Field, Florida, home of the Air Force Special Operations Command. The flares are a countermeasure for heat-seeking missiles that may be fired at the aircraft during real world missions. The aircraft is from the 4th Special Operations Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Julianne Showalter, circa 2005).

Duke Field, and a few active duty squadrons scattered overseas.

Following the failure of the Iranian hostage raid in April of 1980, United States special operations was reborn and rebuilt in the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Soon upgraded AFSOF forces participated in Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada in 1983, and Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama in 1989-90.

Birth of Air Force Special Operations Command

On 22 May 1990, General Larry D. Welch, Air Force Chief of Staff, redesignated 23rd AF as Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). The new major command consisted of three wings – the 1st, 39th and 353rd Special Operations Wings (SOWs) – as well as the 1720th Special Tactics Group (STG), the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, and the Special Missions Operational Test and Evaluation Center (SMOTEC).

The 919th Special Operations Group (SOG) of AFRES stationed at Duke Field, Florida, and the 193rd SOG of the Air National Guard (ANG) at Harrisburg International Airport, Pennsylvania, held associate relationships with AFSOC.

DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM

From early August 1990 to late February 1991, AFSOC participated in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM; the protection of Saudi Arabia and liberation of Kuwait.

Active duty, AFRES, and ANG components of AFSOC deployed to Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The 1st SOW with its AC-130s, HC-130s, MC-130s, MH-53s and MH-60s; the 193rd SOG with its EC-130s; and the 919th SOG with its AC-130s, and 71st SOS's HH-3s, all deployed south of Kuwait. The 39th SOW deployed north of Iraq with its HC-130s, MC-130s and MH-53s. Special tactics personnel operated throughout the theater during multiple

combat control and combat rescue missions.

Special operations forces performed direct action missions, combat search and rescue, infiltration, exfiltration, air base ground defense, air interdiction, special reconnaissance, close air support, psychological operations and helicopter air refuelings. Pave Low crews led the helicopter assault on radars to blind Iraqi forces at the onset of hostilities, and they also accomplished the deepest rescue behind enemy lines for which they received the Mackay Trophy.

Combat Talons dropped the largest conventional bombs of the war and, along with Combat Shadows, dropped the most psychological warfare leaflets. The AC-130s provided valuable fire support and armed reconnaissance, but they also suffered the single greatest combat loss of coalition air forces with the shoot down of Spirit 03. All fourteen crewmembers aboard were lost.

AFSOC – All The Time, Everywhere

Following the Gulf War, AFSOC aircraft stood alert for personnel recovery and various other missions in support of Operations PROVIDE COMFORT and SOUTHERN WATCH. During July 1992, AFSOC units began participation in Operations PROVIDE PROMISE and DENY FLIGHT, the humanitarian relief effort and no fly zone

security in the Balkans.

In December 1992, AFSOC special tactics and intelligence personnel supported Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, followed by the AC-130H Spectre gunships in the spring of 1993 under Operations CONTINUE HOPE and UNITED SHIELD in Somalia. In late 1994, AFSOC units spearheaded Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in Haiti, and did the same in 1995 during Operation DELIBERATE FORCE in the Balkans.

AFSOC Reorganization

The number of deployments following Operation DESERT STORM were only exceeded by the number of organizational changes. The more significant ones included the 353rd SOW relocation, under Operation FIERY VIGIL, from Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines, to Kadena Air Base, Japan, in June 1991 due to the volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo. The unit was supported by temporary duty personnel under Operation SCIMATAR SWEEP for more than a year.

In January 1992, the 39th SOW relocated from Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, to Royal Air Force (RAF) Alconbury, United Kingdom (UK). Later that year, the 39th SOW was inactivated, and then consolidated with the 352nd SOG on 1 December 1992; the same date AFSOC redesignated the 353rd SOW as the 353rd SOG.

More reorganization occurred at Hurlburt Field to include the 1720th STG becoming the 720th STG in March 1992; the transfer of ownership of Hurlburt Field from Air Mobility Command (AMC – formerly MAC) to AFSOC in October 1992, followed by the merger of the 834th Air Base Wing and the 1st SOW, which assumed host unit responsibilities. A year later the 1st SOW became the 16th SOW in a move to preserve Air Force heritage.

Meanwhile, the SMOTEC, which filled the unique role of exploring new heavy lift frontiers in special operations capabilities, while pursuing better equipment and tactics development, was also reorganized. In April 1994, the USAF, in an effort to standardize these types of organizations, redesignated SMOTEC as the 18th Flight Test Squadron (FLTS).

Concurrent to changes made to active duty units, AFRES redesignated the 919th SOG as the 919th SOW on June 1, 1992. Subsequently, on Oct. 1, 1995, the ANG redesignated the 193rd SOG as the 193rd SOW.

AFSOC High Operations Tempo

In March 1994, a 16th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) AC-130H gunship, call sign Jockey 14, paid the price of freedom and high operations tempo. Jockey 14 experienced an in-flight explosion, forcing crewmembers to ditch off the coast of Kenya while supporting Operation CONTINUE HOPE II in Somalia. Eight crewmembers were killed, while six survived.

Soon afterwards another tragedy for the Air Force occurred when a pair of U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters were shot down in a tragic friendly-fire incident during Operation PROVIDE COMFORT III in Iraq. The 9th SOS, 55th SOS and 23rd Special Tactics Squadron (STS) played significant roles in the search, support, and recovery operations.

In the fall of 1994, the U.S. decided to send forces into Haiti. The 16th SOW, 919th SOW and 193rd SOW led formations of fixed and rotary winged aircraft to conduct Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. Air Force special operations helicopters flew from Navy aircraft carriers during this massive deployment. Most of the AFSOC aircraft operated out of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. This deployment also included the largest gathering of MH-53 Pave Lows to participate in one action, and the last real-world operation for the AC-130As of the 919th SOW prior to their retirement.

Also in 1994, the war in Rwanda, and the number of people victimized because of it, led to AFSOC forces of the 352nd SOG becoming involved in a humanitarian effort known as Operation SUPPORT HOPE. It was also referred to as QUIET RESOLVE or PROVIDE RELIEF.

In early 1995, AFSOC received taskings to support a number of peace keeping and humanitarian missions. These included Operation PROVIDE COMFORT III (Turkey and Iraq), plus PROVIDE PROMISE/DENY FLIGHT, which evolved into DELIBERATE FORCE and JOINT ENDEAVOR (out of Italy and into Bosnia Herzegovina-Croatia). Pave Low helicopter crewmen received combat wounds while flying as part of a force trying to rescue two French aviators who had been shot down near Sarajevo during Operation DELIBERATE FORCE. The efforts of the Pave Low flight crew during this attempted rescue effort resulted in their receiving the 1995 Air Force Cheney Award. Units assigned to AFSOC also supported Operation CONTINUE HOPE III (Somalia) which evolved into UNITED SHIELD.

In 1996, AFSOC aircraft were the first on the scene when the CT-43 aircraft carrying U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown crashed near Dubrovnik, Croatia, killing everyone onboard. The 352nd SOG launched two MH-53Js and one MC-130P as part of the search and rescue effort. Crews of the 16th SOW and 20th SOS also participated. The efforts of these crewmembers during this highly visible event resulted in their being awarded the Air Force Cheney Award for 1996. The crews involved in this mission were quickly rotated into Operation ASSURED RESPONSE, which provided support to the emergency noncombatant evacuation operation of more than 2,100 U.S. and foreign citizens from Monrovia, Liberia. Operating in a hostile environment, SOF personnel conducted dozens of rotary wing evacuation flights using MH-53Js and overhead fire support sorties in AC-130H Spectres, often vectoring friendly aircraft through small arms and rocket propelled grenade fire. For their efforts, the Pave Low crews were presented the Tunner Award as the outstanding strategic airlift crew of the year.

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AFSOC Matures

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, AFSOC began changing its readiness posture from one geared to countering the Soviet threat to one of cooperative engagements and peace enforcement activities, for which AFSOC forces' capabilities remained in constant demand. As part of Commando Vision, which started in 1994, the 919th SOW would not receive the AC-130Hs from the 16th SOW as had been planned. Instead, the 919th SOW stationed at Duke Field, retired its AC-130A gunships and gained MC-130P Combat Shadows, flown by the newly stood-up 5th SOS, along with MC-130E Combat Talons,

flown by the 711th SOS. In the midst of change, the 919th SOW deployed to Brindisi Air Base, Italy in the winter of 1995 to support Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. The 919th SOW successfully completed the conversion in 1997.

In February 1997, AFSOC captured the "triple crown" of Air Force Safety Awards for 1996, a feat accomplished only once before by a major command. The command took the Secretary of the Air Force Safety Award for the best overall mishap prevention program in Category I, the Major General Benjamin D. Foulois Award for best flight safety program and the Colonel Will L. Tubbs Memorial Award for the top ground safety program.

Later in the year, the 16th SOW received the Colombian Trophy for military flight safety achievements in 1996. This marked the first time in the 62-year history of the award it was presented to a non-fighter unit.

In April 1997, AFSOC units on temporary duty to Brindisi in support of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) missions in Bosnia took on a key support role during the evacuation of Americans trapped by Albania's civil war. Supporting Operation SILVER WAKE, they assisted State Department officials in the processing of more than 1,000 evacuees, including about 450 Americans, rescued from the warring nation.

In June 1997, fighting raged in the Republic of Congo's capital as a result of that nation's civil war. An AFSOC MC-130H Combat Talon II from the 352nd SOG delivered an American military assessment team; then evacuated 56 people from Brazzaville. Crewmembers earned the Mackay Trophy for their efforts. September 1997 saw three EC-130E Commando Solo aircraft from the 193rd SOW deploy in support of Operation JOINT GUARD.

The stabilization force commander requested the deployment of the aircraft to Brindisi to serve as a NATO resource to counter Serbian radio and television broadcasts misrepresenting the Dayton Peace Accords.

Two 4th SOS AC-130U Spectre gunships flew to Taegu Air Base, South Korea, 24 October 1997, on a 36-hour nonstop mission from Hurlburt Field. The mission brought members of the 4th SOS to participate in FOAL EAGLE 1997, an annual Joint Chiefs of Staff exercise held throughout South Korea. Members of the 6th SOS also participated in the exercise.

Throughout 1998, AFSOC maintained a constant combat search and rescue alert posture as part of Operation JOINT GUARD, with aircraft and personnel rotating from the 16th SOW and 352nd SOG to San Vito, Italy, on a routine basis. This role increased significantly in March 1999 during the crisis in Kosovo and Operation ALLIED FORCE. During the NATO air campaign to remove Serbian forces from Kosovo, special operators conducted two successful combat search and rescue operations to rescue downed American pilots (one F-117, one F-16) in the area of conflict.

In addition, Operation ALLIED FORCE witnessed the employment of the EC-130E Commando Solo aircraft from the 193rd SOW to counter Serbian radio and television broadcasts, use of the MC-130H to conduct extensive leaflet drops over Serbia, and application of the AC-130U to provide armed reconnaissance. All told, AFSOC's special operators and aircraft played a major part in bringing the conflict

in Kosovo to an end. Following the conclusion of ALLIED FORCE, special operations units entered a period of reconstitution, while also supporting humanitarian operations such as Operation ATLAS RESPONSE in Africa.

By the year 2000, the 6th SOS received qualification training on several dissimilar aircraft to include Russian made MI-17 helicopter, AN-26 and AN-32 aircraft, while also having its core mission area expanded.

The beginning of 2001 proved relatively quiet by special operations standards. The command's special operations units used this valuable time for reconstitution, training and a variety of other events that the high operations tempo tended to impact.

Global War on Terror

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., on 11 September 2001, the day that would be known as 9/11 going forward, pushed the nation's special operations forces to the forefront of the war against terrorism.

By the end of September 2001, AFSOC deployed forces to southwest Asia for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM to help confront and remove the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, along with the Taliban-supported al Qaida terrorist organization headed by Osama Bin Laden, who were responsible for the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

Airpower provided by AFSOC delivered special tactics forces to the battle ground and they in turn focused U.S. airpower and allowed Afghanistan's Northern Alliance ground forces (pro-U.S.) to significantly diminish the Taliban's and al Qaida's capabilities in Afghanistan. In addition to their support in Afghanistan, AFSOC personnel also

deployed to the Philippines, and later to the Horn of Africa, Trans-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean and Central American regions to help aid partner nation's efforts in combatting terrorism.

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM is still an ongoing mission and AFSOC personnel continue to protect the United States and its allies against those who use terror and violence as a means unto their end. In March 2003, AFSOC again deployed forces to southwest Asia, this time in support of what would become Operation IRAQI FREEDOM - the removal of Saddam Hussein and the liberation of the Iraqi people from his ruthless Baathist regime. The command's personnel and aircraft teamed with SOF and conventional forces to quickly bring down Saddam Hussein's government by May 2003. AFSOC forces continued to conduct operations throughout the rest of the decade and beyond in support of the new Iraqi government against insurgents and terrorists, whose aim it was to destabilize the country. Operation IRAQI FREEDOM officially concluded in 2011.

While supporting the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and operations in Iraq, personnel assigned to AFSOC continued to participate in other missions around the world. After a devastating earthquake and resultant tsunami ravaged countries spanning from the South Pacific to the Indian Ocean on 26 February 2004, the 353rd SOG quickly responded to the crisis while supporting Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE. From 28 February 2004 to 18 January 2005, the 353rd SOG delivered 796,500 pounds of humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) supplies, conducted 32 casualty evacuations,



An MC-130H Combat Talon refuels a CV-22B Osprey at Hurlburt Field, Florida, on 25 September 2015. MC-130H Combat Talon aircraft provide infiltration, exfiltration and resupply of special operations forces and equipment in hostile or denied territory. Secondary missions include psychological operations and helicopter and vertical lift air refueling. The CV-22 Osprey is a tiltrotor aircraft that combines the vertical takeoff, hover and vertical landing qualities of a helicopter with the long-range, fuel efficiency and speed characteristics of a turboprop aircraft. Its mission is to conduct long-range infiltration, exfiltration and resupply missions for special operations forces. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Meagan Schutter).



MH-53 Pave Lows prepare to take off for their final combat mission in support of special operations forces on 27 September 2008, in Iraq. The Pave Low's mission was low-level, long-range, undetected penetration into denied areas, day or night, in adverse weather, for infiltration, exfiltration and resupply of special operations forces. Pave Lows often worked in conjunction with MC-130H Combat Talon for navigation, communications and combat support, and with MC-130P Combat Shadow for in-flight refueling. (U.S. Air Force Photo).

and opened four airfields rendered unusable by the natural disaster, thus enabling further humanitarian assistance to be delivered to Indonesia and Thailand once AFSOC personnel departed the area.

Effective 1 October 2003, AFSOC welcomed the movement of the USAF's continental U.S.-based rescue forces from Air Combat Command (ACC). With this move, the command inherited the 347th Rescue Wing and 563rd Rescue Group, while also gaining oversight responsibilities for the 920th Rescue Wing (AFRC), 106th Rescue Wing (ANG), and the 129th Rescue Wing (ANG).

The command's newly attained rescue units were soon pressed into action close to home after Hurricane Katrina wrought catastrophic devastation along the Gulf Coast shorelines of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama after making landfall on 29 August 2005.

Led by the 347th Rescue Wing, AFSOC personnel supported a massive humanitarian relief operation under the auspices of Joint Task Force Katrina.

The 347th Rescue Wing, later established as the 347th Expeditionary Rescue Wing during the operation, worked tirelessly day and night to rescue those put in peril by the storm. From 30 August 2005 through 17 September 2005, the 347th Expeditionary Rescue Wing amassed a staggering save count of 4,283 individuals while flying 528 sorties in 1,677 hours.

On 1 September 2005, AFSOC stood up its Warfighting Headquarters (WFHQ) as part of an Air Force wide initiative to provide enhanced warfighting capabilities to achieve the nation's military objectives and to support unified combatant commanders' (UCC) strategic objectives across the full range of military operations.

On 25 February 2006, General T. Michael Moseley, Air Force Chief of Staff, announced his decision to move the USAF's rescue assets from AFSOC back to ACC. General Moseley's decision centered on his vision of rescue's present position and where he envisioned its future.

Despite the movement of U.S.-based rescue forces back to ACC, AFSOC entered a period of growth in other mission areas. On 20 June 2006, the Department of Defense approved the transfer of Cannon AFB and Melrose Range, New Mexico to AFSOC. This transfer became effective on 1 October 2007 with the activation of the 27th SOW.

Additional mission growth continued throughout 2006 and 2007 to include: U-28 aircraft in April 2006, assigned to the 319th SOS; the activation of 11th Intelligence Squadron on 1 August 2006; and assumption of Predator unmanned aerial vehicles on 31 May 2007 from ACC, assigned to the 3rd SOS. Additionally, on 16 November 2006, AFSOC returned to its rightful heritage by redesignating the 16th SOW back to the 1st SOW. On that same day, AFSOC received its first CV-22 Osprey at Hurlburt Field.

From July to October 2006, the 352nd SOG, flying MH-53M Pave Lows and MC-130P Combat Shadows combined to transport American citizens from Lebanon to Cyprus due to hostilities in the Middle East. The group moved a total of 502 Americans during the noncombatant evacuation operation.

In July 2008, Operation WILLING SPIRIT ended with the successful extraction of three American hostages held hostage by the FARC in Colombia since 2003. For six years AFSOC personnel supported the effort to locate and eventually free the hostages.

The MH-53 Pave Low helicopter flew its last combat mission on 27 September 2008 during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. As AFSOC divested from its rotary wing assets, the command remained poised to respond to threats and crises on a global scale.

Overseas Contingency Operations

While counterterrorism remained a top priority for the nation and for AFSOC, the capability was only one of many the command possessed heading into the next decade.

In 2010, AFSOC's rapid reaction capabilities were highlighted again after an extremely strong earthquake centered off the coast of Haiti decimated the country. In just over 24 hours, AFSOC had boots on the ground and within 30 minutes of landing, Air Commandos began controlling aircraft inbound to Haiti.

During the first twelve days of Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE, combat controllers controlled 2,222 fixed wing and 800 rotary wing aircraft (representing 50 nations) from a card table set up next to the single runway at Port Au Prince Airport using handheld radios. Meanwhile, AFSOC pararescuemen executed 14 high risk collapsed structure rescues and treated 25 patients.

During Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE, the 1st SOW, 27th SOW, 193rd SOW, and the 919th SOW delivered 414 passengers and 396 short tons of supplies and humanitarian aid to Haiti. The 193rd SOW's Commando Solos broadcast humanitarian assistance messages across four radio frequencies; further enabled by 100,000 hand cranked radios delivered throughout Haiti by SOF aircraft. Special tactics teams surveyed landing sites and controlled multiple aerial delivery operations

which amounted to 150,000 pounds of humanitarian aid being dispersed to the Haitian population.

Additionally, AFSOC provided security forces, medical triage, stable communications and full motion video products which allowed governments and humanitarian aid organizations to plan and organize their efforts in a more informed and efficient manner.

In March 2011, AFSOC once again found itself responding to a humanitarian crisis stemming from a natural disaster. On 11 March 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake with an epicenter near Sendai, Japan occurred. The extremely violent quake triggered a massive tsunami that inundated large swaths of northeastern coastal Japan. On 13 March 2013, AFSOC personnel began conducting aerial assessments of air fields in the affected areas. The 353rd SOG used MC-130Ps, MC-130Hs and a PC-12 during Operation TOMODACHI. On 16 March 2011, an MC-130P assigned to the 17th SOS arrived at Matsushima Air Base carrying two special tactics teams assigned to the 320th STS. One team stayed behind and assessed and subsequently cleared a runway at Matsushima and within two hours began controlling aircraft into and out of the air base.

The other team from the 320th STS set out in a convoy bound for Sendai Airport. Upon arrival, the team began working with Japanese citizens already clearing a 5,000 foot runway and within an hour declared the runway open. A couple of hours later an MC-130H assigned to the 1st SOS became the first aircraft to land at Sendai since the tsunami and offloaded equipment, supplies and a second special tactics team to bolster the contingent already in place. By 2 April 2011,

320th STS personnel had controlled 170 relief flights carrying a total of 2,500,000 pounds of supplies and 618 passengers to Sendai alone.

The effort to assist the Japanese with their recovery efforts continued through the end of March. In addition to clearing airfields and controlling aircraft, AFSOC personnel provided much needed communications support as well as forward air refueling capabilities. The PC-12 crew proved to be an invaluable asset as they flew 37 hours, hauled 70 passengers, and ferried 2,160 pounds of cargo. The aircraft relieved strain on the MC-130Ps due to its ability to quickly get in and out of airports of all sizes in Japan. On 1 April 2011, the handover of the airfields to civilian control began and AFSOC's participation officially ended on 6 April 2011.

The symbiotic effort between AFSOC personnel and their Japanese hosts proved to be a sterling example of international cooperation. As one Japanese official later put it, the efforts of AFSOC in hard-hit places such as Sendai provided hope during a very bleak time.

Given the global reach required by AFSOC's mission sets, the command continued to focus on Non-Standard Aviation (NSAv) capabilities. These NSAv capabilities allowed AFSOC to help partner nations build aviation capacity and gave Theater Special Operations Commands light and medium mobility capacity.

Throughout 2011, AFSOC further augmented its NSAv fleet. Originally brought into the AFSOC inventory in 2009 as M-28 Skytrucks, the C-145A has remained continuously deployed since March 2011. To further bolster the NSAv mission, the C-146A Wolfhound (a modified version of the commercial Do-328) entered the AFSOC inventory in the same month as the C-145A first deployed. By the end of 2011, the C-146A Wolfhound had deployed in support of overseas contingency operations. With the retirement of the last MC-130E Combat Talons from the Air Force inventory imminent, AFSOC leadership identified the 919th SOW for a re-missioning to include a primary NSAv role.

In conjunction with United Nations Resolution 1973, passed on 17 March 2011, AFSOC supported Operation ODYSSEY DAWN. In partnership with a large contingent from the international community, AFSOC helped enforce a no-fly zone in an aim to protect civilians during a civil war in Libya.

On 12 June 2012, AFSOC activated the 24th SOW. The 720th STG

and the 724th STG realigned under the new wing. The activation of the wing was brought about in an effort to better differentiate strategic and operational concerns.

On 11 February 2013, AFSOC activated the Air Force Special Operations Air Warfare Center (AFSOAWC) at Duke Field. Upon activation, the 919th SOW began an active associate relationship with the AFSOWAC. The AFSOWAC reported directly to AFSOC and assumed command of USAFSOS, the 6th SOS, the 18th FLTS, and other various units. On 28 March 2013, AFSOC inactivated the 23rd Air Force. On 1 April 2013, the 6th SOS moved from Hurlburt Field to Duke Field. Later that month, the last MC-130E Combat Talons were retired from the Air Force inventory. These organizational changes reflected AFSOC's continued commitment to FID as well as the growing importance of the NSAv mission.

On 8 November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda came ashore in the Philippines and left behind a trail of ruin in its wake. Once again AFSOC responded to a natural disaster in a quick and professional manner. From 10-23 November 2013, AFSOC personnel participated in Operation DAMAYAN. Personnel from the 353rd SOG initially performed aerial assessments of the affected areas utilizing U-28As in order to decide the best course of action in response to the crisis.

The 353rd SOG utilized MC-130Hs, MC-130Ps, and C-146As during the humanitarian mission with which they delivered over 700,000 pounds of HA/DR supplies to those in need and evacuated 3,278 displaced persons. Personnel from the 320th STS opened and controlled multiple airfields and relief points which ultimately allowed another 6,590 displaced persons to be evacuated and millions of pounds of relief supplies and equipment to be offloaded.

The Tip of the Spear – Today and Tomorrow

From the beginning through today, Air Commandos have displayed an unwavering ability to adapt and execute the missions presented to them. The unique culture, command relationships, and specialized equipment employed by AFSOC affords Air Commandos the opportunity to provide dynamic and enterprising responses to challenges faced by the United States and partner nations. Air Commandos remain at the tip of the spear serving as force multipliers for the American military. Today, a vital part of America's Air Mobility community, AFSOC truly is a global tactical air component, and will remain so going forward into the future. ■



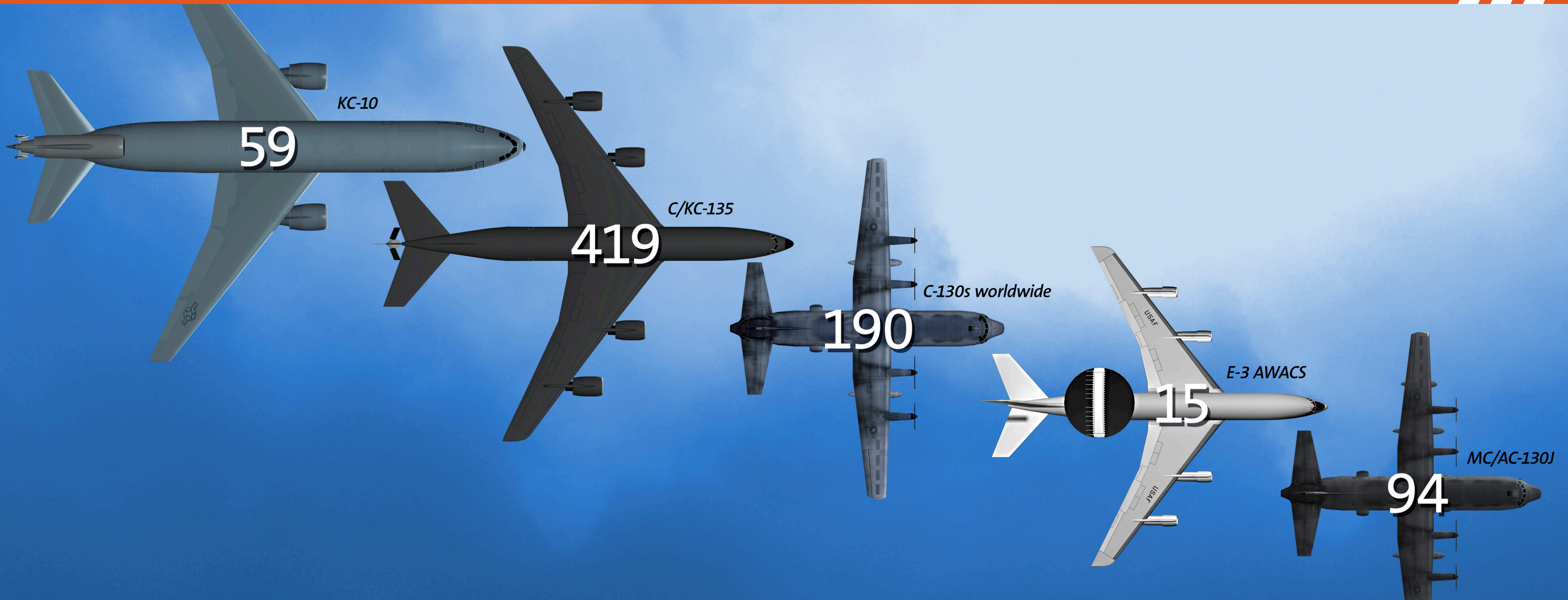
The C-145A Skytruck is a light cargo and troop transport aircraft designed and manufactured for the US Air Force (USAF). The aircraft is primarily used to assist Aviation Foreign Internal Defence (AvFID) missions of the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). The transport aircraft can be reconfigured to perform precision combat airdrop, combat search-and-rescue, humanitarian assistance, casualty evacuation and disaster relief missions. Originally brought into the AFSOC inventory in 2009 as M-28 Skytrucks, the C-145A has remained continuously deployed since March 2011. (U.S. Air Force Photo).



A joint special operations force of Special Tactics operators from the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron and U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers from the 7th Special Forces Group run to board a CV-22 Osprey from the 8th Special Operations Squadron while performing a joint capabilities demonstration for Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson at Eglin Range Complex, Florida, on 3 May 2018. While at the range, Wilson received a joint capabilities demonstration by Special Operations Forces assigned to the 23rd STS and 7th SFG. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Jason Robertson).



Every active model of aircraft in the Air Force Special Operations Command's inventory sits on display at Hurlburt Field, Florida on 3 May 2018. Aircraft in AFSOC provide precision strike, surveillance and reconnaissance, and long-range infiltration and exfiltration capabilities across the spectrum of conflict and crisis...All The Time, Everywhere. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Rachel Yates).



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THE MAYAGÜEZ INCIDENT

The Mayagüez incident took place in the Gulf of Thailand in May 1975. It began when Cambodian gunboats stopped and boarded the American cargo ship SS Mayagüez on 12 May, one month after the end of the Vietnam War. The Cambodians took the crew prisoner and moved the ship toward Koh Tang Island off the Cambodian coast. Considered an act of piracy by the United States Government, the U.S. military received orders to locate the seized vessel. After a U.S. Navy P-3 Orion located the ship off Koh Tang on 13 May, two USAF F-111 aircraft arrived on scene. That night, an AC-130 Spectre gunship circulated over the island, keeping an eye on the situation. Throughout the day and into the evening, Cambodian gunboats travelled to and from the ship, the island and the Cambodian mainland. U.S. and Cambodian forces exchanged fire and several gunboats were damaged or destroyed. On 14 May, USAF aircraft continued strafing enemy gunboats and vessels in the area to prevent them from reaching the mainland. However, one fishing vessel made it to the mainland, and unbeknownst to U.S. forces at the time, carried the crew of the Mayagüez.

Early on 15 May, after diplomatic efforts had failed to secure the crew's release, U.S. forces received orders to seize the Mayagüez and recover the crew. The operation, hastily planned by Seventh Air Force (7 AF), initially included USAF Security Forces to secure the ship and locate the crew, who were thought to be held on the island. However, one of those helicopters crashed, killing its Air Force crew and all 19 Security Forces personnel aboard. When that happened, planners decided to use U.S. Marines. Although USAF C-141 Starlifters transported the Marines to staging areas in Thailand, USAF helicopters would play the major role in the operation. A total of 14 USAF helicopters, both HH-53 Jolly Green and CH-53 Knife helicopters were used. The hastily put together plan called for three helicopters to transport U.S. Marines to the destroyer, USS Harold E. Holt, which would then seize the Mayagüez. Eight additional helicopters would transport more Marines to two landing zones on the Eastern and Western sides of the northern tip of Koh Tang Island. The two landing zones were separated by a thin island neck about 1,100 feet across. However, because of the quick planning, the assault force had little intelligence on the number of Cambodian forces on the island and whether or not the crew was being held there. Still, a rescue attempt had to be made. As it turned out, the crew was not on the island and Cambodian forces were much stronger and entrenched than expected. Approximately 230 Marines boarded helicopters for the assault on the island and the ship. They did so with little knowledge or expectation of what they would find.

Three helicopters delivered their troops to the USS Holt, who then successfully boarded the Mayagüez and found it abandoned by the Cambodians. While that part of the assault went as planned, the same could not be said for the assault on Koh Tang Island. As planned, the helicopters attempted simultaneous insertions on the Eastern and Western beaches at dawn. On the Western beach, Knife 21 and Knife 22 made their approach and came under intense enemy fire that included automatic weapons, rockets, rocket propelled grenades, mortars and unrelenting small arms fire. As soon as the Marines clambered off Knife 21, the helicopter struggled out to sea but crashed one mile off shore. Knife 22 also attempted to insert its Marines but came under such intense fire it aborted its landing and sustained so much damage that it barely made it back to the Thai mainland. Knife 32 then came into the landing zone, and while it managed to unload its Marines, it sustained such severe damage that

it too barely made it back to the mainland carrying a critically injured flight mechanic.

While the situation was grim on the Western beach, a far worse situation developed on the Eastern beach as the first helicopters, Knife 23 and Knife 31, came in. The Cambodians held their fire as the two helicopters approached. But as soon as Knife 23 hovered over the beach, the enemy opened up with such intense fire that Knife 23 crashed onto the beach. Somehow, 20 Marines and an Air Force photographer scrambled off the downed helicopter and into the trees while the crew powered down the helicopter. As Knife 23 was crash landing on the beach, its pilot saw Knife 31 burst into flames in mid-air. A direct hit by a rocket or rocket propelled grenade severely injured Knife 31's pilot and killed the co-pilot and the helicopter went down at the edge of the beach in the water. Still, 18 of the 26 Americans on board survived that crash and exited the helicopter only to come under intense enemy fire as they tried to swim out to sea out of range of the enemy's weapons. All told, 13 men lost their lives in the crash of Knife 31. In spite of the tragedy unfolding on the Eastern beach, the co-pilot of Knife 23, Lt John Lucas, as well as a Marine forward air controller who had survived the crash of Knife 31, used their survival radios to call in close air support, provided by USAF A-7s, which attacked enemy positions in the thin strip of land between the two beaches. One hour after the assault began, only 54 Americans were on the island and 14 others had perished.

Soon, the last three Air Force helicopters carrying the initial wave of Marines approached the Western beach. While under intense enemy fire, Jolly 42 and Jolly 43 managed to unload their Marines. Jolly 41 made several attempts to land, but aborted because of enemy fire and left to refuel. At that point, there were 109 Marines and 5 Air Force crewmembers on the island, pinned down by heavy enemy fire. One of the helicopters that had delivered Marines to retake the Mayagüez, Jolly 13, orbited off Koh Tang to conduct Search and Rescue. After Knife 23 and Knife 31 went down on the Eastern beach, Jolly 13 attempted a rescue but the enemy fire was so intense and the helicopter damaged so severely that it aborted its rescue attempt and struggled back to the mainland. After the failed rescue attempt, USAF A-7s, F-4s and a Spectre AC-130 gunship stepped up their strafing and bombing attacks on the enemy positions. Meanwhile, Jolly 41, which had refueled, returned to try and unload more Marines on the Western beach. After several attempts, Jolly 41 managed to unload all but 5 of its Marines, but it too returned to its staging base so severely damaged that it could not be flown again.

With the departure of Jolly 41, the initial assault wave was complete. There were 131 Marines and 5 Airmen on the island. 82 were on the Western beach, 29 were south of the Western beach, and 25 were trapped near the Eastern beach. Fifteen Americans were dead and eight of the nine helicopters in the first wave had either crashed or were so severely damaged they could not immediately fly again. Perhaps most tragic of all was that three hours after the initial assault began, a Thai fishing boat flying a white flag approached the island. On board the boat was the unharmed crew of the Mayagüez. Soon, the crew was safe on board the USS Henry B. Wilson, and the focus of the Koh Tang Island operation suddenly shifted from an assault to evacuating U.S. forces from the island. However, five additional helicopters were already en-route with reinforcements. They proceeded with their mission because the landing zones needed to be secured before extracting the Marines and Airmen. Also, the aircraft carrier

USS Coral Sea had moved close enough that it could support the operation. Furthermore, now that it was understood that the crew was not on the island, the close air support aircraft could strike enemy positions without fearing for the crew's safety although they had trouble distinguishing between friendly and enemy forces until the arrival of two USAF OV-10 forward air control aircraft at about 4 pm that afternoon. The OV-10s could loiter over the island for an extensive period and flew slowly enough that they could distinguish friendly and enemy positions.

Soon, the five helicopters with reinforcements arrived over Koh Tang. The first, Knife 52, approached the Eastern beach but aborted its landing and flew over the island from east to west but had to return to the mainland because of severe damage to its fuel tanks. The four other helicopters then approached the Western beach. Knife 51 and Jolly 43 successfully offloaded their Marines. Knife 51 also evacuated five wounded Marines and returned to base. After unloading its Marines, Jolly 43 conducted a mid-air refueling and then attempted a rescue on the Eastern beach. Finally, the remaining two helicopters, Jolly 11 and Jolly 12, made their approach. Jolly 11 successfully unloaded its Marines and then moved to a position where its weapons could provide cover for Jolly 12. Jolly 12 delivered its cargo of Marines and evacuated wounded. Much like the previous two helicopters, Jolly 12 sped to the mainland with its cargo of wounded Marines, while Jolly 11 joined Jolly 43 in search and rescue activities on the Eastern beach. However, the enemy fire remained so intense and Jolly 43 suffered so much damage that it was forced to abort and flew on one engine to the USS Coral Sea, escorted by Jolly 11. There it underwent quick repairs to get back in the fight. At that point, the only remaining operational helicopters were Jolly 11, Jolly 12, Jolly 44, and Knife 51.

After more strafing by U.S. aircraft, Jolly 11 attempted once again to rescue the 25 Americans trapped near the Eastern beach, while Jolly 12 provided suppressing fire and attempted to locate a Marine who had been seen near the wreckage of Knife 23. Knife 51, which had returned from dropping off wounded Marines on the mainland, also assisted in the third rescue attempt on the Eastern beach. Although under intense and unremitting fire from as close as 50 meters, Jolly 11 landed on the beach and the Marines and Airmen were able to board the helicopter. It then sped toward the USS Coral Sea. As soon as Jolly 11 departed the area, an Air Force C-130 flew over the island and dropped a 15,000 pound bomb on the neck between the two beach landing zones. It was followed by an AC-130 gunship that sprayed the area with fire as Jolly 12 and Knife 51 attempted to locate the Marine seen near the wreckage of Knife 23. Unfortunately, the man could not be located and the helicopters abandoned the search. After landing on the USS Coral Sea, Jolly 11's crew realized their helicopter had sustained so much damage that it could not be flown again. That left only three helicopters, the repaired Jolly 43 as well as Jolly 44 and Knife 51, to extract the remaining Marines from the island. The burden of extracting the more than 200 Americans on the island at night would fall to those three USAF helicopters and their crews.

Night had fallen as the three helicopters arrived over the Western beach. Knife 51 was the first into the landing zone and under intense fire from Cambodian forces managed to load a full complement of Marines and depart for the Coral Sea. Next, Jolly 43 came in and boarded 54 Marines, more than double the standard load. As Jolly 43 strained for the Coral Sea, Jolly 44 loaded more Marines and headed out to sea. Approximately 73 Marines remained on the island in darkness, surrounded by Cambodian forces and in a desperate situation. The pilot of Jolly 44, 1st Lt Robert D. Blough, decided to unload his Marines at the USS Holt, which was much closer than the USS Coral Sea. However, landing a helicopter on the deck of a destroyer at night posed a significant risk. In addition, Jolly 44 had no landing lights. Lt Blough made three attempts to land on the destroyer, and when he finally succeeded, the rotor blades of the helicopter came

within two feet of the destroyer's superstructure.

At that point, the ground commander radioed the OV-10s that his position was in danger of being overrun, and Jolly 44 raced back to the Western beach while an AC-130 pounded the area. Jolly 44 took on more Marines but received such damage that it was out of the fight by the time it landed on the Coral Sea. Twenty-nine Marines remained on the Western beach for extraction. Knife 51 was the next to return to the beach while the AC-130 continued to provide suppressing fire near the landing zones. After boarding 27 Marines, crewmember TSgt Wayne Fisk left the helicopter and searched the darkened tree line for any remaining Marines. He found two and the three men raced back to the helicopter which then departed the beach. Finally, all the Marines and Airmen had been evacuated. All told, 15 had been killed, 3 were missing in action, and 50 were wounded.

The Mayagüez rescue operation was undertaken with hasty planning, little intelligence and in the face a vastly more entrenched and powerful enemy than expected. Nevertheless, the crew and their ship were recovered and 230 Marines were inserted and evacuated from the island, something that could not have been done without the dedication, persistence and bravery of the USAF helicopter forces in the face of intense and almost overwhelming enemy fire. Two Air Force crewmembers were killed during the operations and six were wounded. Four crewmen received the Air Force Cross and two others received the Silver Star. As Pacific Air Forces Commander General Louis L. Wilson Jr., wrote: "The professionalism, perseverance, and courage of American fighting men at Koh Tang was exemplified by USAF helicopter crewmembers who, despite overwhelmingly unfavorable conditions, delivered, reinforced and then extracted some 230 Marines at the island." The hasty response of the U.S. Government to the seizure and Mayagüez occurred as a way to restore some measure of prestige to the nation after the end of U.S. military involvement in Vietnam in April, 1975. Although the military operation was not a "model of military strategy for future operations," the recovery of the ship and its crew sparked the imagination of the American people and was "greeted in the U.S. with nearly universal acceptance and even exuberance." As Gen Wilson concluded, "the United States, as a nation, had reaffirmed its will to act decisively."

A number of U.S. military personnel were awarded medals following the incident, including: TSgt Wayne Fisk, a pararescuer on Knife 51, who received his second award of the Silver Star; 1st Lt Bob Blough, pilot of Jolly Green 44, who was awarded the Silver Star; 1st Lt Terry Tonkin, USMC, the battalion's forward air controller in the assault on Koh Tang, who was awarded a Silver Star. Four Airmen were awarded the Air Force Cross: Capt Rowland Purser, pilot of Jolly Green 43; 1st Lt Donald Backlund, pilot of Jolly Green 11; 1st Lt Richard C. Brims, pilot of Knife 51; and, SSgt Jon Harston, flight mechanic of Knife 31.

American casualties during the operation were 10 U.S. Marines, two Navy corpsmen, and an Air Force crewman killed in the crash of Knife 31; an Air Force crewman killed in the crash of Knife 21; one Marine killed in action on the West Beach; and three Marines missing in action and presumed dead. Fifty were wounded including thirty-five Marines and six airmen. In addition a CH-53 crashed due to mechanical failure on the way to U-Tapao airfield, killing eighteen USAF Security Police and five flight crew.

Though the Mayagüez incident is often referred to as the last battle of the Vietnam War, U.S. military personnel who participated in it are not eligible for the Vietnam Service Medal by virtue of participating in that battle alone. The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal is authorized instead for military members who participated in the battle. However, those killed/mia during the operation are the last names etched on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. ■

Background Photo: American troops under heavy fire, Koh Tang, Cambodia, 15 May 1975. (U.S. DoD Photo).

SMOOTH *Transitions*

Smooth Transitions is a recurring feature highlighting the interesting work, stories or adventures, of Mobility Airmen outside or after their 'traditional' service. Col Mike Cassidy, USAF (Ret), the A/TA Secretary, is in search of more of these great stories, please contact him at secretary@atalink.org with your adventures.



Fritz Wester on ramp in Cold Bay Alaska January 2017. (Photo courtesy of Fritz Wester).

A Thirty Five Year Love Affair... with the *Mighty Hercules*

"But Herc is a grand lady and I am proud to have worked with her and look forward to a few more before I hang up my spurs."

That was the way Fritz Wester finished his story. I asked him to send me a few notes after I learned that he joined the Air Force in 1981 as a C-130 Turboprop mechanic and is now a co-owner of a C-130 and TBM Inc - <http://www.c130flighttest.com>.

How could I pass up that story for our A/TQ *Smooth Transitions* series? After reading his story, I concluded that this might not fall under the category of a "smooth" transition. This is a story of hard work followed by a lot more hard work, by a dedicated Herk mechanic. And beside all that, I started my Air Force life as a Herk guy, at just about the same time as Fritz, I'm certain I flew on the tails he maintained. I'm not overly sentimental, except maybe about my first airplane and the guys who fly and fix them.

Early Years – Grandparents, Master Mechanic, Farm Hand

In so many ways Fritz Wester's story is a great American success story. A second-generation German, Swedish, English family spending his early years in Minnesota, Fritz was raised partly by his grand-

parents and uncle. They were responsible for much of his upbringing. His love of all things mechanical and his strong work ethic started there.



Prep for CDS Aerial Delivery Flight Test. (Photo courtesy of Fritz Wester).

Early Air Force Life

Despite early thoughts in 1981 of being a rock-n-roll radio Disc Jockey (I'm not making that up), Fritz ended up enlisting in the Air Force before he turned 18 and having max'd his ASVAB scores he went straight to a new career specialty as a Turbo-Prop mechanic. That was the start of the love affair. From that point on Fritz learned everything there was to learn about the "Four Fans of Freedom." Fritz started at Little Rock in the ISO dock (Isochronal Inspection) but from there his Air Force life also took him to Yokota and then back to Little Rock. He was desperate to travel elsewhere

but like a lot of Herk superstars all roads lead back to Little Rock.

Later Air Force Life – Boat Life & Making Connections and Tail #518

It was during this second assignment back at the 314th FMS that he first met Col Ron Boston, who plays an important role later in Fritz's story. But the meeting had nothing to do with the Air Force, but boats. When he returned from Japan Fritz bought a 1964, 14-foot runabout. Given Fritz's mechanical skill, it was just another

challenge to keep it running. He turned this into a sideline business working at a local marina. This led him to meet Col Boston, an avid boat owner, water-skier and fisherman; he needed a mechanic.

It was also during this second assignment that he met and fell in love with the C-130A tail number 56-0518, a 1956 model sitting on Little Rock's ramp. Eventually he became the NCO in charge of getting 0518 on display at the front gate (it is there still today and looks great by the way). This was no small project; Fritz was in charge of getting the aircraft back to full working order but then disassembling the aircraft for towing and reassembly at the gate. All this involved cutting down trees, "requisitioning" a bulldozer, 'Yuking' the aircraft the last few feet onto the pad, an afternoon thunderstorm and a direct, but respectful, conversation with a 'surprised' base commander.

By 1991, somewhat frustrated by not being able to leave 'the Rock' and frustrated with a stagnant promotion system it was time for Fritz Wester to leave the Air Force. He worked on getting his A&P certificate, talked with friends and his instructors about moving to the civilian world, and, eventually, he left the secure path of staying in. But, he has yet to leave the Mighty C-130.

Early Aerial Firefighting Days, French Connections and French Tragedy

Fritz ended up with T&G Aviation in Chandler Arizona; T&G had just sold its PB4Y2, but still operated DC-7s and yes C-130s. He spent that same summer in Alaska in charge of C-130 maintenance during firefighting season. After that first season he was able to stay with T&G for another season but his next stop was France. The firefighting business is seasonal and there were some 'thin' times but he persevered and the company won back-to-back contracts in France from 1994-1996 and again in '98, '99 and 2000. Throughout all this Fritz managed also to become a certified C-130 Flight Engineer, he was now not only fixing but also flying the Mighty Herk. He also continued to assume more responsibility in the company including acting as the Chief of Quality Control, Director of Maintenance and the Operations Manager. While in France he was involved not only in Aerial Firefighting, but emergency rescue cargo delivery missions. Fritz and his crew also managed to beat the French Air Force by delivering emergency relief supplies and generators as part of a Humanitarian Airlift following the 1999 earthquakes in Greece, the people of Athens and the French Interior Ministry were thrilled, the French Defense ministry was not as thrilled. The T&G (now renamed to International Air Response or IAR) contract changed after the French gave them all medals.

Then, later in 2000, IAR's tail number 56-0478 crashed fighting a fire on September 6th in southern France. The right Horizontal Stab struck some trees and Fritz arrived within hours to identify

survivors. Miraculously only the Copilot (married only a month) and the 70-year-old Flight Engineer were killed. Fritz was the one responsible to notify the families and repatriating the remains, which took over a month. He still grieves over those days.



Pallet of faux "money" ready for aerial delivery for filming of "H&R Block" commercial "It's your money!" (Photo courtesy of Fritz Wester).

End of the C-130A in Firefighting and Transitions

The following year, 2001, found Fritz, and the IAR team, back in Alaska fighting more fires, but in 2002 the crash of another company's C-130A followed by the crash of a PB4Y-2 on national television changed the firefighting business eliminating the use of older aircraft, but specifically the C-130A from this challenging segment of the aviation world. Although IAR and another company who flew C-130As (TBM) met the FAA's requirements it was not to be and by 2006 it was the end. Slowly, both IAR and TBM were finding other

work for their C-130s. Then an interesting twist occurred, the owner of TBM passed away suddenly and the company was available. Even though Fritz had now been with T&G (now IAR) for 18 years he joined forces with four other partners to become the shareholders of TBM Inc. and it's sister FAA certified Maintenance Repair service; "Tulare Aircraft Services." So what's the twist? One of those shareholders is Col Ron Boston, former Little Rock boat owner who hired Fritz as his boat mechanic. Now these lifelong friends are business partners working together on something they both love. The company is located at the former Castle AFB near Sacramento CA. As Fritz says, they "eek out a living with the venerable "herkadactyl." They focus on opportunities working in the Hollywood film, television and television commercial business. They also provide Research, Development, Test and Engineering Flight Test work for a number of

civil and military organizations. I strongly encourage you to look at the web site to include the commercials and trailers of the different films at: <http://www.c130flighttest.com>.

Conclusions

I can't summarize or conclude any better than simply quoting Fritz:

"Now for over 35 years I have maintained the Hercules. I have fixed, flown and owned them. I have recovered nearly a dozen C-130's from various states of disassembly, projects that made

others walk away from good aircraft that only needed someone to care enough to fix them right. The years have taken their own toll of flesh, blood and more than a few tears have been shed. But Herc is a grand lady and I am proud to have worked with her and look forward to a few more before I hang up my spurs."

If you are someone who has an interesting transition story, or know someone who does, please contact me so we can discuss, I'd love to celebrate and share your, his or her great Air Mobility Smooth Transition story. Contact me at secretary@atalink.org.

Strategic Airlift Capability, Pápa, Hungary, Supports Exercise Saber Strike 2018

Submitted by Captain (OF-2) Henrik Gebhardt, Swedish Air Force Public Affairs Officer (PAO) Strategic Airlift Capability, Heavy Airlift Wing

Recently the Strategic Airlift Capability at Pápa, Hungary, supported Exercise Saber Strike 2018, conducting air drop and air land operations in several locations throughout Europe.

From 3 to 15 June, two C-17's from the Heavy Airlift Wing, the operational unit of the Strategic Airlift Capability supported member nations Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and the USA, by conducting Joint Force Entries Air drop operations, delivering 1,300 Paratroopers, several platforms with heavy equipment. The SAC C-17's also delivered supplies to ground troops



by conducting a 40 bundle Container Delivery System (CDS) drop. Air land operations included delivering approximately 30 vehicles, and personnel.

Saber strike is a long standing U.S. Army Europe led cooperative training exercise that focuses on demonstrating NATO's deterrence capability and collective defense, by employing NATO force structure mission command and increasing participating Nation's readiness, interoperability and freedom of movement.



Saber Strike 2018 contained 18,000 participants from 19 countries, Host nations were Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Over 45 Tanks and other combat vehicles were deployed, alongside over 950 other support vehicles and over 60 Helicopters.

About the Strategic Airlift Capability

Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC), established in 2008, is a multinational program that provides its 12 member nations with assured access to military airlift capability by owning and operating

three Boeing C-17A Globemaster III long-range cargo aircraft. SAC is based at the Hungarian Defense Forces (HDF) Pápa Air Base, Hungary.

The SAC Nations are the NATO members Hungary (program host nation), Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and the United States and NATO Partnership for Peace nations Finland and Sweden. Each participating nation owns a share of the available flight hours of the SAC C-17As to serve the needs of their national defense, NATO, EU or UN commitments and humanitarian relief efforts.

SAC consists of the 12-nation Heavy Airlift Wing (HAW) and the NATO Airlift Management Programme Office (NAM PO). The HAW is the operational unit and the NAM PO, an integral part of the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA), is the acquisition and sustainment authority of the SAC C-17A weapon system.

NAM PO contracts with the U.S. Government, via Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Agreements with the USAF, for SAC C-17 Technical and integrated Product Support, Flight Crew Training and operational data services. The USAF in turn sub-contracts many of these services to Industry; notably Boeing and Pratt & Whitney, both A/TA Industry Partners.



About Saber Strike 2018

Saber Strike 2018 is the premier venue to build readiness in an integrated and complex training environment. Activities across the Baltics and Poland are a clear demonstration of the commitment and solidarity of the alliance.

These training events build readiness across the total Army, including Active, National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve forces.

The will and capability of a unified alliance between host nation forces, Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroups, Multi-National Corps – Northeast, Multi-National Division – Northeast, NATO Force Integration Units and the U.S. rotational forces providing a real operational capability for deterrence are polished during the exercise which provides a fulcrum for NATO to showcase MNC-NE, MND-NE and the associated NFIUs as a mission command structure capable of commanding on a broad scale and in a complex environment. The exercise facilitates unmatched cooperation between Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and 17 additional participating allied and partner militaries. ■

(All photos courtesy of Strategic Airlift Capability, Pápa, Hungary).

Refuel To Remember: Team MacDill Total Force Support 100-Year Commemoration Flight

6th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

The 927th Air Refueling Wing and the 6th Air Mobility Wing, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, combined efforts to ensure a multinational training mission received the fuel needed to honor aviation history on 12 June 2018.

Team MacDill's KC-135 Stratotanker refueled a 96th Bomb Squadron B-52 Stratofortress from Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, propelling the bomber to join French fighters over Étain, France, to commemorate the entrance of U.S. aviators into World War I, 100 years ago.



(Left to Right) Master Sgt. Nate Violette, superintendent of the 6th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (AMXS), Master Sgt. Kevin McGrath, superintendent of the 927th AMXS, and Lt. Col. Dean Rancourt, aircraft commander and evaluator pilot assigned to the 63rd Air Refueling Squadron, pause for a photo at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, on 14 June 2018. As the first leg of the mission, ground crews from the 6th AMW and aircrews from the 927th ARW collaborated to ensure the rapid refueling of a B-52 Stratofortress from the 96th Bomb Squadron during a WWI commemoration flight. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Vernon L. Fowler Jr.)

"It was a challenge that we were ready to take on. Putting fuel in the air is what we do; there's no other option," said Master Sgt. Kevin McGrath, superintendent of the 927th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "We work in a dynamic environment and are expected to meet challenges as they come."

Ground crews from the 6th AMW and aircrews from the 927th ARW collaborated to ensure the rapid refueling of the 96th Bomb Squadron's B-52 during the first leg of its mission. Carrying more than 180,000 pounds of fuel, the tanker crews successfully offloaded over 65,000 pounds to fuel the bomber, proving Total Force Integration is a key component to global air superiority and unbreakable alliances.

"Our Total Force team rose to the challenge of this tasking and performed beautifully," said Lt. Col. Dean Rancourt, aircraft commander and evaluator pilot assigned to the 63rd Air Refueling Squadron. "While our 927th aircrew members were handling the complexities of the change in coordination with air traffic controllers, both the 927th and 6th maintenance teams were scrambling to make the fuel load and aircraft changes to make this happen."

The fueled-up bomber successfully flew alongside the Armee de l'Air over Étain, France, where the first U.S. combat aerial bombing took place during WWI on 12 June 1918, demonstrating the close resolve and cooperation of the U.S. and its steadfast ally France.

"I was extremely proud of my aircrews' ability to make this mission change happen," said McAllister. "This was successful only because of our deep rooted partnerships between the 927th ARW and the 6th AMW, both operations and maintenance!" ■

Air Mobility News & Views continues >>>

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Journey To 10,000: KC-10 Flight Engineer Achieves Historic Milestone

by Tech. Sgt. James Hodgman, 60th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs / Published June 19, 2018

Performance and numbers matter. For more than two decades, Master Sgt. Scott Dillinger, a KC-10 Extender flight engineer, has completed countless checks on KC-10 aircraft from California to the Middle East.

He has been working toward his goal of 10,000 flight hours since he became a KC-10 flight engineer in 2004. It took him more than 1,000 sorties to accomplish that feat, but on 4 June, during a flight from Misawa Air Base, Japan to Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, he hit the 10,000 hour milestone.

Dillinger and his fellow crew members landed at Travis AFB, California, on 6 June where they were greeted by several members of the 6th ARS who were on hand to celebrate Dillinger's accomplishment.

"I reached a milestone that was really important to me and it feels good," said Dillinger. "Even better than hitting 10,000 hours is sharing it with my crew."

The flight was part of a refueling mission supporting six F-15 fighter aircraft as they crossed the Pacific Ocean in-route to Alaska to participate in the RED FLAG-Alaska exercise. Prior to leaving Misawa, Dillinger had 9,993.5 flight hours. He joins a select group of KC-10 flight engineers with this achievement.

"To say the least, 10,000 hours is a rare achievement," said Senior Master Sgt. Philip Edwards, 9th Air Refueling Squadron superintendent. "In my 21 years of flying, I have only known two active-duty flight engineers to achieve this milestone."

According to Edwards, at least nine people have hit the 10,000 hour mark while serving at Travis and late Monday evening, Dillinger added his name to that list.

"I accomplished something, but I had a lot of help along the way," he said. "The 6th

Air Refueling Squadron has been so good to me. Hopefully, 10,000 hours is something the younger guys can strive for. But, the bottom line is nobody achieves alone. No man gets there by themselves. Everyone here supported me."



Master Sgt. Scott Dillinger, 6th Air Refueling Squadron noncommissioned officer in charge of standardization and evaluation and a KC-10 Extender flight engineer, sits in the cockpit of a KC-10 at Misawa Air Base, Japan, 4 June 2018 prior to flying a refueling mission. During the flight, Dillinger hit the 10,000 flight hour milestone. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. James Hodgman).

approximately 6 hours and 34 minutes into the 7 hour and 12 minute flight. Once the crew realized Dillinger hit 10,000 hours they celebrated in the cockpit with cups filled with juice. They raised their cups high and honored Dillinger minutes before landing at Eielson.

Master Sgt. Scott Ferneding, 6th ARS assistant NCOIC of standardization and evaluation and a KC-10 flight engineer, has known Dillinger since 2005 and the two have grown close over the years. He helped lead

the celebration and was one of the first to congratulate Dillinger.

"He's put in the work for a long time and this is so awesome," he said. "To hit 10,000 hours you have to routinely get that alert call at 3 a.m., fly through bad weather and overcome numerous challenges over and over and over. He put in the work and he deserves everything he gets."

"This KC-10 came into service in 1982 and has a little over 32,000 hours on it," said Ferneding. "Dillinger became a flight engineer in 2004 and in 14 years has accumulated a third of the flying hours on this jet. What he's done is amazing."

The achievement is kind of a bookend for Dillinger and foreshadows the sunset of his military career. After serving in the U.S. Navy, the Air Force Reserves, Air National Guard and in the active-duty Air Force, he plans on retiring in November.

"I'll miss the camaraderie and getting the mission done with these guys," said Dillinger.

"You can't stay in the military forever," said Ferneding. "When he leaves the 6th ARS we will lose 10 percent of flight engineer hours in the squadron. Whatever he does next, I wish him all the best."

Dillinger hopes his accomplishment will inspire others to achieve their dreams.

"Follow your passion and be good at it," he said. "Don't give up. Find the one thing you want to do in life and go after it. Set goals, do your best to achieve them and surround yourself with really good people. And no matter where you get in your career, share your knowledge."

Before he retires, Dillinger plans on making the most of the rest of his time in the Air Force.

"Now, it's time to go for 11,000 hours," he said. ■

KC-46 Training Summit Helps Set Timeline for Air Force

By Staff Sgt. David Bernal Del Agua, 22nd Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

McConnell AFB, Kansas, hosted its fifth KC-46 Pegasus Maintenance Training Summit, in late June, to define training timelines and expected progression based on aircraft delivery.

The summit outlined when to train maintainers, crews and the entire KC-46 community. It also addressed how the Air Force is going to cross-train current KC-135 Stratotanker maintainers to the new KC-46.

"The 22nd Maintenance Group created a KC-46 training timeline that was used as a baseline for the KC-46 enterprise," said Master Sgt. Ian Evans, 22nd MXG KC-46 transition team superintendent. "This timeline will be adopted by Air Mobility Command as the way forward."

The main focuses of the summit were the emerging KC-46 training requirements that come with the new platform scheduled to arrive in October.

"Based on the training we have done over the last couple of years with Boeing, our maintainers are posturing and ready for the aircraft to touchdown," said Evans. "Our initial cadre will be executing the beddown plan for the KC-46 and they will train everyone else."

The summit included Airmen from Pease, Tinker and Altus Air Force Bases as well as members from AMC, Air Education and

Training Command and the Air National Guard.

"We had about 45 key members in attendance," said Master Sgt. Edward Musterer, 22nd MXG KC-46 transition office flight chief. "We started with a clean slate and adopted new ideas and concepts to make this transition as smooth and seamless as possible."

A couple of months after aircraft arrival, the summit will reconvene and reevaluate their master training plan going forward.

"After we implement the aircraft and go through the initial phases of training, we're going to readjust our training and technical school curriculum," Evans said. "We have to bring everyone involved in the planning and work through whatever problems we may find. This will help the next base receiving the aircraft stand up their units faster."

McConnell hosted the first training summit in November 2016, where they laid out a plan to approach the KC-46 as an enterprise team.

"The first main operating base and AETC have worked together to standardize the training approach across the board and ensure all training requirements were met," said Musterer. "This is another step closer in increasing our readiness in preparation to accept the aircraft." ■

Marshall Assumes Command of the CRW

By Master Sgt. Chuck Larkin Sr., 621st Contingency Response Wing P.A.

Col. Ryan T. Marshall [A/TA Life Member] assumed command of the 621st Contingency Response Wing during a change of command ceremony at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, June 21. Maj. Gen. Christopher Bence, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center commander [A/TA Life Member], presided over the ceremony in which Col. Charles Henderson relinquished command of the 621 CRW to Marshall.



Col. Ryan T. Marshall (R) assumes command of the 621st Contingency Response Wing during a change of command ceremony at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, on 21 June. Maj. Gen. Christopher Bence (L), U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center commander, presided over the ceremony. (U.S. Air Force Photo).

Marshall, who previously served as the Director of Operations, Logistics, Plans & Strategy at the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, now leads the 621 CRW, a highly-specialized unit trained to rapidly deploy personnel, quickly open airfields and establish, expand, sustain and coordinate air mobility operations around the world.

"Under Colonel Henderson's command, you [the 621 CRW] have nailed the priorities that he established and you've executed without flaw" Bence said. "Our Devil Raiders have done amazing things and their efforts have gotten high level recognition, not only within Air Mobility Command, but the highest levels of our United States Air Force."

"As Colonel Marshall begins to take command of the 621st Contingency Response Wing...I have no doubt you will have a busy couple years," Bence said. "You have the playbook and I'm confident you are prepared and ready to respond not *if*, but *when* the Devil Raiders are called into action."

"To the men and women of the 621st CRW, you are an elite organization with an incredible mission," Marshall said. "From air advising joint integration to theater wide command and control, air base opening you are second to none. I'm honored to be associated with you, and it's a privilege to serve you, may God continue to bless the 621st CRW and the United States of America." ■



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The sun rises over the KC-46 Pegasus three-bay hangar on 12 October 2017, at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas. All KC-46 construction on McConnell has been completed, and the base now stands ready to be the first to accept the new aircraft. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Erin McClellan).

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Mobility Forces Deliver U.S., UK Paratroopers To Europe For Swift Response 18

By 1st Lt. Allison Egan, 628th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

U.S. paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and British Paratroopers from the 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, Colchester, England, arrived in Latvia with the assistance of various mobility aircraft in support of Exercise Swift Response 2018 (SR18) on 9 June 2018.

In the eighth iteration of the exercise, nine C-17 Globemaster IIIs, refueled in air by two KC-135 Stratotankers and one KC-10 Extender, transported about 700 paratroopers



U.S. Army paratroopers assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and British Army paratroopers assigned to the 3rd Regiment Parachute Battalion C. Company, Colchester, England, board a C-17 Globemaster III at Pope Army Air Field, North Carolina, during Exercise Swift Response 18 (SR18) 8 June 2018. SR18 is one of the premier military crisis response training events for multinational airborne forces in the world that demonstrates the ability of America's Global Response Force to work hand-in-hand with joint and total force partners. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman First Class Gracie I. Lee).

nonstop from Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina, to Latvia. Exercises like SR18 rely on joint and intraservice capabilities to ensure that Mobility Air Forces respond rapidly, enhance coalition partnerships and ensure global reach.

"The primary mission of SR18 is to demonstrate the ability to move a global response force anywhere in the world, and in this case, it could be in a contested environment," said U.S. Air Force Col. Anthony Angello, SR18's airlift mission commander. "This is an opportunity that allows us to work with our coalition partners and allies in Europe and creates a space where we can work together, learn from each other, and build the trust and confidence we need to succeed on the battlefield."

SR18 is co-led by the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force and includes seven partner nations in an exercise designed to train the U.S. global response force's ability to operate with allies across Europe. When combining ground forces with airpower, units can move

thousands of miles in a matter of hours.

SR18 is part of Saber Strike, a two-week exercise in Europe involving 19 partner nations and more than 12,000 troops.

"Mobility airlift is what enables the Joint Forcible Entry (JFE) capability. Without mobility airlift, paratroopers cannot get to where they need to go," said Senior Airman Ryan Stefanowicz, C-17 loadmaster, 7th Airlift Squadron, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. "We provide the ride and we

combatant commander needs to succeed on the battlefield."

The exercise provided a first for Britain's paratroopers.

"We haven't jumped from a C-17 yet, so it's our first time, and it's also the first time for a lot of the new guys," said British Army Lance Cpl. Rushane Shaw, before the flight. The paratrooper from the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment, C Company, Colchester, England, also added, "It's also the first time in history our regiment has flown so far to jump into another country. I look forward to getting on the ground and working with our allies, using our tactics and using their tactics."

Of the nine C-17s that headed to Latvia, two of them carried essential equipment for the Army. With Humvees and other tactical vehicles packed into the jets, the Army prepared to begin their ground mission upon landing in theater. The vehicles parachuted into Latvia with the troops.

"Also exiting one of the jets are door bundles, which are padded equipment that troopers can jump with," said U.S. Army Sgt. Dominick Skompski, infantry squad leader, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. "My job is to ensure the bundles exit the jet properly – we are dropping an 81 mm mortar system, two javelin missile systems, .50 caliber sniper system and three crates of medical supplies for the ground portion of the exercise."

Integrating the Army and Air Force with British forces allows all sides to practice how they defend allies in Europe. It also provides an opportunity to show how effective they are together and that each component is vital to responding worldwide, Angello said.

"Exercise SR18 is a great opportunity for us to demonstrate the total force effort that goes into these types of exercises. We certainly can't do it without the active duty, reserve, and air national guard," said Angello, who is also a U.S. Air Force reservist. "As a total force team we have the ability to project this type of power anywhere in the world and we just simply can't do it without relying on each other's skills, talents and capabilities across the different components of the Air Force." ■

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Book Review

by Capt Murdock Moore, USAF Ret

OPERATION CHOWHOUND

The Most Risky, Most Glorious US Bomber Mission Of WWII

Stephen Dando-Collins, 2015, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

In April 1945 the Third Reich's resident ruler in Holland, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, could see the writing on the dike, Hitler's Thousand Year Reich had only a few more weeks to live. Add to that, the Canadian First Army was advancing steadily towards him. Arthur's problem – under his direction over 25,000 Netherlanders had succumbed to starvation resulting from the German Fuhrer's anger over a Dutch Allied-aiding rail strike Hitler ordered Seyss-Inquart to starve Holland into submission. Commandeered trains rushed eastward filled with the sugar beet harvest and other perishables. The Dutch were basically told, "Eat you tulip bulbs! (which they did!)"

Now the nasty Nazi decided to be a nice Nazi and feed his captive people (though not at the expense of his well fed, but now isolated 120,000 "Fortress Holland" troops). He offered Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces commander General Dwight Eisenhower a chance to airlift over the German lines food for the starving.

General Dwight Eisenhower had a problem with the idea. He had lots of warehoused rations in the UK, but his airlifters were 100% committed to supporting his combat columns in Germany, Czechoslovakia and Austria (1/3 of Patton's gas was air delivered). BUT he did have those four engine bomber boys now pubbing it up after standing down as strategic targets were now too close to the advancing Allied armies. Ike called to his Reims, France HQ Air Vice Marshall Robert Geddes of the Royal Air Force. The AVM had a reputation for taking on the impossible – in 1940 while flying a LYSANDER army cooperation aircraft he attacked a formation of 20 STUKA dive bombers. Geddes returned home with an air kill! The air vice marshal accepted the challenge.

Straight forward do-gooding required a lot of weaving as Geddes had to coordinate with SHAEF, RAF Bomber Command, the 8th Air Force, the Dutch government-in-exile, the Dutch in-country resistance movement, the Dutch collaborationist government, the German Air Force, the German Army, plus the advancing Canadian First Army.

On April 29th, seven days after being given the tasking, two RAF four engined LANCASTER bombers arose and headed eastward under OPERATION MANNA.

Leading the lead LANCASTER, Royal Canadian Air Force Flight Sergeant Robert Upcott in THE BAD PENNY (as in "A Bad Penny Always Comes Back!"). As he crossed the Dutch coast at the German prescribed 400 feet (20,000 feet lower than usual) Upcott could see the 88 and 20mm cannon keeping him dead center. This AAA shadowing would continue for days as many Germans considered this a charade of kindness, a setup for thousands of paras to leap from the bombers in a BRIDGE TOO FAR #2 attempt.

Upcott's navigator didn't note those guns as he was busy working his charts to avoid barrage balloon fences, smoke stacks and antennas (Oh, for the simple follow-the-radio bombing-beam of a few days before!). Finally the IP appeared. A moment later the, "Food gone!" from the bomb aimer. Then it was a gradual turn to the Dutch coast with no "jinking" or altitude increase allowed. "Piece of cake," the nonchalant appearing crew briefed post-flight intel. But to young Dutch children who'd never known peace or tasted a cake the big bombing birds would mean salvation.

The American chipped in the next day with 117 OPERATION CHOWHOUND sorties. They tried loading food parcels on the bomb bay doors. The simple act of opening the doors converting into food

accurately delivered, IN THEORY.

Of course the Air Transport Command (ATC) folks, who had been doing so for three years, were not consulted as what could the "Allergic-To-Combat" types knew of delivering packages from a B-17. But aeronautically designed bombs were different from six-sided cardboard boxes. When the rations hit the slip stream most reentered the aircraft, seemingly coming to rest in the most inaccessible of places. You had aircrew playing find-catch-release into a wind howling bomb bay or gunport. Though they were paid to sling bombs and lead, not ration boxes, experience gave way to boxes bundled and then tied to bomb racks with slip knots. On the bombardier's "boxes away!" rope holders yanked and bundles headed in the right direction.

Some "exploded" on ground impact, but the "K" rations were boxes within boxes within bags so any bursting was short radiused. The K rations however had a "death from within" aspect – though high in calories they were very, very low in protein – the mini-meals were not to be eaten more than 15 times in five days. The boxes were stenciled in English to that effect. But the average Netherlander didn't speak English so some boxes carried hand written warnings in Dutch. Plus pamphlets were dropped and warnings issued over the overt and covert radio networks.

With all those boxes boring into Dutch soil you would expect a lot of human "collateral damage," but only one Dutch person lost his life to aerial delivery. He was over anxious and entered a still active drop zone. One RAF aircrew experienced anguish when a packet hung up for few seconds then released itself. It plowed into the roof of a four story apartment building. A gapping hole resulted. The aircraft did a 360 for worried visual recon – filling the roof gap was a group of Netherlanders waving and giving them thumbs-up for the convenient "home delivery."

The ration warnings were mitigated when German forces in the Netherlands unconditionally surrendered on May 6th (Germany officially on May 8th). But the air "safe corridors" had morphed into a general Air Cease Fire. Then into a Ground Cease Fire – Truce – Armistice – Surrender. But even before the surrender, Dutch driven army food trucks had passed through German lines allowing immediate local directed deliveries.

Some 5,569 Royal Air Force Operation MANNA/United States Army Air Force Operation CHOWHOUND missions were flown and over 11,000 tons of relief were delivered. Three aircraft were lost, two to a midair, one to an engine fire/ditching. Combat crew casualties on wartime "peaceful" missions.

An Air Ops Oddity – RAF Bomber Command considered the missions noncombat, *even if you came back with holes*. The U.S. Eighth Air Force was only slightly less illogical as in – if you took a hit you got combat mission credit, *BUT THE PLANES AROUND YOU DIDN'T!*

Not on the Allied "hit parade" was nasty-to-nice Nazi Arthur Seyss-Inquart. He stretched a rope at Nuremberg on October 16th, 1946. His legacy far out lived him, to include a young Royal Netherlands Ballet hopeful rejected because her legs were too weak (from a Nazi induced vitamin deficiency). The young lady ended up having to do film work. But for decades she would show up at many a god-forsaken location to lend a hand. At 103 pounds she wasn't a heavy lifter, but to the gruff, sweat stained humanitarian airlifters she was a spirit lifter. Operations MANNA and CHOWHOUND had saved Audrey Hepburn's life – she was merely helping returning the favor to others. ■

INDUSTRY PARTNER *Spotlight*



Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) is a global leader in applied research and development whose world-class engineers and scientists solve some of the toughest problems facing government and industry. GTRI is uniquely positioned within the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), a top research university. Many of GTRI's experts are recognized internationally in a vast array of research domains. GTRI's core research areas include complex and agile systems engineering, sensor design and integration, modeling and simulation, information management and cyber security, and defense technology development. GTRI has over 2000 employees and conducts more than \$375 million in sponsored research annually.

When the doors of the Georgia Engineering Experiment Station (EES) opened back in 1934, with the express purpose to conduct research applicable to "any or all branches of engineering, manufacturing and the industries and the science related thereto," the handful of part-time researchers and graduate assistants running the operation knew they were a part of something very special. Some of the most important projects coming into the EES in the early days involved sensitive communications research for the Pentagon's Office of Scientific Research and Development.

Work picked up sharply in the years immediately prior to and during World War II. War-related projects included an expansion of helicopter research, plus wind tunnel testing of airfoil designs.

EES' future expansion would rely heavily upon U.S. Department of Defense work, most of it related to electronic communications. Another important project with long-reaching implications was a study on the propagation of electromagnetic waves. This was followed by a large U.S. Navy contract for radar research and development. The work set the stage for Georgia Tech's future standing as the country's pre-eminent innovator in radar and defense electronics – a role that GTRI occupies to this day.

Upgrading Defense Technology

A majority of GTRI's military contracts reflect the institute's historical preeminence in radar and electronics. Several noteworthy projects improve the defensive capability of aircraft through different technologies, underscoring the breadth of the Institute's capabilities in this area.

Integrated Defensive Avionics Software (IDAS)

Today, IDAS is an integral component in the complex electronic warfare technology ubiquitous in modern military aircraft. Developed by GTRI engineers to complement radar warning, missile warning and countermeasures systems, IDAS supports rapid threat display and response. It presents accurate and usable information to the aircrew.

IDAS includes a sophisticated threat data correlator that combines information from onboard sensors and data links. It provides real-time threat response management functions required to counter radio frequency and infrared threats. It also includes automated chaff and flare countermeasures.

In addition, IDAS incorporates the Virtual Electronic Combat Training System function in its operational flight program. System capabilities include in-flight aircrew tactics training using

simulated threats.

IDAS can be configured for specific missions and individual threat responses. This flexibility makes the system applicable in a range of aircraft, from fixed-wing fighters to rotary-wing craft. Most recently, IDAS was revised under the C-130 Avionics Modernization Program to add capability and update to open-systems standards.

Digital Crystal Video Receiver

GTRI researchers invented and patented a digital crystal video receiver, a vital part of the radar warning receiver system that alerts an aircraft crew to enemy ground radar activity. By converting U.S. radar warning receivers from analog to digital circuits, the digital crystal video receiver will provide more stable in-air detection of enemy ground radar at less cost.

The device represents a substantial improvement in reliability, cost and accuracy over the analog chips they are designed to replace. The digital crystal video receiver needs no calibration, performs well under temperature extremes and is more robust, making the circuit more stable. The digital version is also far less expensive to manufacture and reduces the overall production cost of a radar warning receiver by a factor of between 5 and 10.

Updating Aircraft

GTRI engineers showcased their expertise in the modernization of existing military hardware through their work on the MH-53 Pave Low helicopter.

Among GTRI's most successful early such projects was an upgrade of the U.S. Air Force's H-53 helicopter. Originally designed as a general purpose cargo transport, the Air Force wanted a modified craft for special operations forces. GTRI engineers initiated numerous structural improvements that significantly increased payload capacity, along with improved main rotor blades, a more reliable main rotor head and upgraded engines.

Substantial changes in the mission equipment package were made as well. The changes allowed for safer, more effective navigation at low altitudes in total darkness and adverse weather, over all types of topography, including mountainous terrain. As a cost-saving alternative to building new systems from scratch, GTRI's idea of updating aircraft found a receptive audience at the Pentagon and Capitol Hill.

For more information, please visit: GTRI.gatech.edu.



GTRI engineers showcased their expertise in the modernization of existing military hardware through their work on the MH-53 Pave Low helicopter. (U.S. DoD Photo).

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Industry Partner HIGHLIGHTS



Col Cary Walgamott USAF (Ret)

The Airlift/Tanker Association team is in the final stretch with preparations for the 50th Annual A/TA Convention, Symposium and Technology Exposition in Grapevine, Texas. Another world-class program has been planned and preparations are coming together nicely. Once again, an outstanding lineup of senior Air Force leaders including the Air Force Chief of Staff as well as an impressive list of seminars on a wide variety of mobility topics are at the heart of the symposium program.

Early indications predict that there will be even more exhibitors at this year's Air Mobility Technology Exposition than last year and we are estimating attendance to be approximately 2000 attendees. Similar to last year there will be a number of AMC mini-conferences held before, as well as integrated into, the symposium. These are designed to meet and enhance the professional development requirements of the air mobility community.

We will again have several industry-focused seminars including panel discussions and specific speakers focused on industry matters. In addition, the Chairman's Luncheon – always a very popular event – will feature Lt Gen David D. Thompson, Vice Commander, Air Force Space Command, to address industry specific subjects. In addition, Air Mobility Command (AMC) will host an AMC Industry Day (ID) '18 on Thursday, 25 October from 0800-1600, before the Airlift/Tanker Association Symposium. More details about the AMC Industry Day will be announced via FedBizOpps. In addition, I will include additional information as it becomes available in my early September update letter to the exhibitors. If your company is interested in attending the all-day event, ensure you plan your travel and hotel reservations accordingly.

When you go to the Airlift/Tanker Association website to register for this year's event, you will also find something new. Our IT team and A/TA administrative staff have been working diligently since last year's convention to further streamline and make the registration process more customer friendly. Their efforts have been exemplary and we hope your registration goes very smoothly. As a reminder, ALL exhibitors must individually register for the convention. This is separate from the exhibit space reservations. This is accomplished at our A/TA website at atalink.org.

This year our convention will be at the beautiful Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas. We hope you will join us, 25-28 October, for the 2018 A/TA Convention/Symposium and Air Mobility Technology Exposition. The 50th Golden Anniversary Airlift/Tanker Association Convention will be a historic event – come and be part of air mobility history!

Warm regards,
Cary Walgamott
Vice President Industry

A/TA Industry Partnership remains a bargain at the annual rate of \$1700. Industry Partner benefits include a reduced exhibit rate, opportunity to select your exhibit location (based on established criteria), a write-up with your logo in the convention issue of the *Airlift/Tanker Quarterly* (as well as a listing on our website) and five "free" individual memberships. A new and exciting benefit for our Industry Partners is our Industry Partner News page on our website. This is a place where you can share information about new products/services or company news. Contact Sondra Hart at ata@atalink.org or 423-902-2297 to become an A/TA Industry Partner today.

AIR MOBILITY Classics

Air Mobility Classics is a recurring feature contributed by Lt Col Douglas H. Lloyd, USAF Ret.

And now for something completely different! For the benefit of our Navy airlifters, this month's subject is the Convair R3Y Tradewind, an aircraft that was the poster child for one of the more bizarre concepts for aerial resupply.

The use of large flying boats for long-range patrol and cargo transport was a key mission capability for the United States Navy during World War Two. The vast overwater expanses of the Pacific theater and limited land-based airfields made flying boats seem a logical choice. In an emergency they could alight on the sea. Any protected lagoon or harbor became a landing field. Long-range patrol bombers like the Martin PBM Mariner and the four-engine Consolidated PB2Y Coronado were the "eyes of the fleet," and purpose-built cargo versions of both these aircraft, along with the giant Martin JRM Mars, were the backbone of the USN air logistics network in the Pacific.

So it is understandable that the USN would continue the development of these types of aircraft in the immediate postwar era, and in December 1945, manufacturers were invited to submit proposals for an advanced flying boat. The new aircraft was to benefit from new scientific research in hydrodynamics and hull design. More significantly, the aircraft was to be powered by an entirely new and revolutionary type of engine... the "propeller-turbine." Convair won the competition with their Model 117, and two XP5Y-1 prototypes were ordered on 19 June 1946. Intended for patrol, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), and air-sea rescue, the four-engine Convair design featured a high length-to-beam ratio hull that made it relatively sleek (if any flying boat can be called sleek) in the air as well as on the water. The innovative new power plants were an immediate source of trouble, however. The 5,100 shaft horsepower Allison T40 turboprop was a complex engine, actually consisting of two smaller T38 turboprop engines coupled to a common gearbox and driving two six-blade 15ft diameter contra-rotating propellers. Endless delays with the engines caused the two prototypes to be rolled out engineless from the factory in San Diego in mid-1949.

Meanwhile, the Navy was having a "mission-identity crisis" with the airplane. They deemed the patrol bomber was an obsolete concept, and changed the primary mission to ASW, then, still later, to mine-laying. By the end of 1949, engines were finally available for installation in the first prototype, and the first flight was made on 18 April 1950. Four months later the Navy changed the mission of the aircraft again, announcing that the aircraft would be developed as a pure transport. On 16 August 1950 a contract was placed for six aircraft to be designated R3Y-1

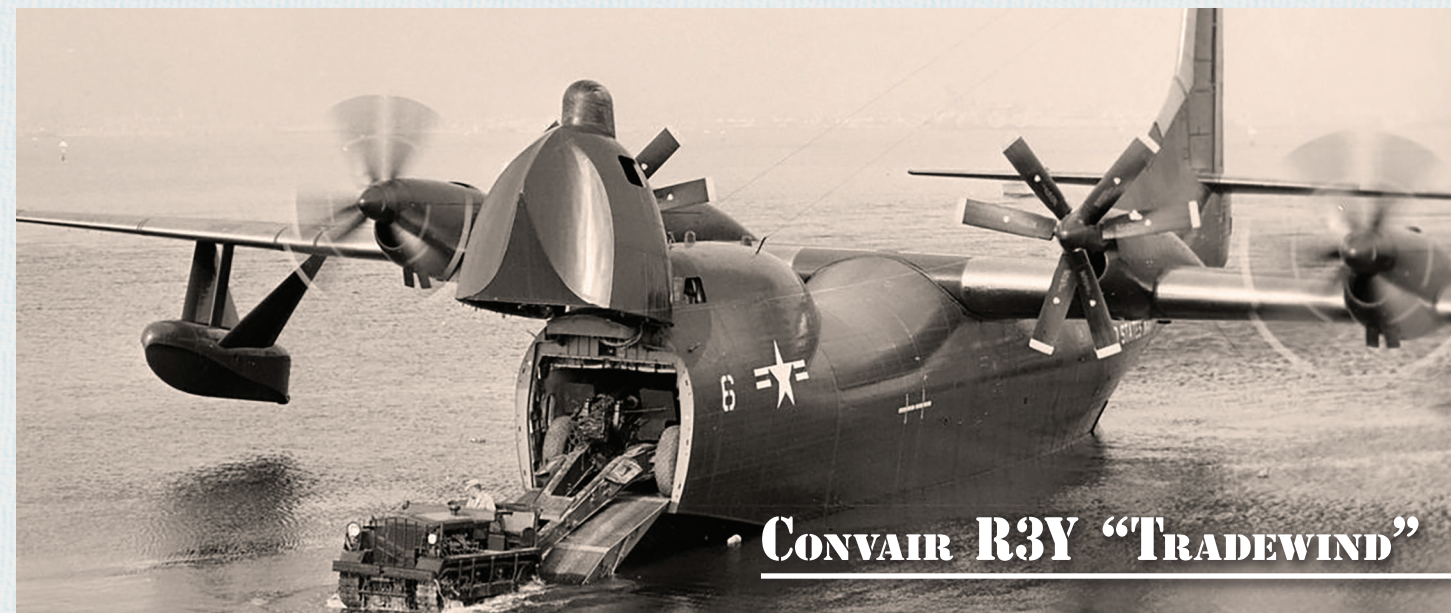
Tradewind (in the Navy pre-1962 designation system, "R" indicates a transport, and "3" signifies the third transport design of the Convair company, which was assigned the manufacturers code letter "Y"). With the switch to the transport role, substantial changes were made to the design. The hull was lengthened nearly 15 feet, a taller tail was fitted, and a 10 foot wide cargo hatch was provided aft of the wing on the port side. Accommodation was provided for 80 passengers or 72 stretcher patients in a pressurized 9 foot wide cabin. The first flight of the R3Y-1 was 25 February 1954.

But the R3Y-1, like every flying boat transport before it, had one major disadvantage; the necessity of offloading cargo and passengers to boats or barges for transfer to shore. And within a year, the Navy had a new idea...why not an "assault transport" that could offload cargo directly onto the beach...an airborne version of the highly successful LST (landing ship tank)? The R3Y-2 was born. With an upward opening nose and power-operated ramps, this version was expected to taxi right up to the beach to offload heavy equipment, vehicles and artillery. One R3Y-1 was converted to become the first R3Y-2, taking to the air on 22 October 1954. Five others were built.

The assault transport concept was better in theory than it was in practice. Crews found it very difficult to keep the aircraft stable for offload once beached. And true to form, the USN had come up with yet another mission for the Tradewind; aerial tanker. One of the R3Y-1s and three R3Y-2s were fitted with a four-point drogue and hose system to permit the simultaneous refueling of four fighters.

The Tradewind finally entered operational service with Naval Transport Squadron Two (VR-2) in 1956. Based at NAS Alameda, CA, the unit flew the aircraft on trans-Pacific services, principally between the west coast and Hawaii.

Despite some notable flights (one Tradewind averaged 403 mph on a six hour flight, a world record for seaplanes that still stands), engine problems continued to plague the R3Y. VR-2 lost one aircraft due to a run-away prop in mid 1957, and eight months later a second crew was lucky to survive an emergency water landing and collision with a seawall after a catastrophic gearbox failure in flight. These incidents were in addition to two earlier R3Y losses, also attributed to the troublesome T-40 engine. The Navy grounded the Tradewind fleet immediately. Although there was a proposal to retrofit the R3Ys with Rolls-Royce Dart turboprops, nothing came of it. The remaining aircraft were scrapped after just 21 months of operational service. ■



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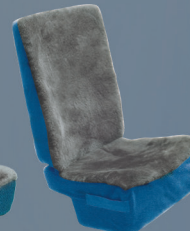


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