

It's Protection, Not PR

As the [former] commander of the Continental US North American Aerospace Defense Command Region, 1st Air Force (Air Forces Northern) I would like to respond to the letter from retired Maj. Dudley H. Johnston "Giant and Fly" [*February, p.8*]. Using the example of a midsized turboprop flying over the National Capital Region (NCR) at 18,000 feet, Major Johnston erroneously concludes that the air defense system in place in the NCR has a "chink in the armor."

In the example painted by Major Johnston, the many parts of the Integrated Air Defense System (IADS) would respond in a timely manner to mitigate the threat. Working closely with our partners such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), our robust command and control system would very quickly identify the deviating aircraft and activate the Ground-Based Air Defense (GBAD) systems to ensure that there was a very high confidence prior to a decision to address the threat. If needed, prior to fighters being in a position to respond, the multiple elements of the GBAD would be sure to protect critical NCR assets.

I also take exception to his observation that "intercepting Cessnas with an F-16 is questionable PR." Defending the homeland 24/7 is and always has been the No. 1 priority mission—an absolute no-fail mission. There are other capitol defenders to be considered. Interceptor aircraft like the F-16 are only one tool in a multilayered defense system that consists of radars, command and control, Coast Guard helicopters, and various GBAD systems that include laser warning elements, surveillance cameras, and Army surface-to-air missiles. These elements, together with a dedicated group of professionals who manage them, provide a world-class multilayered Integrated Air Defense System. Additionally, we work very closely with the FAA and other partners with a significant role in this mission, such as the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), to educate pilots and minimize the need to conduct intercepts.

But vigilance can never relax, for history has shown that we cannot predict the nature of the next threat. There should be no doubt that in spite of all the preventive measures taken, if needed we will use

F-16s or other aircraft to ensure that our mission succeeds. As a commander, I am often reminded of how critical this mission is and I am, without question, 110 percent confident in the ability of our dedicated team of joint professional men and women to perform it. America's airmen on the watch.

Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III
Tyndall AFB, Fla.

Play Misty—and Tiger and Stormy

In your February issue, Rebecca Grant writes brilliantly, as usual [*"The Crucible of Vietnam," p. 74*]. But perhaps my book *Hangar Flying* gave the wrong impression that the Misty Fast-FACs lost 14 aircraft in the first half of 1969. Though the first and maybe the most famous, Misty was not the only fast-FAC outfit. Others gradually took on the role—Stormy out of Da Nang, Wolf, Tiger, Laredo/Falcon, and Night Owl, all operating out of Thai bases. By 1969, even the Marine Corps had a fast-FAC outfit, Playboy, flying from Chu Lai. All of these contributed to the 14 fast-FAC aircraft lost in my calculation.

Of the 157 pilots who flew as Mistys, 35 were shot down during their short stay with the squadron, two of them twice. But as luck would have it, we lost only one airplane while I was there, and we recovered both pilots—Ron Standerfer and Lacy Veach.

I'm inordinately proud of this low loss rate, though it was mostly due to the strength and skill of the other pilots, men like Ron Fogleman, Jack Dickey, and Arnie Clarke.

Gen. Merrill A. McPeak,
USAF (Ret.)
Lake Oswego, Ore.

Saving the Patient—and Money, Too

I would like to commend Ms. Malenic for her article "Emergency Care by Air" [*February, p. 58*]. It clearly showed the many parts of a system dedicated to saving lives and how the people in that system interconnect. However, one of the improvements in the patient movement system was not mentioned: using in-system select aircraft for patient movement. Prior to that, an airframe would be "dedicated" to an AE mission, regardless of how many or how few patients needed to be moved. The exact year escapes me, but around 2003 AMC held an AE

Tiger Team with subject matter experts from the Total Force community—medics, operators, flight nurses, AE medical technicians, administrators, even financial experts, etc. Anyone who was somehow involved in the patient movement mission was in attendance. One of the team's products was the recommendation for an in-system select process. The result was maximum use of an aircraft. For example, a C-17 moving cargo from an East Coast port to Ramstein, then downrange, could then be selected and reconfigured for the AE mission to move patients westbound. Dollars saved and without compromising patient safety.

Col. John M. Starzyk,
USAF (Ret.)
Riverside, Calif.

La Revolución

"The Condor Legion" by John T. Correll [*February, p. 84*] contains one of the most concise and balanced explanations of the forces on both sides of the Spanish Civil War. Not only was the aviation side of the article highly enlightening, the historical content verifies all the stories my father told us about his youth during the Spanish Civil War, which his generation often referred to as the "Revolution."

As a teenage Catalan, my father along with his brother fled through the mountains of the Pyrenees to escape the violence and the recruiting coming from both sides of the conflict. Although the Catalonian region saw little air warfare, the various components of both political factions—especially on the Popular Front—were very active in Catalonia. Many "expat" Catalans like my father, although not at all fond or supportive of a fascist dictator ruling Spain, found the alternative anarchistic collection of communists

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and socialists much less appealing and quite destabilizing.

No excuses can be made for the atrocities committed by all parties, but as John Correll indicates, the Republicans had a much larger role than popular history recalls. Army Lt. Col. Frank Monaghan, Ph.D., writing in his 1943 *World War II, An Illustrated History*, called the Spanish Civil War a “rehearsal for disaster.”

Rodolfo Llobet
Phoenix, Md.

I think the penultimate statement in Mr. Correll’s excellent article “The Condor Legion,” i.e., “He was sympathetic to the Axis powers that supported him in the civil war, but Spanish forces did not engage in combat,” requires some further elucidation.

Spanish personnel fought alongside the German Army during the siege of Leningrad. The unit was named the Blue Division. I don’t know if this was an actual Spanish Army unit or more possibly a group of Spanish volunteers whose intention to defeat communism motivated them to ally with the Germans, similar to the communist sympathizers from the United States who joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to serve with the Republicans.

In any event, there is a street in Madrid, the “Calle Caidos de la División Azul,” which commemorates those who died in this endeavor.

I was stationed in Spain from 1976 to 1979 during which time Franco’s death was finally acknowledged.

Lt. Col. W. J. Seaman
Las Vegas

“Challenging” Is Putting It Mildly

I was interested in Walter Boyne’s B-47 article in the February issue, as I flew the airplane as an aircraft commander from ’58 to ’61 with the 509th BW at Pease. It was the most challenging aircraft I ever flew, and I flew a long list of fighters, bombers, tankers, and trainers. I encountered all of the shortcomings Boyne cited plus a few more [“*The B-47’s Deadly Dominance*,” p. 79].

It was the most difficult of all birds I knew to refuel in the air. The J47 engines didn’t spool up together which produced roll due to yaw as the shoulder-high downwind wing was blanked by the fuselage. Further, the incompatibility with the KC-97 caused some interesting stalls off the boom! On one occasion I had given the tanker a forming speed of 218 and last read 193 as I slid into the Arctic murk!

Also, in 1959, I lost an outboard engine on takeoff and barely staggered into the air fighting the yaw which threatened to make the ship uncontrollable. I learned later that not many survived that combination of circumstances.

All in all, though, it made me a better airman and made the B-52 a piece of cake!

Maj. Gen. Earl G. Peck,
USAF (Ret.)
Clearwater, Fla.

Walter Boyne’s article on the deadly, dominant B-47 was very well done. However, one misstatement needs correcting. Strategic Air Command never used the Boeing KB-50 tanker. SAC began its air refueling fleet with the KB-29, supplanting it with the KC-97 and then, of course, the KC-135. The KB-50 was used by the tactical air forces (TAC, FEAFF then PACAF, and USAFE). They began in 1953 receiving SAC’s surplus KB-29s, then switched to the triple

drogue-equipped KB-50 as they became available in 1956-57. With its emerging probe-equipped fighter force (F-100s, etc.), TAC used the KB-50 to enable its Composite Air Strike Force (CASF) concept, the predecessor to today’s Air and Space Expeditionary Force.

Lt. Col. John F. Bessette,
USAF (Ret.)
Springfield, Va.

Under Pressure

I am sure that *Air Force* Magazine editors know the difference between normal flying helmets and pressure suit helmets, but you did not make that fact clear in the February 2013 issue [“*Flashback: Brain Buckets, Hanoi Style*,” p. 56]. The suits and helmets shown are for high-altitude



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flight only and are not and were not worn on normal missions. The helmet shown in the inset is and was the type of helmet worn for normal altitude missions (those below 45,000 to 50,000 feet) as the pressure suit is confining and uncomfortable to wear unless it is required for life support at high altitude. The communist pilots did not wear these suits and helmets as a normal rule during the last two years of the war.

I have some experience in both the partial pressure suit and the full pressure suit, having flown the U-2 from 1965 to 1986.

Lt. Col. George Worley,
USAF (Ret.)
Elberton, Ga.

Knock Off the Spy Lingo

Like retired Lt. Col. Allan Johnson, I am a former RC-135 instructor navigator. I, too, take exception with your use, and explanation for said use, of the word "spy" in connection with the RC-135 [*Letters: Please, Avoid Page 32 of This Issue, March, p. 10*] and again in the March issue article on the U-2, "Spy Eyes in the Sky" [p. 32].

One of the first things I learned in SV-83 (Special Survival School) was that the RC-135 was a reconnaissance mission, not a spy mission. Reconnaissance is legal. Spying—otherwise known as espionage—is not. In fact, the overall strategic reconnaissance mission is referred to as PARPRO—Peacetime Aerial Reconnaissance Program.

Nowhere does the Air Force or DOD refer to ISR as "spying."

As to your definition, Webster's defines a spy as a person employed by one nation to SECRETLY convey classified information ... to another nation. Spying is clandestine; reconnaissance isn't. You might also look up "espionage"—the use of spies or illegal monitoring devices which is distinguished from intelligence gathering by its "aggressive nature and illegality."

You are right. ISR assets collect information without the opposing interest's permission. The difference is, reconnaissance is overt and legal; spying is covert and illegal.

I'd rethink my explanation and use of the word "spy" in relation to ISR.

Lt. Col. Charles A. Grimes,
USAF (Ret.)
Williamsburg, Va.

As usual I enjoyed reading your February issue of *Air Force Magazine* and particularly the fine article by Richard P. Hallion [*"Air Dominance From Normandy to the Bulge," p. 94*].

He did fail to emphasize one item of the greatest significance—particularly to those of us who were on the historic missions of Dec. 24, 1944.

This was when the weather fully cleared over the Ardennes, and Eighth Air Force launched the largest number of four-engine bombers that will ever be launched—2,046 plus 853 fighters. In total, 5,555 sorties were flown by the Allied air forces that day. While mentioning the limited air missions of Dec. 23, he failed to emphasize the tremendous airpower commitment of Christmas Eve.

Lt. Col. Wallace A. Storey,
USAF (Ret.)
Spartanburg, S.C.

While I thought this was a very good article about a very overlooked aspect of WWII, I did find a problem with your photographs. The B-17s depicted in the photo on p. 72-73 are flying over Antwerp, not Bonn.

SMSgt. Dan Delaney,
MDANG
Laurel, Md.

Gooney Fans

What a pleasant surprise to turn to p. 104 in the February issue and see the C-47 Skytrain pictured in "Airpower Classics." There is no doubt that its predecessor, the DC-3, shouldn't be considered eponymously for early air travel.

I'm sure there are a host of *Air Force Magazine* readers with "stick time" in the "Gooney Bird." I would like to relate my experience in two missions that may be of interest to the readers.

In early 1945, it became necessary to airlift supplies and equipment to Burma to support General Stilwell's drive with the Chinese army to fully retake Burma. One operation was coded "Cotton Tail" and could be considered as "reverse Hump activity" in that the material was being moved from China to Burma.

Some of the "material" were mules. I flew two C-47 trips from China to Myitkyina, Burma, carrying six mules each trip. A British Army sergeant was the project escort. His orders were to shoot any of the mules that started to act up. We thought if there was going to be any trouble, it would happen on takeoff; however, takeoffs were uneventful. The mules were hoisted about eight-to-10 inches from the cabin floor by two three-to-four-inch wide industrial type belts from under their bellies to the cabin top.

As we leveled off, I went to the cabin on both trips to check on our "passengers." They were quite docile, some sleeping, others just looking around enjoying the ride. The cabin floors had been completely covered with straw. As one might expect, by the end of the flights, the cabins had the appearance and aura of a flying stable.

But alas, that was war!

Lt. Col. Marcus B. Crisman,
USAF (Ret.)
Belleville, Ill.

During my Air Force career I accumulated over 4,500 flying hours, a good portion of them in the "Gooney Bird." Although your crew of three (pilot, copilot, and flight mechanic) is technically correct, I believe there are thousands of navigators and radio operators who may feel slighted. Their flight positions and equipment are/were an integral part of the flight deck.

TSgt. William Yeager,
USAF (Ret.)
Jackson, Ohio

The February issue on the C-47 Skytrain brought back memories of medical air evacuation missions I flew as a Medical Technician during 1955 and 1956. Missing in the Interesting Facts section was the role that the "Gooney Bird" played in evacuating patients from Korea to Japan and the Philippines during the Korean War. While I was assigned to the 1st Aeromedical Evacuation Flight at Rhein-Main AB, Germany, in 1955, we were bringing patients from bases in Morocco, Libya, France, and Egypt back to Germany for treatment. With the exception of one mission in a C-54, all of the flights that I crewed were in the C-47, a real "work horse" in aeromedical evacuation.

CMSgt. Richard L. Knowdell,
USAF (Ret.)
San Jose, Calif.

Gunnery School

In the [January] issue, someone did not do their homework (i.e., research) [*"From Gunnery School to Fighter School," January, p. 42*]. The Fighter School started out at Williams AFB, Ariz, first of all. The four-ship of F-80As on p. 44 shows the markings used when the school was at Willy. The F-51D on p. 45 is in the markings of the school's commander, Col. Robert L. Scott Jr., of *God Is My Co-Pilot* fame (see his book *Boring a Hole in the Sky* for an image of him standing next to her), and the F-84E 424 is not from the FWS, but was a 27th FEW aircraft taking off from a base in Korea in late 1950.

David Menard
Huber Heights, Ohio

The photo spread on the Weapons School was motivating. On p. 45, photo two was of a "Fighter Weapons School 'Heritage Flight.'"

The F-100 is listed as an F-100D when in fact it is the sixth F-100A. The P-51, which is a lightweight H model, seems to have its tail wheel stuck down.

Brig. Gen. Art Cornelius,
ANG (Ret.)
Tigard, Ore.

■ *The historical photos and information for the captions came from the USAF Weapons School.—THE EDITORS*