He became an Air Force leader and thinker of great distinction—but he started out as a bugler in the cavalry.

The Strategic World of

By John T. Correll

Russ Dougherty decided at age 12 that he wanted to be a lawyer. He never wanted to be anything else—until he flew a B-29 in World War II.

After the war, he went home to Kentucky and resumed his legal studies, but it wasn't the same.

"While I was in law school, I recognized that I had fallen in love with flying big airplanes," he said. "That profession had more appeal to me than the law."

Nevertheless, he went into the inactive reserve and completed law school before going back into the Air Force. For a few years, he juggled two career paths, flying airplanes while practicing as a judge advocate. Eventually, he chose flying and gave up the legal specialty.

He spent the next three decades in the thick of the Cold War.

In the 1950s, he was in Strategic Air Command when Gen. Curtis E. LeMay was building it into the most awesome striking force the world has ever known. In the 1960s, he was in the Pentagon during the Cuban Missile Crisis and the struggles with Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and his doctrine of "assured destruction." Pentagon assignments were interspersed with duty in Europe, where NATO was squared off against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.

In the 1970s, he was Air Force deputy chief of staff for plans and operations, commander of SAC's 2nd Air Force, and chief of staff of NATO's Allied Command Central Europe. From 1974 until his retirement in 1977, he was commander in chief of Strategic Air Command at a time when the Soviets were deploying one new ICBM after another.

Along the way, Dougherty gained a reputation as one of the Air Force's best thinkers and planners. He was—and is—a leader who was held in exceptionally high regard by those he led.

James M. McCoy, the senior enlisted advisor at SAC during the Dougherty years (and later Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and National President of the Air Force Association) still has the desktop plaque that Dougherty passed out to his staff, bearing a statement he made at a conference in 1974: "There is nothing in your job description that requires you to be an S.O.B."

"Your dad chewed me out, and it took me a while to realize what had happened," an officer once told

Russell E. Dougherty

Dougherty's daughter, Dede Ralston. "He had time for everyone—janitors, chock pullers, secretaries, and Secretaries," said Brett M. Dula, Dougherty's aide in the 1970s (and later a lieutenant general and vice commander of Air Combat Command).

After retirement, Russ Dougherty was a senior statesman whose opinion carried particular weight in the power circles of Washington. He was executive director of the Air Force Association, continued his affiliation with such organizations as the Atlantic Council and the Defense Science Board, and joined the international division of a major law firm.

Six universities presented him honorary degrees and the University of Louisville named a building after him. The most recent honor was an award

Gen. Russell Dougherty rose from a 15-year-old cavalry bugler in 1935 to the four-star commander of mighty Strategic Air Command in 1974. He gave up a law career after flying B-29s in World War II.

last fall, for lifetime achievement, from the Air Force Association.

It was a remarkable career, and it all began in the 123rd horse cavalry of the Kentucky National Guard.

Bugler

Russell Elliott Dougherty was born in 1920 in Glasgow, Ky., a town in the southwestern part of that state. It was the county seat, with lawyers bustling all around the Barren County courthouse. Young Russell sometimes attended trials there, which he later recalled as both entertaining and inspirational.

A judge who lived next door was a further influence on him, and he decided at an early age to pursue a career in law. But that came later.

Lt. Russell Dougherty (top photo, front left) was aircraft commander for this B-29 crew in 1945. Lt. Tennessee Ernie Ford, a bombardier, is behind Dougherty. The famous singer (bottom photo, left) and Dougherty became lifelong friends.

In 1935, the 123rd Cavalry of the Kentucky National Guard was in need of a bugler. The commander of the headquarters troop was Capt. Sam Sears, cashier of the local bank in Glasgow and a distant relative.

He knew that young Russell Dougherty played a trumpet in the high school band and elsewhere around town. Russell's age—he was 15 at the time—was an issue soon overcome, and he was enlisted in the cavalry. That year, he went to summer camp at Ft. Knox, bugled, and took care of the captain's horse. He stayed in the cavalry through high school and college.

He also continued with his music. He paid his way through school as the trumpet player and manager of a dance band.

"The thing in my lifetime that gave me the greatest satisfaction of anything I ever did was that I was able to go four years to college and three years to law school and never cost my parents a penny," Dougherty said.

Another member of the band was Billy Vaughn, born in Glasgow a year before Dougherty and destined to become a famous bandleader in the 1950s. Sometimes a songstress from Nashville—Dinah Shore—sang with them.

However, the singer that caught Dougherty's eye was Geralee Shaaber of Louisville, who appeared with the band at a fraternity dance one night. She was engaged to someone else, but the persuasive young trumpet player "managed to disengage her." They were later married, when Dougherty was a lieutenant in the Army Air Corps.

He graduated from Western Kentucky University in 1941 and went to Washington to study law and take a job with the FBI. He had not gotten very far along with it when World War II began.

Airman and Lawyer

At the outbreak of war, Dougherty joined the aviation cadets and got his wings and a commission in the Army Air Corps in 1943. At first, he was an instructor pilot in Air Training Command and was later assigned to 3rd Air Force in crew and instructor duties as a B-17 pilot.

When the B-29, the most advanced bomber of World War II, came along, Dougherty qualified for it. His bombardier was a first lieutenant from Sullivan County, Tenn., Ernest Jennings Ford, who later made a name for himself in show business as Tennessee Ernie Ford.

When, in 1986, Dougherty organized the "Gathering of Eagles" in Las Vegas for the Air Force Association, Ernie Ford was there to lead in the singing of "Off We Go Into the Wild Blue Yonder."

At the end of World War II, Dougherty went into the inactive reserve and entered the University

of Louisville law school. In 1946, he accepted the offer of a regular commission, having been assured he could stay in law school to graduate and take the Kentucky bar exam. He was attached to Ft. Knox with duty station at the law school but was soon asked to take on an additional duty as unit instructor and operations officer of the local Air Force reserve training detachment.

"Soon after I took over this unchartered additional duty, there arrived at Standiford Field—my tiny command, one master sergeant and 10 junior sergeants—10 AT-6s and two C-45s," Dougherty said. "I was given a roster of names and instructions to get in touch with them, and anyone else who had served in World War II who was interested in maintaining an association with the AAF. I was authorized to requalify them in our training aircraft and to begin to build the nucleus of a reserve air transport wing."

Dougherty graduated from law school in 1948 and was assigned to the bomb wing on Guam. He turned the Standiford Field unit over to his replacement, Capt. David C. Jones—later Chief of Staff of the US Air Force and a lifelong friend of Russ Dougherty's.

On Guam, he flew with the 19th Bombardment Wing and also served as a judge advocate. He returned home as a procurement and contract attorney for Air Force Materiel Command. In 1952, he left the legal specialty and entered aircrew refresher training for his return to operations.

It would be more than 30 years before he returned to the legal profession, but his education and experience in law would always remain strong influences on him. For example, he kept a strong belief—which could be attested to by anyone who was ever careless in drafting a paper for him—that words are important.

"If you don't think so," he said, "just try writing a very binding will and use your own language, easy to read, simplistic language, and find out how much trouble you create for the person whose will you just wrote."

Cold Warrior

Dougherty spent the next six years (1953-59) in operational assignments in Strategic Air Command. This was the time in which LeMay was building SAC from the poor and ineffective shape in which he had received it into the most famous organization of the Cold War.

"I probably wouldn't want General LeMay as my children's Sunday school teacher, but that wasn't his job," Dougherty said later. "I consider him the best wartime general we've ever had in the United States Air Force."

Dougherty, by then a major, took refresher training on the B-29, which SAC was still flying, although the huge B-36 by then was the first-line strategic bomber. Over the next few years, these propeller-driven bombers gave way to jets, first the B-47 and then the B-52. Dougherty qualified in the B-47 in 1954.

He progressed through a series of assignments that included command of a bomb squadron and culminated with a tour as deputy director of operations at 15th Air Force. When he left in 1959 to attend the National War College, Dougherty was well experienced in planning and command as well as operations.

He was also steeped in the strategy of deterrence in which the overriding objective is to prevent war by possessing enough military power to forestall enemy attack or aggression.

It was at the War College that Dougherty first encountered the legendary Col. George A. Lincoln of the West Point faculty. As a visiting speaker, Lincoln talked about the formula for successful deterrence: Capability X Will = Deterrence.

Lincoln "emphasized that this is a proposition in multiplication, not in addition, for if either of the essential factors is zero, then the product—deterrence—is also zero," Dougherty said. Neither capability nor will, in whatever strength, is sufficient in the absence of the other. In subsequent years, Dougherty cited and built upon Lincoln's formula and made it one of his major themes when he spoke.

Over the next decade, Dougherty was assigned to the Pentagon four times, mostly in duties where joint and allied operations were central concerns. As a staff colonel during the Cuban Missile Crisis, "I made trips back and forth carrying pictures and carrying things to the White House," he said. He was in a position to see and learn.

As an Air Force planner, he had a part in the clash between the services and Secretary of Defense McNamara over what came to be known popularly as Mutual Assured Destruction, or MAD.

The Air Force advocated a "counterforce" targeting doctrine, in which the targets were military forces and assets rather than population centers. McNamara and his followers believed that counterforce was pointless and argued that the only way to deter was a balance of nuclear terror, with each

After World War II (and law school), Dougherty served with the 19th Bombardment Wing on Guam. Major Dougherty is pictured here during a stopover at Pusan AB, South Korea. He would soon return to SAC.

side holding an "assured destruction" capability over the other.

Nevertheless, MAD did not actually make it into the war plan, which continued to reflect a preference for counterforce. "We never really targeted a city as such," Dougherty said. "We had many targets, discrete targets inside a city, the effect of which could be to destroy that city by peripheral effects. As our weapons got better, as our accuracy got better, we could limit that collateral damage very considerably."

Dougherty's Pentagon assignments were interspersed with duty in Europe, where he was twice assigned to US European Command in planning and policy jobs. He became a confirmed Atlanticist and made many lasting friends in Europe and NATO.

In 1970, he returned to the Pentagon as a three-star general and Air Force deputy chief of staff for plans and operations. A year later, he took command of 2nd Air Force at Barksdale AFB, La. It was USAF's largest numbered air force, consisting of the majority of SAC's B-52s and KC-135 tankers.

In 1972, he received his fourth star and went back to Europe as chief of staff of NATO's Allied Command Europe.

When Dougherty assumed control of SAC, the command had 150,000 airmen; 1,200 nuclear-capable aircraft; and more than 1,000 ICBMs. In 1977, he flew the first B-1A strategic mission simulation.

Pictured here with USAF Gen. David Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Dougherty vigorously advocated nuclear force modernization to meet the Soviet challenge in strategic arms.

CINCSAC

In August 1974, Dougherty became commander in chief of Strategic Air Command, the job for which he had been preparing, in one way or another, since his bomber pilot days in World War II.

SAC in 1974 had about 150,000 people, 1,200 airplanes, and more than 1,000 land-based ballistic missiles. The United States had adopted a policy of detente—or a lessening of tension—with the Soviet Union and was pursuing the objective of "essential equivalence" with Soviet strategic capabilities and power.

The Soviets, however, were aggressively improving their strategic nuclear force, especially with large ICBMs armed with multiple warheads. The strategic advantage the United States had previously enjoyed was fading. The Soviets had more missiles and more throw weight. The United States had more bombers and more accurate warheads.

SAC had recently added the Short-Range Attack Missile (SRAM) as a standoff weapon for its B-52s and was deploying Minuteman III missiles with multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicle warheads to replace the Minuteman I ICBMs.

A prototype for the B-1A bomber made its first flight in December 1974, four months after Dougherty's arrival, flying with the SAC shield and band painted on its nose.

As CINCSAC and US director of strategic target planning, Dougherty worked with Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger and others on more-precise strategic targeting options for SAC's nuclear weapons, moving further from McNamara's assured destruction theories of the 1960s.

In early 1977, Dougherty flew as pilot on the first full-length, simulated strategic mission of the B-1A bomber, of which he was a strong supporter. However, the new President, Jimmy Carter, canceled the B-1A in June 1977, a month before Dougherty's retirement.

Dougherty had grown up in big bombers, but he took great interest

and pride in SAC's ICBM force. After a visit to the missile wing at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., in 1974, he said later, "I recognized that the ballistic missile force had turned a major corner in the two years I had been away. Our missile crews had come into their own. ... They were Air Force missileers and proud of it, with their own uniforms, new traditions, and professional expectations."

The CINCSAC was a night owl—had been ever since his dance band duties kept him up late during college—and he was a frequent visitor after midnight to the SAC command post. He enjoyed checking in with SAC people on duty around the world at 2 a.m. or 3 a.m.

In those days, Dougherty said, SAC maintained a fairly constant level of communication all the time because the Soviets were known to be monitoring the volume and watching for a sudden increase. "We kept a level of communication that was far more than we needed so that when we did need to communicate, it didn't raise red flags," Dougherty said.

Another reason, probably, was that the CINCSAC liked to talk with members of the command, whenever and wherever he found them.

Tom Domingues, his aide in 1976 and 1977, said that Dougherty "was always accessible, especially to the troops in the field—almost to a fault for those of us who were trying to meet published base visit timelines. He made us proud to be involved with the profession of keeping the nuclear peace. His standard departing comment at the end of the day to the office staff was, 'Good night, good people. I couldn't do it without you.' "

"General Dougherty hardly ever closed his door to his office, and his desk sat so that he could see who was in the outer office," said McCoy, the SAC senior enlisted advisor. "He drove his executive officers crazy because, when he would see someone standing there, he would call them in and simply ask them how they were doing."

Interested as he was in the strategic mission, Dougherty never forgot the importance of people or of making the command a good place to serve.

"I asked dad once what he was most proud of as the SAC commander," said his son Mark. "He said planting trees. That wasn't the answer I expected, but that's what he was most proud of, planting trees at northern tier SAC bases."

Nor did he ever lose his love of aviation. He had flown most of the operational aircraft of the Air Force, from B-17s, B-25s, and B-29s of World War II to the B-52, KC-135, U-2, SR-71, and the F-15. Years later, Mark Dougherty said, "We counted the number of airplanes he had flown once, and I believe it was around 74."

Dougherty retired from active duty in 1977 after 35 years of commissioned service.

Thinker and Teacher

In retirement, Dougherty continued to speak and write. He was often interviewed and consulted. His roles as leader, planner, and strategist were well-established, but, in addition, new generations of airmen came to know him as a teacher with special insights.

"He wrote all his own speeches, longhand, on yellow legal pads," Mark Dougherty said. Among the views he expressed were these:

■ On long-range combat aircraft (1984): "Some years ago, I was accused by a close military associate of advocating a long-range combat aircraft of such conventional versatility that, in his words, it could 'deliver hay to the yaks in Katmandu.' We do not know on which day or to what remote corner of the world it may suddenly be in our nation's interest to put a platform carrying sensors, weapons, or, if it is in our national interest, hay for the yaks in Katmandu."

■ On the alleged "overkill" of nuclear weapons (1986): "Consider the capability of No. 6 shot in a 12-gauge shell, which you would use if you were hunting ducks. Each shell contains about 300 pellets. You could conclude that's 300 times overkill for a single duck, or maybe enough to kill 300 ducks with one shell. That's the analysts' approach, but that's not the way the ducks line up. And to apply the analogy to military capabilities, that's not the way the targets line up, either."

■ On the greatest changes in airpower (1996): "Some of you will remember that during my tenure as CINCSAC, I said, on numerous oc-

Dougherty worked closely with Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, shown here on a visit to SAC headquarters at Offutt AFB, Neb. Schlesinger and Dougherty agreed that the US needed more-precise strategic targeting options.

In 1980, a retired Dougherty became the Air Force Association's executive director. He is shown here in 1984 with retired Army Gen. William Westmoreland, former commander of US forces in Vietnam.

casions, that the greatest changes in capability of our Air Force aircraft during my lifetime resulted from 1) the jet engine; 2) air refueling; and 3) a standoff missile capability. At that time, 'standoff' weapons were the SRAM and the ALCM [Air-Launched Cruise Missile], with accuracies in the hundreds of feet. But today, the accuracy of our newer standoff missiles is measured in tens of feet."

■ On the importance of strategic access (1991): "I came up with what I considered to be the unique feature of aerospace power and it was contained in a single word—and that word was *access*. Aerospace power provides unlimited access to this world and, to an increasing degree, access out of this world. Access for whatever purpose—access for offense, access for defense, access for information and intelligence, access for political purposes, for psychological purposes, for exploration, for whatever is in our nation's interests."

■ On strategic thinking (2004): "Our military must continually evolve, and we must have people who think about it all the time. I'm not sure we have enough people thinking about it."

■ On the conventional Air Force mission (1992): "As I reflect on these past few decades, I confess that I now know that our peacetime emphasis on nuclear weapons and nuclear delivery systems dominated our thinking—too much so. The operational ICBM force gave us the opportunity to diversify our bomber force, to equip and train for modern non-nuclear delivery. But we failed to take advantage of this, except when forced on us by war, and then backed away the minute the conflict ended."

■ On issues beyond peace (1984): "The easiest way for the United States to avoid war would be to disarm unilaterally and let Moscow have its way in the world. To most Americans, however, standing politically and economically isolated, a supplicant to the Soviet Union, would not be acceptable."

Senior Statesman

After he retired from the Air Force, Dougherty did not take a full-time job until 1980, when the Air Force Association recruited him to be its executive director.

The organization fit him like a glove. Its mission was to inform the public—including the news media and Congress—about airpower and national defense. The focus was not only Washington but also more than 300 local communities where AFA had chapters.

At peak times, Dougherty made several speeches a week. He was also the publisher (and, for a short time, the editor in chief) of AFA's monthly journal, *Air Force* Magazine.

He continued in the AFA post until 1986, when he joined the international law firm of McGuireWoods LLP, where he remained until retiring in 1999.

He also served on the Defense Science Board, the Atlantic Council, and with other organizations. He was on the boards of visitors for Air University and National Defense University. For many years, until knee problems slowed him down, he was among the most popular speakers at the annual orientation for new Air Force general officers.

Honors and accolades kept com-

Dougherty was AFA's executive director until 1986 and, for a short time, was editor in chief of Air Force *Magazine. He is shown here with AFA executives Ben Catlin (left) and Dave Noerr.*

ing. In 1976, he was recognized as Man of the Year by the Los Angeles Philanthropic Society and was accorded the same honor in 1977 by the National Jewish Hospital and Research Center.

When the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association gave him its David Sarnoff Award in 1980, he surprised the crowd by pulling a bugle out of a bag he had brought and tooting off several bugle calls from the rostrum. This was to demonstrate that he was a communicator.

The Air Force Academy gave him its Thomas D. White National Defense Award in 1983. He was named an "Old Master" by Purdue. And the list went on.

He went back often to his home state of Kentucky, which remembers him with pride and fondness.

In 1987, the governor of Kentucky presented him with the state's Distinguished Service Award. Dougherty has also been designated by the governor as an Outstanding Alumnus of Kentucky.

Last October, the whole family went to Lexington, Ky., where retired Air Force Gen. Joseph W. Ralston (born in Hopkinsville, Ky.), formerly NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, was inducted into the Kentucky Aviation Hall of Fame. Ralston was presented by his father-in-law, Dougherty, who had been similarly inducted in 1998.

Photo courtesy of Mark Dougherty

Dougherty keeps up with defense issues and stays active in Air Force Association events. His family is Air Force through and through—sons Mark (shown here with his father) and Bryant followed him into USAF, and his daughter, Dede, is married to retired Air Force Gen. Joe Ralston, a former Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.

Life's Great Adventures

Since retiring from the Air Force, Dougherty has made his home in Arlington, Va. Staying in one place for that many years was a big change from his military service, when the interval between assignments was short.

"It is always an exciting time to be on the move," Dougherty said. "In my family, we had a corny, trite tradition that grew up throughout our 35 moves in 35 years, mostly with children. As we pulled away, in the aftermath of the moving vans, I would say, 'OK, children, OK, Mom, here we go, off on another one of life's great adventures.' "

Part of the tradition was for the younger Doughertys—Diane, called Dede, and the twins, Bryant and Mark—to then hoot in derision.

"Well, a few years ago we were at my daughter's house at Bolling," Dougherty said. "She and Joe were on their way to Alaska. Son Mark and his family were on their way to Turkey. Out at the edge of the grass, standing by our cars, Mark and Dede blurted out in unison, 'Well, here we go, kids, off on another one of life's great adventures.' "

"His family was his only hobby," Mark Dougherty said. "No golf, no hunting. Just work and family. My identical twin brother and I—Bryant was also a fighter pilot; he died of a melanoma in 1990 when we were 38—had the good fortune to follow him into the Air Force, so our personal and professional lives crossed and became intertwined, [and] when my sister Dede married Joe Ralston (they went to Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, together), our family truly bled Air Force blue.

"Bryant's wife was an Air Force cop when he met and married her. She just retired from the Air Force Reserve as a colonel. My wife is an Air Force brat. She and I have spent our entire lives associated with the Air Force in one way or another."

After Geralee Dougherty died in 1978, Russ Dougherty married Barbara Brooks of Birmingham, Ala. "Barbara has been his wife ... for 26 years," Mark Dougherty said. "Dad called my sister up to ask her, is it OK to go out on a date with Barbara, who sold them the house they still live in in 1977. The rest is history."

Dougherty keeps up with Air Force and defense issues. Several times a month, friends and colleagues receive a thoughtful e-mail from him, often with an article or report attached, and often dispatched at 3 a.m.

He putters about the Arlington town house amid papers, books, and printouts from his trusty computer. Nearby, on the bar, next to the big jar of salted nuts, is a bugle.

For the former horse cavalry trooper from Glasgow, Ky., the past and the present blend seamlessly with the future into life's great adventures. ■

John T. Correll was editor in chief of Air Force *Magazine for 18 years and is now a contributing editor. His most recent article, "Disunity of Command," appeared in the January issue.*