Letters

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Micromanaging Carter

The recent editorial, "Carter's Coming Challenges," was right on target *[January, p. 3].* The facts as presented certainly leave many to believe that his tenure back in the Pentagon, albeit at a higher level of responsibility, will be micromanaged by the Administration. Secretary-designee Carter is a brilliant man with many years inside the Beltway and in the Pentagon, so given the chance to excel, he might do very well by our national security interests. If, however, the current trend of micromanagement by people who have little or no military experience continues, we will see yet another SECDEF leave early. We will be watching very carefully the dialogue between the new chairmen of the Senate and House Armed Service Committees and Mr. Carter.

Again, many thanks for the great article in the January edition.

CMSgt. John "Doc" McCauslin, USAF (Ret.)
San Antonio

Vipers Down Under

Vipers in Australia, Round 1?

I enjoyed reading "Back in Black" in the January 2015 issue *[p. 34]*. It reminded me of Viper South 92, when the 35th Fighter Squadron from Kunsan AB, South Korea, deployed through Darwin to RAAF Base Williamtown in September 1992.

We had planned to depart Kunsan at the end of August, but we were delayed until Sept. 1, when we deployed 12 F-16s and a KC-10 to Darwin. We could not make it to Williamtown (near Newcastle, NSW) that day, possibly because of a weather delay out of Kunsan. The Australians were magnificent hosts, putting the USAF team up for the night in the Darwin Travelodge downtown, and launching all of us out on Sept. 2. We were able to spend some time walking around Darwin the afternoon and evening of Sept. 1.

We arrived at RAAF Williamtown Sept. 2, in the afternoon, where we were welcomed by the RAAF with a barbecue. The 77 Squadron (F/A-18A and B at the time), 2 Operational Conversion Unit, and the 3 Control & Reporting Unit were our hosts and training partners during the two-week DACT exercise. We were able to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 77 Squadron, too, as it had stood up in 1942. According to an 8th Fighter Wing public affairs article, the 35th Fighter Squadron was the first F-16 unit to deploy to RAAF Williamtown. These F-16s may have been the first Vipers to deploy to Australia, too.

We participated in air-to-air and air-to-ground training during the exercise, with the aerial engagements primarily taking place over water.

Our lodging during the deployment was in Newcastle, at Noah's On the Beach, and we were hosted by the local community much like our RAAF friends at Darwin and Williamtown had hosted us.

We redeployed to Kunsan with a KC-10 on Sept. 13, 1992, meeting up with KC-135s on the way. Col. Steve Polk, the Wolf, met each jet as it parked that afternoon. All in all, a great training deployment!

On a related note, in an attempt to help update the record on USAF fighter deployments to Australia, the 132nd Fighter Wing (ANG), Des Moines, Iowa, also executed DACT at Williamtown

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in February to March 2011 (Sentry Down Under).

In addition, the 18th Aggressor Squadron from Eielson AFB, Alaska, deployed to Williamtown from February to March 2013, and to RAAF Base Amberley in February to March 2014 (Lightning Viper). There may have been other USAF fighter deployments to Australia in the last 10 years as well.

Thanks for a great article—and for the memory jogger!

Col. Pat Miller,
USAF
JB Elmendorf-Richardson,
Alaska

This was a very well-written article about how the United States uses its Total Force to project power around the world. However, it neglected one very important part of the story. Please allow me to answer your question from the title page: How do F-16 units get from Washington, D.C., New Jersey, and South Korea to Australia? The answer: a whole lot of tankers!

Now ask AMC how many tankers these moves required. You may be surprised the level of dependency we have on air refueling. Remember: Nobody Kicks Ass Without Tanker Gas—nobody!

Col. W. Michael Guillot,
USAF (Ret.)
Montgomery, Ala.

Baby, It's Cold Outside

In June of 1982, I had the privilege of leading the Air Force's first KC-10A support team to the annual Operation Deep Freeze midwinter airdrop of supplies for the Antarctic science personnel at McMurdo Station and the South Pole *["Ice Boxes," December 2014, p. 52].* Our lone Extender replaced three KC-135 Stratotankers previously required to refuel a cargo-laden C-141B Starlifter. We landed a couple of days early at the Auckland, New Zealand, airport, with its lengthy runway on North Island. Our receiver was already parked at the Christchurch Airport on South Island. The mission plan was simple: The C-141B would take off heading south, and we would launch and overtake our receiver with an en route rendezvous.

Arrival at the busy civilian airport did not go unnoticed. I was marshaled right up to a jetway putting me at eye level with a flock of Kiwi travelers filling the second story lobby, gawking at our brand-new Air Force jumbo jet. Later, it was our turn to gawk when a bubbly, petite woman marched right up to our crew waiting for a bus. She announced: "My name is Shirley Temple Black!" And indeed it was the world famous Shirley Temple, child movie star and former US ambassador to Ghana. She was in town to visit New Zealand's Prime Minister and never passed up an opportunity to say Hi to the troops. We invited her for a grand tour of our KC-10, which she graciously accepted. She even autographed the ship's maintenance log.

On mission day, we rolled onto the big runway at our maximum takeoff gross weight of 590,000 pounds. Against that, we applied 157,500 pounds of thrust from three yowling General Electric CF6-50C2 turbofan jet engines. The time was 0500; we probably woke up some of the neighbors. It was the shortest day of the year Down Under, albeit scheduled to be a very long day for us. We soon had good radio contact with our receiver, and he was on course/on time for our join up. Of note, we were heading due south toward Antarctica and the South Pole, without the benefit of a navigator onboard. However, we did have a fine triple INS (inertial navigation system).

The weather conditions were good, with the exception of the outside air temperature registering a brisk -95 degrees Fahrenheit. Our boom operator noted that his controls were sluggish but usable.

We caught up with, and pulled ahead of, our receiver, then cleared him to the contact position. He immediately began taking on fuel. The heavy cargo jet wallowed a bit as the refueling progressed. We were only scheduled for the single off-load, but offered to orbit nearby in case we were needed. The drop over McMurdo Station went as planned and we were released to return to Auckland. The C-141 headed toward the South Pole Station. During the McMurdo drop, the cargo team opened the large clamshell petal doors in the aft section of the aircraft. However, there was concern that the harsher weather at the pole could cause the doors to remain stuck in the opened position, causing greatly increased fuel consumption. Also, there would be difficulty with aircraft pressurization. The alternative required using the smaller side troop doors, plus a lot of muscle. The cargo section could easily become a death trap with the cold air and low oxygen levels. We were well on our way back to Auckland when we received an urgent call from the C-141: The port troop hatch could not be secured. We were too far away to render any assistance. The situation looked pretty grim. Then, out of the blue, we received an all-clear call. Whew.

The next day, after some well deserved crew rest, we joined up with our new friends and pumped 44,000 pounds of fuel to them, allowing their nonstop flight to the West Coast. We still had enough fuel to fly 16 hours nonstop back to our home station at Barksdale AFB, La.

The 1983 KC-10 Deep Freeze team made sure that their C-141 receiver was scheduled for at least two air refuelings!

Lt. Col. Charles E. Bailey,
USAF (Ret.)
Placentia, Calif.

Frederick Johnsen's great article about the 1983 midwinter Antarctic airdrop ("Ice Boxes") in your December edition highlighted the danger had the C-141's petal doors frozen open after a drop. Fortunately, that didn't happen, but it prompts me to recall, as accurately as I can, a "frozen episode" that did occur over Antarctica in October of 1985.

Every year, an ice runway at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, is used for landings during the Antarctic summer and then is abandoned during winter. As the ice is transient, each year a new runway is established—different location, orientation, etc. In 1985, a ground-based Precision Approach Radar (PAR) was available and installed on the ice, but obviously it could not be flight checked until the first flight came in. My Strategic Air Command (SAC) KC-10 crew and I deployed from March AFB, Calif., to Christchurch, New Zealand, to provide refueling support to a Military Airlift Command (MAC) C-141 from McChord AFB, Wash., to initiate the summer's resupply flights between Christchurch and McMurdo. MAC controlled the US flight operations out of Christchurch and had a lieutenant colonel in charge.

The plan was to have our KC-10 refuel the C-141 a few hours after takeoff and return to Christchurch while the C-141 continued to McMurdo, about 2,200 miles south of Christchurch. The details of the C-141 fuel plan are lost to me, but I believe the C-141 was to receive enough fuel from us to be able to fly to McMurdo and shoot a missed approach if need be and still have sufficient fuel to return to New Zealand. The C-141 aircraft commander was a Captain Surratt, if I recall correctly, and he came to me during mission planning to ask if, instead of us accompanying the C-141 only part way to McMurdo, could we take off with sufficient fuel to go the distance and also refuel the C-141 on the way home "in case something went wrong." That was easily within the KC-10's capabilities and I readily concurred with his thinking. We went to the lieutenant colonel with the new plan and he shot it down, not wanting to burn the extra fuel or flight time for a long-shot contingency. We captains huddled a bit, decided to hit

the center of the line one more time, and the lieutenant colonel reluctantly relented, "just this once."

Long and exciting story short, we conducted the planned refueling and continued south, while the weather at McMurdo unexpectedly also went "south." We orbited overhead McMurdo listening to the C-141's approach on the radio and what an exciting approach it was: The ground controller was calling headings, distances, and descent information from the PAR that did not correlate at all with what the McMurdo-experienced navigator on the C-141 was seeing on his scope as he conducted an Airborne Radar-Directed Approach (ARDA) using radar reflectors that had been positioned at the ends of the runway. The discrepancies resulted in much confusion, and with no outside visibility, Captain Surratt conducted a missed approach from a few hundred feet above the ground. Anxious personnel on the ground reported that they heard the aircraft go by (somewhere close) in the blowing snow. A little regrouping and much discussion resulted in a second attempt, with similar conflicting approach guidance and lack of any visual contact with the ground, so Captain Surratt wisely chose to go missed approach again and this time head for Christchurch.

Here's the "frozen episode" and the salute to foresight: As the C-141 climbed out to join us for the trip back to Christchurch, I believe it was the nose gear that remained frozen, refusing to retract and creating a drag condition that would have precluded the still-loaded C-141 from making any landfall outside of Antarctica. Although the condition eventually was resolved, I can guarantee that the crew of the C-141 was very happy when the KC-10's air refueling boom seated in their refueling receptacle and the fuel began to flow! Upon hearing the story, I believe that the lieutenant colonel was thankful as well. Subsequent missions enjoyed better weather, a recalibrated PAR, and much success.

I salute all those who continue to have the honor to execute the Air Force mission today.

Brig. Gen. Thomas E. Stickford,
USAF (Ret.)
Burke, Va.

Show Me the Money

I am skeptical of Mr. Tirpak's claim in the next-to-last paragraph of subject article that the Pentagon compensation system has "ballooned to consume more than two-thirds of defense spending" *["Aperture: Top-level Transition," January, p. 8].* If he can support such a claim, it would be interesting to see all of the ifs, ands, and buts and other disclaimers that go with the data.

Joe Higgins
Greenville, S.C.

The Will to Kill

I don't get it: How did we win World War II? We certainly could not have won it today with our current President, Congress, Supreme Court, military leadership, and weapons acquisition system.

Concerning weapons acquisition, how much time and ink and how many millions of dollars must be expended concerning the A-10 *["What's Next for CAS?," December 2014, p. 34]?* Has any weapons system other than the M-16 (problems in Vietnam) ever received this much congressional attention?

The problem is that the weapons acquisition process has two aspects: a military aspect and a political aspect. The political aspect seems to be winning with the A-10, with congressional meddling in the decision whether to keep or to retire the A-10. What is astonishing about Congress is its lack of understanding of the military. Although some Congress members are veterans, what does the average Congress member know about the military? How many times has the average Congress member called for close air support (CAS)? How does that member know if the A-10 is the best means of delivering CAS? What happened to deferring to experts such as military members who have flown or used the A-10 or who know something about it based on real-time experience with the A-10?

Imagine the angst, delay, and lost lives in World War II if it had the weapons acquisition process we have today. The B-29 would have been delayed for years, costing countless lives.

Talk about sequestration: Here is an idea. Sequester the service Chiefs and their weapons experts in a room with the President and determine what weapons are needed. Then tell Congress what the military requires. If Congress balks, the President will veto every piece of legislation until Congress defers to the experts.

Two adjuncts to our dysfunctional weapons acquisition process: One is our lack of competence in employing our military might, and two is our lack of a national will to kill in using our military. The title of Adam Hebert's editorial in your December issue says it all: "Win or Go Home." We have spent years in Afghanistan for what result? The British were cruel and could not conquer it; the Soviets were crueler and could not conquer it. What makes anyone think that we can conquer it? Had we a national will to kill and military leaders such as we had in World War II, the Afghanistan War could have been won and quickly.

We lost our national will to kill after World War II. Israel has it, which is why it still exists as a country. When it found the Iraqi nuclear facilities to be a menace, it did not raise its hand at the United Nations and say, "Mother may I?" Instead it unilaterally took action: Problem solved.

Sadly our defense establishment is at best in neutral, spinning without results, and at worst in reverse, going backward at a dangerous speed.

Col. Charles A. Jones,
USMC Reserve (Ret.)
Greensboro, N.C.

"The A-10 and the Rescue Helicopter" noted that the A-10 performed 20 percent of the CAS missions in Afghanistan [July 2014, p. 28]. In "What's Next for CAS," the author noted that Gen. Mark A. Welsh III argued that 80 percent of all CAS missions in Afghanistan were flown by other aircraft. In addition, General Welsh said that the F-16 alone has flown more CAS sorties than the A-10 during the last eight years. These are misleading and incomplete statistics.

The above statements, when taken alone, imply that the A-10 was not needed to conduct CAS during this century. However, this is from *Joint Publication 3-09.03 Close Air Support,* July 8, 2009: "CAS can be conducted at any place and time friendly forces are in close proximity to enemy forces. The word 'close' does not imply a specific distance; rather, it is situational."

Therefore, CAS does not equal troops in contact (TIC). In fact, with Type 3 control, aircraft are cleared to engage or initiate attacks within parameters.

Missing statistics are total and types of aircraft available for each mission, type of CAS sortie, length of sortie, time over target, and results. In other words, all factors have not been included in any analysis provided in any articles discussing the A-10 in relevance to CAS.

I am well aware of the A-10's limitations on a modern battlefield, even though my 2,000-plus hours ended in 1988. But having combat experience as both an air and ground FAC, I know that results are what counts. Let's be honest and consider all of the factors prior to making any proclamations.

Maj. Milan J. Franceschi,
USAF (Ret.)
Landenberg, Pa.

I'm Just Fine, Thanks

As youths, my buddy and I had our own bug spraying enterprise. I recall spreading DDT by hand around porches and foundations and spraying bushes with chlordane from a small pressure

sprayer. Both those substances have been banned for many years and some would suggest I should be dead from exposure.

Coincidentally I found myself back in the spraying business with Ranch Hand when it was an aerial spray flight located in the VNAF compound at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. We parked on Charlie Row, and behind the aircraft were decent-size puddles of rain water with ample defoliant residue floating on the surface. That was in the latter part of 1966.

May 2015 will mark the 50th anniversary of the insertion of troops into the war in Vietnam. It is absolutely mind-boggling that there is still debate over the effects of Agent Orange resulting from spraying in Vietnam ("The Lingering Story of Agent Orange," January, p. 50). The Air Force Health Study was an effective and thorough effort lasting over 20 years. The suggestion that blue water sailors and National Guard or Reserve crews have been exposed to dangerous levels of dioxin is preposterous.

The criteria for spraying a target required advanced coordination with MACV, province chiefs, and ground units in the area. We knew exactly where we sprayed. Spraying was done early in the morning with temperatures low enough to assure the defoliant settled into the jungle. If conditions weren't met, we didn't spray. We didn't spray military installations with Agent Orange; however, we did spray with malathion to kill malaria-bearing mosquitoes.

Admittedly we did infrequently spray where US military would have been exposed, such as when we sprayed the Long Binh ammunition storage site. That exposure would have been nominal.

Nearly all Ranch Hand personnel had higher levels of dioxin in their blood than the peer group in the Air Force Health Study, but as the article pointed out, their mortality rate was comparable to those not exposed.

I flew over 160 spray missions, was wounded three times, had significant exposure to Agent Orange, and I am 81 years old, in good health.

Lt. Col. Clyde Picht,
USAF (Ret.)
Fort Worth, Texas

Your article on Agent Orange in the January 2015 issue was great. The only issue I have is not with the magazine but the Air Force Health Study conducted between 1982 and 2003. Although the Air Force solicited volunteers with the help of The Ranch Hand Association, they left out a huge population of airmen who worked on these aircraft and were directly exposed to this chemical in liquid undiluted form and were not part of the Ranch Hand organization. I was one of those many who were never considered for the study.

I served at Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN, from January to December in 1966. I was an airframe repairman assigned to one of the aircraft maintenance squadrons. During that year, I can't begin to think of the number of repairs we performed on these C-123B Ranch Hand aircraft, from patching minor bullet holes to major repairs conducted in the shop on removable parts such as flaps, ailerons, rudders, landing gear doors, etc. While performing my duties, I came in daily contact with Agent Orange, on the ground, on aircraft parts, and even dripping on my head as I walked underneath the wings where the spray nozzles were located. This stuff was nasty, and I got the liquid on my skin while lying in puddles underneath the fuselage and even in my mouth from time to time, as the liquid leaked over my head from various parts of the aircraft. As a matter of fact, one day while wearing a brand-new pair of combat boots with neoprene soles, I noticed several holes in the bottom of my boots. I went to my supervisor and explained that this Agent Orange stuff was really nasty, as it ruined a new pair of boots. His response, like that of everybody in the chain of command, was that this stuff was harmless and the holes in my boots were caused by something else. Therein lies the problem and the controversy with Agent Orange: short and long term effects—if we can blame these illnesses on other causes, then let's take the low road and deny our veterans any real benefit of the doubt!

For many years after I was discharged in 1967, I had a mystery rash reoccur on both my arms every summer when the heat and humidity were high, as they were in Vietnam. No one could explain the outbreak, and I never knew until many years later that there were many different studies by USAF, the VA, and the Institute of Medicine. I don't know what if any future complications will arise from my encounter with this Agent Orange, but to say that veterans should be given the benefit of the doubt is as far from reality as a reasonable person could ever get.

I hope some day we'll really examine all of the hundreds if not thousands of airmen who were exposed to this stuff before we all die of some sort of cancer "caused by other causes."

Lt. Col. John C. D'Auria,
USAF (Ret.)
Mays Landing, N.J.

Agent Orange used in Vietnam was used against the VC against their cover. It killed not only food crops, but also pot plants—the same pot sold to American troops who smoked it with pleasure. Most Americans over there did not understand what Agent Orange could do outside of killing plants. The lack of MSDS sheets back in those days and, usually, lack of basic information on any chemicals did not help the matter. Today we know the difference on how to handle that chemical—or for that matter any type of possible lethal chemical.

How many people who claim problems from being exposed to Agent Orange have since Vietnam exposed themselves to other harmful chemicals?

Richard Cornell
Des Plaines, Ill.

Tire Out Someone Else's Airplanes

I read with interest the changes being made to how the Civil Reserve Air Fleet program is executed ("CRAF to the Future," January, p. 22). I don't agree with the idea that since the Air Force has more C-17s than initially planned that the service should shoulder more of its airlift requirements organically. Aircraft have a finite life span, and procurement cycles seem to take longer and longer due to political considerations and increasing cost. Private-sector aircraft get refreshed on a much shorter cycle. Because of this, I say we should pay those companies to put hours on their own airframes. That way, we can extend the service life of our military aircraft, saving them for when they're really needed—especially getting into places that even CRAF-committed jets and crews may not be able or willing to go.

Lt. Col. Chris McMartin,
USAF
Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

This Is Innovation?

[Former Air Force] Secretary Donley was correct in his complaint about congressional inaction on the budget, but if this conference is the best thinking of the Air Force for "innovation," I can understand why they give reluctant support *["Innovating for Airpower," January, p. 18].* The speakers provided a murky mix of psycho-babble about paradigm shifts, breaking the rigid processes of the industrial era, buying more from foreign sources (except for RD-180 rockets), sharing capability with allies, wasting less manpower on email, and spending more money on research of "test capabilities."

I believe "the rigid processes of the industrial era" provided excellent aircraft and missiles on time, budget, and performance—a real contrast with decades-long F-35. On the operational side, I would like to see some "shock and awe" in lieu of our piecemeal effort against ISIS.

Lt. Gen. Aloysius G. Casey,
USAF (Ret.)
Redlands, Calif.