

## Love the Badges

I enjoyed your recent photo collage highlighting New England's Air National Guard units. There's nothing like photos of our Air Force in action to get you pumped up ["*On Guard in New England*," *May*, p. 126]!

I was disappointed that [the photo essay didn't show] occupational badges.

Occupational badges have been around since before the Air Force with many coming over when they emerged from under the Army in 1947. Those were predominantly for pilots and navigators but aerial gunners, bombardiers, flight mechanics, and turret specialists also had badges.

Other occupational badges were later introduced in piecemeal fashion. Air Force functionals would act unilaterally, designing and then advocating for badge approval through the Air Force Uniform Board.

In the early 1990s Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Merrill McPeak opened the badge flood gates. He directed that every Air Force career field would have an occupational badge for wear.

When I was assigned to a majcom headquarters I frequently visited bases with inspection teams. Whenever I encountered a badge-less airman I'd

always ask, "Where's your badge?" This was usually followed by some kind of a red-faced response.

I never met anyone trying to make a statement in regard to either their career field or the Air Force by not donning their badge. It usually came down to lack of attention to detail or situation awareness.

You got your badge the hard way: You earned it! Now wear it proudly for all to see!

Col. Bill Malec,  
USAF (Ret.)  
O'Fallon, Ill.

## C-17 Angels of Mercy

I noticed in the "In Brief" section on the C-17 that there was no mention about the Globemaster III's ability to perform the aeromedical evacuation mission ["*Airpower Classics: C-17*," *May*, p. 152]. Each C-17 has three litter stanchions that are integral to the aircraft and can carry nine patients. With the addition of the patient pallet, the C-17 can carry 36 litter patients. Also in the event of contingency operations, 48 patients can be floor loaded on the main cargo compartment with an addition 12 more on the ramp. I was fortunate enough to be a small part of the team of Reservists with the 315th AES at Charleston Air Force Base that was the initial cadre that developed the AE mission on the C-17.

Col. John M. Starzyk,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Summerville, S.C.

It would be hard to beat your "whale of a tale" about the C-17 experiencing a collapsed landing gear while delivering a whale to Iceland. But I will offer that DOD used a C-17 to transport its first MIA recovery team to Pyongyang during the Clinton Administration. Led by retired Army Major Bob Jones, deputy assistant secretary of defense for POW/MIA affairs, the team spent eight hours

on the ground negotiating the protocols that established the recovery efforts that would follow. Once back at the airfield, Jones noticed that dozens of locals had gathered along both sides of the runway to watch the C-17 depart. He asked the aircraft commander what the chances were for a maximum performance takeoff. The captain was more than happy to reply that such was very possible. The C-17 roared down the runway. It gave them a view of American airpower that they had never seen before nor likely will ever see again.

Unfortunately, even though the MIA recovery program in North Korea was a success, George Bush and Condoleezza Rice terminated it when that Administration came into office. Today, those listed as MIA in North Korea will remain there forever.

Maj. Vern J. Pall,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Tucson, Ariz.

## Heavy Convention

Sam McGowan's interesting article "Herculean Ordnance" (April, p. 58) on the C-130s dropping BLU-82s raises the question of why no heavy conventional ordnance had been developed for US bombers despite lessons from both World War II and Korea that our bombs were too light to be effective against many targets. I think much of the problem can be traced to the leaders of Strategic Air Command and their focus on nuclear weapons despite the fact that we continued to fight non-nuclear wars. Even as late as 1990 when I proposed the development of 38,000-pound conventional bombs for the B-2, I was told by an *Air Force Magazine* editor that to his knowledge there was no program and no Air Force interest in such a bomb. Thankfully, the lesson on the need for

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heavy conventional ordnance for US bombers has finally been learned and we now have the GBU-43B. I hope tomorrow's Air Force leaders will always be students of our past experiences to ensure that we don't forget any more key lessons.

Lt. Col. Price T. Bingham,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Melbourne, Fla.

stands. One of the early Ryan reconnaissance drones is also displayed by the U-2. This section of the museum houses a number of American military items, including several Air Force planes that they either shot down or had been captured over the years.

Maj. Gen. Pat Halloran,  
USAF (Ret.)  
Colorado Springs, Colo.

### Shot Down

Interesting story and pictures in the May issue of *Air Force Magazine* on the Black Cat U-2 losses over China [*"Flashback: Dragon Ladies Down," May, p. 148*]. I spent nine years flying the U-2 and was one of the instructors who helped check out the Taiwanese pilots back at Laughlin Air Force Base in the early '60s. I was always curious about their losses and, while on a trip to China, I visited the magnificent military museum in Beijing. By carefully watching the roving guards I was able to get some pictures of the same plane that is in your article. It was really a mess, and the wings were held in place by metal

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**NOMINATIONS: To Be General:** Tod D. **Wolters**.

**To Be Lieutenant General:** Jeffrey L. **Harrigian**, Stayce D. **Harris**.

**To Be Brigadier General:** Sean M. **Farrell**, Timothy D. **Haugh**, William G. **Holt II**.

**CHANGES:** Maj. Gen. Christopher J. **Bence**, from Vice Cmdr., 3rd AF, Ramstein AB, Germany, to Cmdr., USAF Expeditionary Center, AMC, JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. ... Brig. Gen. Kathleen A. **Cook**, from Dir., Public Affairs, OSAF, Pentagon, to Dir., Svcs., DCS, Manpower, Personnel, & Svcs., USAF, Pentagon ... Brig. Gen. (sel.) Kenneth P. **Ekman**, from DCS, NORAD, NORTHCOM, Peterson AFB, Colo., to Dep. Chief, Supt./Security Agreement, Office of the Defense Representative-Pakistan (ODR-P), CENTCOM, US Embassy, Islamabad, Pakistan ... Brig. Gen. (sel.) Sean M. **Farrell**, from Cmdr., 1st SOW, AFSOC, Hurlburt Field, Fla., to Dir., Strat. Plans, Prgms., & Rqmts., AFSOC, Hurlburt Field, Fla. ... Lt. Gen. (sel.) Jeffrey L. **Harrigian**, from Dir., F-35 Integration Office, Office of the C/S, USAF, Pentagon, to Cmdr., AFCENT, ACC, Southwest Asia ... Lt. Gen. (sel.) Stayce D. **Harris**, from Cmdr., 22nd AF, AFRC, Dobbins ARB, Ga., to Asst. Vice C/S, USAF, Pentagon ... Brig. Gen. (sel.) Timothy D. **Haugh**, from Cmdr., 480th ISR Wg., ACC, JB Langley-Eustis, Va., to Dep. Cmdr., Jt. Task Force ARES, CYBERCOM, Fort George G. Meade, Md. ... Brig. Gen. (sel.) William G. **Holt II**, from Cmdr., 352nd SOW, AFSOC, RAF Mildenhall, UK, to Dir., Ops., AFSOC, Hurlburt Field, Fla. ... Maj. Gen. Mark D. **Kelly**, from Cmdr., 9th AF, ACC, Shaw AFB, S.C., to Spec. Asst. to the Cmdr., ACC, JB Langley-Eustis, Va. ... Brig. Gen. Cory J. **Martin**, from Spec. Asst. to the Cmdr., US Forces Korea, PACOM, Yongsan, South Korea, to Spec. Asst. to the Vice C/S, USAF, Pentagon ... Brig. Gen. Lenny J. **Richoux**, from Dir., Svcs., DCS, Manpower, Personnel, & Svcs., USAF, Pentagon, to Vice Cmdr., 18th AF, AMC, Scott AFB, Ill. ... Brig. Gen. Edward W. **Thomas Jr.**, from Cmdr., Thomas N. Barnes Center for Enlisted Education, AETC, Maxwell AFB, Ala., to Dir., Public Affairs, OSAF, Pentagon ... Gen. (sel.) Tod D. **Wolters**, from Dir., Ops., Jt. Staff, Pentagon, to Cmdr., USAF, Ramstein AB, Germany. ☼



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*Advocate for aerospace power and STEM education.*

*Support the Total Air Force family and promote aerospace education.*