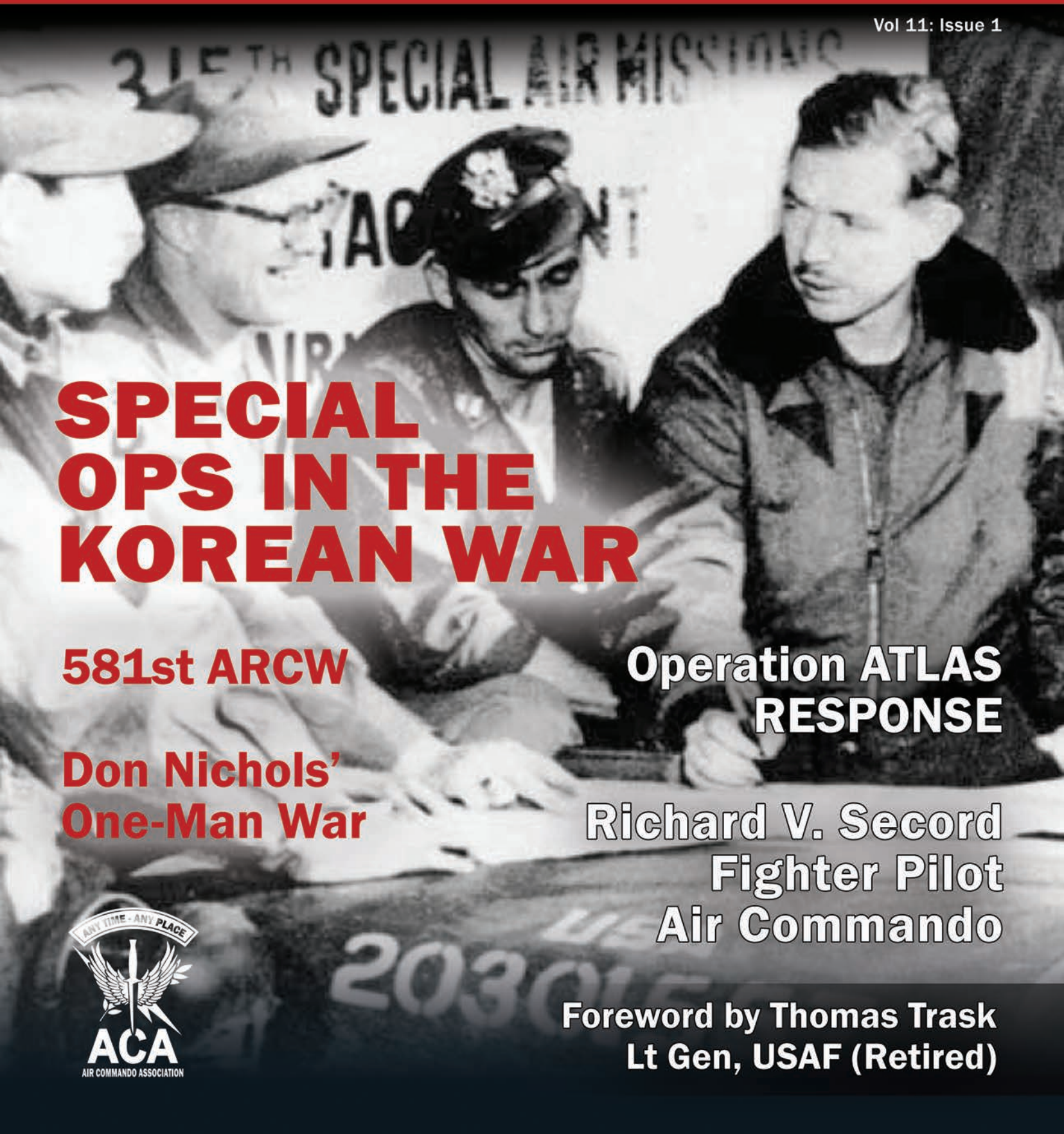
AIR COMMANDO JOURNAL

A Professional Publication by the Air Commando Association
Dedicated to Air Commandos Past, Present, & Future

Vol 11: Issue 1



SPECIAL OPS IN THE KOREAN WAR

581st ARCW

Operation ATLAS RESPONSE

Don Nichols' One-Man War

Richard V. Secord Fighter Pilot Air Commando

Foreword by Thomas Trask
Lt Gen, USAF (Retired)

ANY TIME - ANY PLACE
ACA
AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

Air Commando JOURNAL

Publisher
Norm Brozenick / info@aircommando.org

Editor-in-Chief
Paul Harmon / info@aircommando.org

Managing Editor
Richard Newton

Senior Editor
Scott McIntosh / bookrevieweditor@aircommando.org

Contributing Editor
Ron Dains

Contributing Editor
Matt Durham

Contributing Editor
Joel Higley

Contributing Editor
Mike Russell

Layout Editor/Graphics
Jeanette Elliott / jeanette@aircommando.org

Public Affairs/Marketing Director
Melissa Gross / melissa@aircommando.org

ADVERTISERS IN THIS ISSUE

Air Commando Association

The *Air Commando Journal* publication is free to all current members of the Air Commando Association.

Membership is open to persons who served with or supported USAF Air Commando/Special Operations units. To include Guard and Reserve Special Operators. Other interested parties may join as non-voting associate members with the approval of the Board of Directors. To join our association visit www.AirCommando.org and click the membership link or call our office Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Air Commando Association
P.O. Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569
Telephone: (850) 581-0099
Fax: (850) 581-8988
Web Site: www.aircommando.org
Email: info@aircommando.org

Air Commando Journal
July 2022
Vol. 11, Issue 1

ON THE COVER:

Air Commando icon Brig Gen Harry C. Aderholt, then Major, is photographed during the Korean War. Special air missions brought US Air Force, Army, CIA, and Korean special operations personnel together for missions "north of the bomb line."

(Photo courtesy *Apollo Warriors*, by Col Michael Haas, USAF, Ret.)

Foreword

The hallmark of great special operations has always been the creativity and ingenuity of the operators themselves. It is a story of men and women who thrived on challenge and on the unknown, came together as teams, and accomplished unbelievable feats. They were their best when the challenges were the greatest and the stakes the highest. After growing up in the 20th SOS in the 1980s and 90s, I learned from my mentors to study the history, learn what others had done, but always know that the next mission would be different. As I grew more experienced, I imparted as much of that history as I could on to others, and one of my go-to lines was that "special operations are missions that nobody is trained to do." Certainly, there were tasks and specific skills we honed and did repetitively, but that was for training. It was like having a plan that is simply the point from which to deviate. The hard missions always had something we hadn't planned for or trained for.

This issue of the *Air Commando Journal* provides a focus on a time in special operations that has not been studied to the extent of many others. The Korean War came at a time of great transition in military art. It was a combination of WWII technology with the advent of new types of weapons and purpose. It was the first war with large scale use of jet aircraft, helicopters, and completely redefined use of air control parties, all under the threat of a nuclear strike from either side. It was also the first major attempt of a global governing body, the United Nations, to oversee a "limited" war. The requirement for new ways to fight was enormous.

Michael Haas's book, *Apollo's Warrior's*, provides possibly the best source of Air Commando operations in Korea ever written and this excerpt on the impact of psychological warfare highlights the need to control information, as timely today as it ever was. The review of Colonel Haas's latest book, *In the Devil's Shadow*, puts it on my must-read list. Mike also enlightens us with the story of Donald Nichols, a Master Sergeant who rose to Lt Colonel, operated on the edge of out of control, but created many of the SIGINT and HUMINT techniques in Korea that would become critical to Cold War success. The operations of the 581st Aerial Resupply & Communications Wing, as described by Rick Newton, provide an interesting study on one of the most prolific groups of Air Commandos in the conflict. This issue also includes Paul Harmon's article on Maj Gen Richard Secord and follows the life and military career on one of the men who most shaped current day AFSOC. There is also Gene Correll's recollections of moving an MH-53J Pave Low squadron, recently evacuated from the Philippines, onto a fighter base in Korea in the early 90s, and finally a more recent accounting of AFSOC's Deployed Aircraft Ground Response (DAGRE) teams by Matt Durham.

I must congratulate the *ACJ* team as they move into the second decade of producing this journal. The *ACJ* has become an extremely useful tool in providing professional development and education to another generation of Air Commandos. These useful histories and records of what went right and wrong in the past will long serve the next generation and the generation after that. Keep up the great work team!

Thomas J. Trask, Lt General USAF (Retired)
Former Vice Commander USSOCCOM

Chindit Chatter

I'm writing this Chindit Chatter on Memorial Day and it is dedicated to all service men and women who have passed in the service of our country. Several Air Commando Hall of Fame inductees took their final flights in recent months and I thought it appropriate to mention them in this issue.

Maj Gen Leroy 'Swede' Svendsen enlisted in the US Navy in 1943. He was an aerial gunner and radio operator and was discharged after VJ-Day. He completed high school, some college, and in 1947 joined the US Army Aviation Cadet program. He graduated earning his officer's commission and pilot's wings and went off fly fighters. When the Korean war broke out, he volunteered as a forward air controller with the 25th Infantry Division during the defense of the Pusan perimeter and flew with the 8th Fighter Squadron (FS) during his second tour. General Svendsen joined Air Force Special Operations in 1962 at Hurlburt Field and deployed to Vietnam in 1963 as the commander of the 6th FS, 1st Air Commando Wing. He flew the AT-28 fighter and was responsible for employment of numerous other special operations aircraft. On his second tour in SEA, he was the chief of covert Project 404 in Laos. General Svendsen spent five years in Air Force Special Operations and completed multiple other important assignments before he retired in May 1980. General Svendsen served during three wars, flying over 230 combat missions in two of them. General Svendsen was inducted into the Air Commando Hall of Fame in 1969. He passed away on 14 February at the age of 93.

Paul Harmon, Col, USAF (Retired)
Editor-in-Chief

Brigadier Robert Cardenas began his career as a B-24 pilot in Europe during World War II and earned the Air Medal with 2OLC. He was shot down over Germany in March 1944 and despite wounds from anti-aircraft fire, he made his way back to Allied control. When he returned to the States he became a test pilot and served in several assignments to include combat in SEA earning the DFC while piloting an F-105. In June 1968, General Cardenas became the commander of the Special Air Warfare Center (SAWC) at Eglin AFB. Under his leadership, the SAWC expanded to two special operations wings, comprising 268 aircraft of 16 varieties. The Special Air Operations School provided 15,000 academic 'pipeline' students with SEA orientation and over 3,200 air crew with their aircraft type training for SEA deployment. General Cardenas' outstanding leadership and expertise was invaluable in activating the 1st Combat Control Squadron and detailed planning for the formation of four special operations fighter squadrons. General Cardenas was inducted into the Air Commando Hall of Fame in 2002 and the International Air & Space Hall of Fame in 2008. He passed away 10 March 2022 at the age of 102.

Colonel Ronald Terry joined the Air Force in 1952 attending basic training at Sampson AFB, NY and completed the Aviation Cadet program receiving his officer's commission and his pilot's wings. When deployed to SEA he became involved with the concept of a side-firing gunship. Colonel Terry convinced USAF Aeronautical Systems Division of the value of the project and gained approval for a feasibility flight test program using a C-131 with three SUU-IIA/A 7.62 mini-gun pods. Later, Terry gained backing from CSAF Gen Curtis LeMay to conduct a combat evaluation of a C-47 aircraft outfitted with miniguns. His test team went to Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam in October 1964 and flew day and night test sorties. On one night sortie, the AC-47 dropped 17 flares and expended 9,000 rounds breaking two assaults. Colonel Terry returned to the US in early 1966 and based on the AC-47 sorties he knew a gunship with greater loiter time and a larger ammunition magazine could be more effective. As a result, he had a C-130A modified with four miniguns and four 20mm Gatling guns and an array of sensors and returned to Vietnam in September 1967 to combat test the AC-130A. The success of this effort expanded the gunship's role from firebase/hamlet defense to include interdiction leading to a variety of other gunships. After Vietnam, Colonel Terry became the Gunship Program Director and over his 31-year career became known as "The Father of the Gunship." He flew over 200 combat missions earning the DFC with OLC and the Bronze Star Medal in Southeast Asia. Colonel Terry was inducted into the Air Commando Hall of Fame in 2013. He passed away on 3 April 2022 at the age of 88.

Hotwash

10th Anniversary of the *Air Commando Journal*

A decade ago, the Air Commando Association chose to reinvent itself. Always a place of friendship, shared values and camaraderie, the Association leadership embarked on an effort to cultivate Air Commando professionalism, sense of community, and healthy debate. The *Air Commando Journal* was the vehicle to achieve these aims. With each edition, each of us learned more about the challenges confronted and the accomplishments of others in our remarkable community. Provocative ideas caused each of us to rethink our long held views on the mission and what it takes to provide trained and ready airmen "Anytime, Any Place." Like so many others, I look forward to receiving my *Journal* and explore the articles cover to cover. What started as a very good idea has become an indispensable means to reflect and share by those who carry the coin. I certainly look forward to the next decade... and more...of the *Air Commando Journal*.

Norty Schwartz, Gen, USAF (Ret)
Former Chief of Staff USAF
ACA Life Member #1457

10 Years

My brother and I were Air Commandos that gained our combat experience as Air Guerrillas in Vietnam. Those are years gone by, but over the past 12 years, I have watched and been a small part of the Air Commando Association as it has grown under Dennis Barnett's leadership to become a premier professional organization. Many of the professional aspects of the ACA have revolved around the *Air Commando Journal*. The *Journal* has been the anchor point that has not only revived the memories and spirits of older generations, but has served as a departure point for lessons learned for those Air Commandos that follow. I only wish we had this publication when I was AFSOC commander.

Bruce L. Fister
Lt Gen, USAF (Ret)
2d AFSOC Commander
ACA Life Member #4689

Congratulations

Congratulations and thank you, ACA, on the 10th Anniversary of your (our!) commitment to creating a professional journal "for Air Commandos, by Air Commandos." I've been quoted in this publication before as having kept all my issues. It was true then and is still true. As a long time/life-time member of ACA, this decision significantly upped our game with respect to dialog that matters. The rich history and foundational culture contained herein are frankly vital to sustaining a proud and storied lineage, especially as we look to continued relevance in the future.

Over the years, I've found myself drawn to articles that tell the story of Air Commandos solving difficult challenges. I think specifically of issues in which Air Commandos describe the "outside-the-box" thinking it took to resolve a tactical dilemma (with strategic consequences). One such notable article was *Mayaguez Incident: A Crew Chief's Perspective* by MSgt (Ret) Jack Armstrong (May 2018). While I'm not old enough to have served in 1975 (and many of you weren't even born then!), every single one of us "know" this Air Commando crew chief. Jack exists in every AFSOF maintainer still to this day! Another issue that resonates loudly with me is June 2021 — *Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.* From Philippines to Haiti to Lebanon and on and on…this issue is fraught with examples of Air Commandos solving problems and making a difference!

Above all, for me — and my favorite issue to date — October 2018: *Women in the Fight.* This issue more than any other is seriously meaningful. You find in this issue story after story of AFSOC's journey toward unshackling and empowering a diversity of thought, background, and experiences so crucial to surmounting today's national security challenges. Targeting SOF Truth #1, AFSOC's efforts to develop and empower all of our Air Commandos will serve SOF, the Air Force and our nation well…forever.

So, again, well done and happy anniversary, ACA! We are a better force for having this journal. As always, I eagerly await my next issue!

Brad Webb, Lt Gen, USAF (Ret)
Former AFSOC Commander
ACA Life Member #3564

Ten-year Anniversary

Congratulations to the *Air Commando Journal* on its ten-year anniversary! It was about a decade ago when the Air Commando Association decided to take a different path forward into the future. The ACA's journal has evolved as a professional publication that rivals any in existence. The breadth of articles include little-known historical documentation as well as modern day accomplishments of Air Commandos around the world. In its pages are included stories from each weapon system community, as well as maintenance and support functions, and the remarkable achievements of special tactics and combat aviation advisors as they meet the challenges of an ever-changing world.

History has shown that Air Commandos provide leadership in unstructured environments. A review of past actions proves that over and over again. Our forces are the first to be called whether the crisis involves contingency response, combat action, humanitarian assistance, or other sensitive activities. Formerly undocumented, or filed quietly away, the *Air Commando Journal* now allows the

unclassified aspects of AFSOC's successes to be shared across the force and to add professional depth and experience to our people.

The ACA sponsorship of the Commander's Leadership Awards and the Air Commando Foundation represent other aspects of professional relevance of this worthwhile organization. So, congratulations again to the *Air Commando Journal* on its tenth anniversary of making a difference for Air Commandos past and present, and representing the Air Commandos of AFSOC so well and professionally to the Air Force, USSOCOM, and our national leadership. Well done!

Lt Gen Donny Wurster, USAF (Ret)
Former AFSOC Commander
ACA Life Member #2104

10 Years of *ACJ*

I can't believe it has been more than 10 years since the first edition of the *Air Commando Journal* was published on 12 September 2011! This professional journal is the go-to history of Air Force Special Operations as it has detailed the lineage and exploits of the extraordinary Air Commandos that have, on battlefields around the globe, brought to bear the full power of the Airmen and the weapons systems that truly are sentinels of freedom.

In 1991, when I was assigned as an aerial gunner to the storied 16th SOS, most of the history of special ops aviation was passed on by word of mouth. These first-hand accounts, while riveting, told the what and only lightly touched on the why and the how. This is no longer the case.

Each publication of the *Air Commando Journal*…this is the 34th edition, takes a deep dive into the missions, the machines, and the Air Commandos who have shaped the world we live in and have served to provide specialized air power to air and ground force commanders in nearly every military operation since the early days of WWII. The *ACJ* analyzes the triumphs and the tribulations and serves to detail the lessons learned from the highest echelons of command and control leaning into accomplish the mission all the way down to the maintainers readying and launching aircraft under the most austere conditions.

There is something for everyone in past publications. Whether you want to learn about the operations that shaped the command, the Air Commandos who lived the missions, or the platforms that served the ground force, the *ACJ* is the definitive history. What began as Dennis Barnett's vision, captures the history of Air Commandos in a very relatable way. As the command forges ahead, so too will the *ACJ*!

Bill Turner, CMSgt USAF (Ret)
Former Command Chief USTRANSCOM & AFSOC
ACA Life Member #4397

Interview With Colonel Larry Ropka

Thank you for your well documented and very well written articles on great men that I have served with.

The Larry Ropka interview in the *Air Commando Journal* is a 'great read'. So very well written. His life's work is well documented. I worked with him a number of

years and was fascinated by his early operations...Tibet, Laos, North Vietnam. [[Heinie]]. Colonel Ropka was an exemplary person during his service in the Air Force and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

I would also like to mention the bravest Air Commando that I have ever known: my Military Assistant, Colonel Ellwood "Johnny" Johnson, AC-47 pilot and friend. He steadied me when I got 'wobbly' under fire in Cambodia and Vietnam.

With all best wishes,
Erich F. von Marbod
Former Principal Deputy
Assistant Secretary of Defense

Footnote:

The week before the war ended Johnny, Rich Armitage, and Larry flew to Saigon. Erich was determined to get the serviceable airplanes and helicopters out of SVN. The Ambassador had put out a search to apprehend Erich fearing such a move would trigger the collapse of the government. Erich and Johnny hid out in a hooch at the airport where Erich could pressure VNAF officials to get going. The hooch came under mortar fire and Johnny shepherded Erich safely through the night. The next day they went to the embassy and were airlifted off the roof. Larry had gone on to Bangkok to get Heinie's help in getting the Thais to receive the SVN aircraft landing all over the country. Rich went to the Navy where he arranged the evacuation of the entire SVN Navy and nearly 30,000 dependents.

-- Editor

Dear Editor,

I was delighted to receive the latest *Air Commando Journal* containing your interview with Col Larry Ropka. First of all, great job with the interview! I stopped today's writing of the Nichols story just to read it. Other than your first-rate interview, I am in total despair in reading it. When I talked with Larry, while researching *Apollo's Warriors*, it was all about Heinie Aderholt's work. I had no idea Larry was a participant in many of the stories I was writing about. It's another one of those 'if only I had known' laments as if I had known then what I'm just now learning from your interview, *AW* would have been notably better.

Michael E. Haas, Col, USAF (Ret)
Santa Fe, NM
ACA Lifemember #1359

Tribute to Lt Col Felix 'Sam' Sambogna

Thank you from the very bottom of my heart for the tribute to our father, "Sam," in the *Air Commando Journal*. It is well written and just perfect; the pictures are perfect too. The tribute will be a reminder for us of our father's dedication and passion for the noble causes that he strongly believed in. He loved this country, and he loved the ACA! We will treasure it!

Thank you again and God bless you all,
Nancy Shoults

2021 Commander's Leadership Awards

My son, First Lieutenant Ryan M. Laube was acknowledged in the Volume 10 Issue 3 *Journal*. It is an article recognizing him and others for distinguished service. Is it possible for me to get a copy of this article or journal? Ryan takes great pride in his Air Force career but very modest when it comes to any special recognition, awards, medals etc. and often downplays his accomplishments if they are mentioned at all.

Ryan is the one who wears a uniform, but I must acknowledge his wife [name withheld for privacy], a woman who never ceases to amaze with her strength, management, and organizational skills equal to that of any Fortune 100 CEO, and makes it look easy. Also in service to the military are their four wonderful children.

Thank you for assistance with this request and your service to the United States.

Sincerely,
Susan Laube

Dear Susan,

Thank you for contacting the ACA regarding the issue your son 1Lt Ryan Laube is in. We would be delighted to send you a copy of the issue.

Jeanette Elliott
ACA Media Coordinator

The *Air Commando Journa*l wants to hear from you!! Send in your comments or thoughts about our publication for the HOTWASH section

Email: info@aircommando.org

Special Air Warfare During the Korean War:

The 581st Air Resupply and Communications Wing

581st ARCW Helicopter Flight H-19A. (Photo courtesy of USAF)

By Richard Newton, Lt Col (PhD), USAF, (Retired)

In the aftermath of the Second World War, it became obvious that the Soviet Union was determined to spread its communist ideology around the world. To counter the Soviets' overt andcovert subversion, a number of US intelligence and propaganda operations were combined under the Joint Staff. Accordingly, in 1948, the year-old US Air Force created a Psychological Warfare Division within the Air Staff. By 1950, plans were approved to create two special operations wings in 1951 and three more the following year. Each wing would operate under the operational control of an overseas combatant commander, but report directly to the Psychological Warfare division at HQ USAF Directorate of Plans. In January 1951, the Military Air Transport Service (MATS, now Air Mobility Command) was given the mission to organize, train, and equip the new special operations wings. For security purposes the wings were named "air resupply and communication wings" (ARCW), with communications being the bland pseudonym for psychological operations.

To understand the unique spirit of the time and how the Air Force ended up assuming the lead for unconventional warfare within the Department of Defense (DoD), it is helpful to go all the way back to July 1947, when the National Security Act created the US Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Fear of the USSR spurred both organizations to create and expand upon the special operations concepts they had pioneered during the Second World War. During the 1950s, what we now call special operations was called psychological warfare and included unconventional and guerrilla warfare, direct action raids, strategic reconnaissance and intelligence gathering, and psychological operations. Responsibility for psychological warfare went to the CIA, staffed largely by veterans of Office of Special Services (OSS). Those veterans remembered how the Army Air Forces Carpetbagger squadrons had provided covert, long-range air transport to insert and resupply agents and guerrillas behind Axis lines. Thus, they eagerly collaborated with the newly independent Air Force to create an analogous special air warfare capability appropriate for the Cold War. By the time the US Army had created its own Office of Psychological Warfare, the Air Force was already fully supporting the CIA. Furthermore, Air Force leadership intended that they would become the DoD's executive agent for psychological warfare, to include commanding guerrilla forces in the field. The organization within the ARCWs charged with a mission that today seems a bit incredulous was the Holding and Briefing squadron. Their tasks included administration, briefing, and supply of individuals being inserted behind enemy lines. Officers and NCOs assigned to this unit went through airborne school, Army Special Forces training, and tactical training in guerrilla warfare techniques.

The first new special operations wing was the 580th ARCW, activated

in April 1951 at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. The second wing, the 581st ARCW, was activated three months later, in July, also at Mountain Home AFB. With the war in Korea a year old, both the CIA and the USAF felt it imperative to get an ARCW into the fight. The 581st was ordered to Clark Field, Philippines, with a report date of not later than July 1952. The Air Staff gave the ARCW a year to receive its equipment, train its people, and deploy into combat, without any formal documentation – doctrine, tables of equipment, approved mission statement, training plans, approved budget, etc.

For MATS, a major command steeped in processes and averse to risky and ill-defined situations, "owning" the ARCWs was frustrating and outside their corporate comfort zone. The leadership made no secret of the fact that they did not want responsibility for the special air warfare mission or the units. Despite the administrative and logistic obstacles, the two ARCWs did what special operators do, they defined psychological warfare and aerial resupply missions for themselves, found aircraft and equipment to do the missions, and developed training plans to prepare their Airmen.

The 581st ARCW arrived at Clark Field on time, but Thirteenth Air Force had no idea what this secretive newcomer was, what it could offer, nor how to employ it. So, Col John Arnold, the wing commander, flew to Tokyo to explain to Far Eastern Air Force (FEAF) staff what this new special operations capability was and how they might integrate the 581st ARCW into their Korean War air operations. From those meetings, the wing began flying leaflet drops, clandestine airlift, agent infiltration and extraction, and air-sea rescue sorties.

The 581st ARCW comprised six squadrons: one flying squadron, the 581st Air Resupply Squadron (ARS); a maintenance squadron, an air materials assembly squadron to package and rig aerial resupply bundles, the holding and briefing squadron to care for and support agents behind enemy lines, a communications squadron, and a reproduction squadron to create leaflets and propaganda materials. The flying squadron had a mix of highly modified B-29 Superfortress bombers, SA-16 Albatross amphibians, C-119 Flying Boxcars, H-19 Chickasaw helicopters, and two each C-119 and C-54 transports that were reserved for special missions supporting other government agencies. *(Editor's note: These were the aircraft Larry Ropka referred to in his interview last issue.)* All of the aircraft, except for the B-29s, were brand new.

Four-ship packages of special operations B-29s deployed to Yokota AB, Japan, for 60-day rotations and collocated with the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, which also had B-29s. All four of the squadron's H-19s were sent forward, to Seoul AB (then called K-16), where they fell in on the 2157th Air Rescue Squadron, part of the 3rd Air Rescue Group (ARG). Two-ship packages of SA-16s also deployed to Seoul AB for 90-day rotations, but were aligned with B-flight, the mysterious unconventional warfare unit of the 6167th Air Base Squadron at K-16. Non-flying support personnel from the communications and the holding and briefing squadrons were also attached to the secretive B-flight.

Like today's Air Commandos, the 581st ARS used the cover of night to conceal their flying activities from the enemy. The difference from today's special air operations, though, is that they flew their missions without any of the modern systems – night vision devices, radar altimeters, precision navigation aids, and integrated electronic defensive systems. In 1951, these systems had not yet been invented. The disparity between the ARCW's and the conventional units' operating concepts was sometimes a source of institutional friction. For example, when the ARCW's helicopter flight arrived at K-16, the commander of the 3rd Air Rescue Group, Col Klair E. Black, objected to the special operators' intentions to fly at night. During the Korean War, conventional wisdom was that night flying by helicopters was too dangerous. But the ARCW's primary mission was to secretly infiltrate, resupply, and extract intelligence agents behind enemy lines, which meant they flew at night. In typical Air Commando fashion, the ARG commander was reminded that his responsibilities were maintenance and logistical support, and how the helicopters operated was none of his business. The concession the special operations flight made, though, was to remove the word "Rescue" from their helicopters.

Typical missions for the helicopter flight began with a daylight sortie from K-16 to Cho-do, a United Nations-controlled island 10 miles off the west coast of North Korea. The H-19 would land at Cho-do, refuel, and then settle in until nightfall. Once takeoff was approved, a solo helicopter would fly as low level as the pilot dared, blacked out and in radio silence, above the Yellow Sea to avoid detection by North Korean radars. It was not uncommon for pilots to fly a bit too low and inadvertently

catch the nose wheel in the cold ocean waters. Flying in these conditions took skill, courage, and often, just a little bit of luck.

3rd Air Rescue Group H-19 recreating the rescue of Capt Joseph McConnell on freshwater lake in Japan.
(Photo courtesy of USAF)

While the helicopters could use the cover of darkness to sneak into North Korea, night operations did not fully protect them from communist night fighters. On one occasion a solitary ARCW H-19, call sign Treefrog 33, was over the ocean planning to infiltrate a team into North Korea. The helicopter, maintaining radio silence, was hailed by "Kodak," the UN radar tracking site on Cho-do. When Treefrog 33 did not answer Kodak's calls, the radar site broadcast, "Treefrog 33, I am painting five, repeat five, slow moving targets near your vicinity." At that point, the H-19 reversed course, kept its radio silent, and returned to Cho-do. The ARCW pilots also had to deal with enemy controllers attempting to pass for friendlies and asking the special operators to come up on the net and reveal their locations and intended landing zones.

The SOF H-19s had the secondary mission of augmenting the 2157th Rescue Squadron. On these occasions, all pretenses of secrecy were ignored. The goal was to reach the downed pilots before the enemy had a chance to locate the unfortunate aviator or to prepare for the expected air rescue attempt. Again, there was friction between how each unit intended to accomplish the rescue - the Air Rescue squadron would go through a meticulous mission planning process while the special operators counted on immediate reaction before the defenses were prepared. (Editor's comment: It is interesting to note that by the mid-1980s, these tactical mindsets had reversed and it was the SOF units who meticulously planned and prepared before attempting a personnel recovery mission.)

In April 1953, Capt Joseph C. McConnell, Jr, the F-86 Sabre pilot who eventually became the leading jet ace of the Korean War, had to bail out of his badly damaged aircraft after winning a dogfight against Soviet MiG-15 ace, Capt Semyon Fedorets. Two H-19s, one from the ARCW helicopter flight and the other from the rescue squadron, happened to be in the air near Cho-do and both were soon looking for McConnell. 2Lt Robert Sullivan from the special operations squadron saw McConnell's parachute coming down and watched as the fighter pilot landed in the water about a quarter mile in front of him. Sullivan then used his helicopter's rescue hoist to recover the triple ace. After thanking his rescuers, McConnell asked if might be possible for him to return to his home station because he was scheduled for another sortie that afternoon. The interesting twist to this story is that because the 581st ARCS was still a secret unit, credit for the rescue was given to the 2157th ARS and the picture published in the newspaper showing the rescue taking place was a re-creation, staged on a freshwater lake in Japan.

In addition to the four helicopters, the 581st ARCW rotated two SA-16 Albatross amphibians through K-16. Unlike the Air Rescue Service SA-16s and the 581st ARCW helicopters, these aircraft were painted black to reduce their visual signature during night operations along the North Korean coast and also, as with the helicopters, to distinguish themselves as not part of the air rescue service – although they occasionally did augment the ARS for night water pickups. The Albatross's ability to land both on water and unimproved dirt strips, coupled with its reversible props, made it a versatile and highly effective platform for clandestine agent insertions and pickups as they could land on almost any available body of water and many open fields or roadways.

The special operations Albatross crews were the experts at blacked-out night water landings, a hugely dangerous undertaking given the state of technology at the time. Most operations were attempted during the weeks either side of a full moon, when the crews had at least some ambient light to assist the operations. On multiple occasions, though, operational necessity meant the crews operated under sub-optimal conditions. Normally, once an SA-16 was in its target area and the crew determined it was safe to land, the large, ungainly aircraft would descend into the darkness – no lights, no flares, no NVGs, no radar altimeter. When the navigator reported they were 50-feet above the surface the pilot would raise the nose to impact angle, slow down, and continue descending until hitting the water. In rough seas, the aircraft would sometimes bounce off the wave crests. In those situations, the pilots

581st ARCW SA-16 Albatross at Seoul AB, Korea, circa 1952.

would reverse the props on landing and push up the power to ensure the amphibian stayed on the water.

Takeoffs during high sea states could be equally challenging. If the seas were greater than about 8 feet, it was difficult for the aircraft to generate enough airspeed to break the surface tension. The solution was to mount detachable rocket-assisted takeoff (RATO) bottles to the fuselage either side of the aft crew doors. The crew then had the option of mounting two bottles or four bottles depending on the need. Each bottle generated 1,000 pounds additional thrust for about 15 seconds. The procedure was for the pilot to ride the crest of a sea swell, apply full engine power, and at about 65 knots airspeed fire the RATO bottles. If everything worked correctly, the bottles fired simultaneously, but if one failed the asymmetric thrust was enough to ruin a crew's day. Even with the extra thrust supplied by the RATO bottles the seas were sometimes too rough for the aircraft to take off. In 1956, an Air Rescue Albatross landed in 15-foot waves to pick up a downed pilot. It then taxied 100 miles across open ocean to deliver the survivor to safety.

On occasion, the SA-16s would fly in support of the helicopter flight; the Albatross's low cruise speed being a bit more compatible with the helicopters. One night, an H-19 and an SA-16 took off from Cho-do for Cholson in North Korea, about 25 miles south of border with China. Their mission was to pick up a downed airmen who had been evading capture by the communists. The Albatross provided navigation assistance for the helicopter, flying about 100 feet off the water, through the darkness. After the helicopter crossed the beach and went inland to locate the evader, the SA-16 orbited offshore, waiting for the H-19 to return. Unfortunately, they never found the evader and both aircraft had to return to Cho-do when fuel ran low. That mission was the deepest helicopter penetration of the Korean War.

The wing's dozen B-29 Superfortresses were modified for the special operations role by removing all the gun turrets; cutting a "Joe Hole," a parachute exit for personnel and resupply bundles, where the belly turret had been; and painting the aircraft black. The biggest challenge for the WW II-era heavy bombers, though, was that they had been designed for high-speed, high-altitude bombing. When operating at low level for special operations air drops, the bomber was near its stall speed and was hard to handle and to maneuver. The 581st ARCW's B-29s flew long-range psychological warfare missions from Japan, dropping leaflet bombs over northern Korea from high altitude. The "bombs" had a fuse that opened the leaflet container at a predetermined height above the ground to attain the desired dispersal pattern based upon forecast winds. In January 1953, the wing commander, Colonel Arnold, was shot down while flying a leaflet dropping mission. The story of Stardust 40 is included in this issue of the *Air Commando Journal*.

Korean workers load psychological warfare leaflets for B-29 delivery over North Korea. (Photo courtesy of USAF)

In July 1953, the United Nations and North Korea signed an armistice ending hostilities on the Korean peninsula, creating a demilitarized zone between North and South Korea, and arranging for the release and return of prisoners and displaced civilians. Interestingly, armistice is a purely military agreement – no nation is a signatory. In September, the 581st was reduced in size and scope from a wing to a group. Half of its personnel were reassigned elsewhere and it lost all subordinate units except the air resupply and airborne materials assembly squadrons.

The newly renamed 581st Air Resupply Group – psychological operations had been deleted from its wartime mission – moved from Clark AB to Kadena AB, Japan, in October 1954. People and aircraft continued to be gradually transferred out of the group, to the point that by December 1955 there was only one operationally-qualified crew for each of the unit's three remaining types of aircraft: B-29s, SA-16s, and C-119s. The final blow was delivered in September 1956, with orders to transfer all remaining aircraft to the 322nd Troop Carrier Squadron (Medium) (Special). While it appeared that the USAF had eliminated its special operations capabilities in the Pacific, the truth was that the mission had gone underground. It assumed a covert persona more appropriate for the special air warfare operations needed for the Cold War.

For three years, the 581st ARCW served with quiet distinction, provided FEAF special operations capabilities that are still barely known today. The men who flew with and supported the ARCWs are still very close-mouthed about their operations and activities… and they are happy to keep it that way. Sadly, from an air power historian's perspective, those stories are likely to never be captured and saved, thus depriving current Air Commandos insight into the amazing legacy their forebearers established. *Libertas per Veritatem.*

About the Author: Lt Col (retired) Rick Newton volunteers as an editor for and occasional contributor to the Air Commando Journal and Air Commando Press, while also researching and writing about air power and irregular warfare.

PAST AS PROLOGUE

Special Operations and Psywar Innovation in the Korean War

By Dr. Ronald Dains

As America refocuses on strategic competition following an ignominious departure from Afghanistan, operational and strategic innovation will play an increasingly important role. Military strategists and planners would do well to study the multifaceted efforts – think joint and interagency – executed in Korea at the onset of the Cold War. To aid such study, retired USAF Colonel Michael Haas' book, *Apollo's Warriors: US Air Force Special Operations During the Cold War*, provides a treasure trove of operational vignettes. The following is an excerpt from a chapter in *Apollo's Warriors* that offers insight into the strategic decisions, operational considerations, and tactical adjustments made in the early years of USAF special operations.

USAF's Secret Psywar Weapon

When the first North Korean assault regiments exploded across the 38th parallel in the early Sunday morning darkness of 25 June 1950, the international reverberations rocked the United Nations like an earthquake. Earlier tremors like the Berlin airlift of 1948 and the workers' anti-Soviet rebellions in Eastern Europe had already been felt. It was the first major bloodletting of the Cold War, and who knew where it might lead? But despite mounting evidence of the Soviets' global ambitions, these tremors were like danger signals that, strangely, only some in the Western world would or could see.

Fortunately, there were in the Pentagon (as well as in the newly organized Central Intelligence Agency) small pockets of visionaries that did see what others would not or could not acknowledge. What the visionaries saw was Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's total commitment to the spread of Communism far beyond Soviet borders—and even how he was going to do it. Stalin's primary weapon would be a new kind of war, one that would take the term psychological warfare to an extreme never experienced in modern history.

The visionaries in the Air Force understood the potential of psychological warfare, or "psywar" as it came to be called. With Soviet intransigence continuing to manifest itself in Europe (and Korea), Headquarters USAF organized a Psychological Warfare (PW) Division at the Air Staff level in February 1948. Within 24 months, the PW Division was ready to propose specific plans for an Air Force psywar weapon tailored to meet this new kind of war. The plans turned to reality in 1950 when the Air Staff authorized the activation of two special operations wings (SOW) in fiscal year (FY) 1952, with three more to be added in FY 1953.

Initial planning called for each SOW to operate under a psywar unit within each overseas theater command. These theater psywar staff units would, in turn, report directly to the PW Division at Headquarters USAF, an odd "stovepipe" arrangement, but one that

fully reflected the priority attached to the psywar mission at the start of the Cold War. On 5 January 1951, the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) was given the mission of organizing, training, and equipping these SOWs, which for security reasons were designated "air resupply and communications wings."

An Air Resupply And Communications Service would provide a functional headquarters for the air resupply and communications wings (ARCW, pronounced "Arc"). Never before had the Air Force attempted such an organization on this scale—nor would it ever do so again.

The first air resupply and communications wing, the 580th ARCW, was activated in April 1951 at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho; the 581st ARCW followed three months later at the same base. In the haste to prepare for combat in Korea (and perhaps elsewhere), the first group of personnel rushed to Mountain Home arrived to find the base, working areas, and living quarters in a state of total disrepair. The words primitive, crude, and unsatisfactory permeate Air Resupply and Communications Service (ARCS) reports of this period. Nonetheless, a sense of urgency drove the first "pioneers" on, apparently with the pragmatic outlook that complaining was acceptable as long as hands and feet kept moving at the same pace as the mouth.

The 581st received orders to report to the Thirteenth Air Force, Clark Air Base, Philippines, by July 1952. The wing arrived on schedule, the aircrews having safely ferried the aircraft across the Pacific while the main body arrived on the US naval ship *General William Weigle*. Not surprisingly, it took the Thirteenth Air Force a little time to figure out just what it was that had flown and sailed into town.

The ARCWs weren't like anything anyone had seen before. Like the World War II Air Commandos in the CBI, the 581st was a composite wing with different types of aircraft. But unlike the Air Commandos, the aircraft in the ARCWs were only one part of a multithreat system. And as a "threat system," an ARCW was the only USAF organization built from the ground up for psychological warfare.

TALES OF THE 581st

It was the aircrews of the flying squadrons more than the other personnel who found themselves in harm's way, and their stories tell in graphic detail just how much harm was out there for these psywar specialists.

The Ambush of Colonel Arnold

On 15 January 1953, the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron notified the 581st ARCW Operations Center at Clark AB that Colonel Arnold, the 581st commander, and the other officers and airmen aboard a 581st B-29 Superfortress were missing in action on a night leaflet drop in the northernmost sector of North Korea near the Chinese border. Nine days later, Peking Radio announced the shootdown and capture of the surviving crew members. Colonel Arnold was specifically named as one of the prisoners. Peking Radio then went dead silent on the fate of the crew.

Already inside China, the ARCW prisoners had only begun their ordeal. Kept handcuffed and chained in solitary confinement for months, the ARCW crewmen underwent grueling mental and physical torture. Eighteen months after their internment and a year after the war was over, the Chinese broke their silence to announce the forthcoming trial of the crew on charges of germ warfare. In October 1954, the crewmen were put through a highly publicized propaganda trial before a Chinese military tribunal and—surprise—found guilty.

The effects of prolonged deprivation and torture showed on the crewmen during the trial, a fact that generated outrage throughout much of the Western world. Efforts by the United States and the United Nations to secure the release of the crew intensified, but without apparent impact on China's leaders. Then, following secret negotiations between the US and China in Geneva, Switzerland, in July 1955, the Chinese released the crew on 4 August 1955—the last American POWs released after the Korean War.

Was it coincidence that the massive Chinese effort expended just happened to fall on Airmen from an ARCW unit? Improvable circumstances suggest otherwise.

The shootdown of Colonel Arnold's flight, call sign "Stardust 40," was neither the first nor the last of B-29 losses during the Korean War. In fact, only four months prior to the loss of Stardust 40, FEAF had lost five of the giant bombers and suffered damage to another seven on bombing missions in the last 10 days of October alone." That these air-to-air losses to Soviet-built MiG-15 fighters occurred despite USAF

fighter escort gives some measure of the threat posed at the time. Reasonably enough, FEAF concluded that until the MiG threat could be neutralized, it had to be avoided.

Limiting the B-29s to night missions was the obvious answer, at least for the time being. The MiG-15 was an effective, but fairly crude, day-only fighter with none of the electronics necessary to conduct night-interceptor missions, a fact borne out by their combat record during the war. The temporary measure worked, and losses to night-flying B-29s by MiGs stopped . . . until Stardust 40. Lt Col George Pittman, the 581st Air Resupply Squadron commander at the time, still recalls the secret post shootdown briefing he received at Fifth Air Force headquarters:

> Fifth Air Force radar plots had showed the "day only" fighters rising up to intercept Stardust 40. At approximately the same time, radar-controlled searchlights lit up the B-29, making it an easy target for the cannon firing MiGs.

Stardust 40 was flying approximately 12 miles south of the Yalu River, approaching its final leaflet-drop pass for the night's mission when the MiGs attacked at 2230. Within moments three of the Superfortress's four engines were on fire. Capt Wallace L. Brown, pilot of the bomber, recalls the surviving crew bailing out: "We landed safely in North Korean territory . . . [but] we were scattered all over the countryside." North Korean militia troops rounded up the crew one by one the following day and after a short delay turned them over to the Chinese.

There is no evidence that this combination of radar-controlled searchlights and night-attacking MiGs ever occurred before or after the shootdown of Stardust 40. The officers of the 581st believed that the Chinese knew the B-29 was carrying leaflets, not bombs. Leaflet-carrying B-29s had been in the area recently and always flew single ship missions, as Stardust 40 was doing. More disturbingly, the officers were convinced that somehow the Chinese knew Arnold was on this particular flight. If true, this knowledge would represent the highest possible security breach. The suspicions of the 581st were fueled by what happened within hours of the shootdown and days before Peking Radio made its first announcement:

> The early morning edition of the Manila newspapers highlighted the shootdown, quoting Hong Kong newspapers as their source. The newspaper stories were complete with the names and personal details of some of the surviving crew members, including their assignment to the 581st ARCW.

The Communist Chinese links to Hong Kong newspapers did not surprise the Air Force officers. But how could such details of the aircrew have reached Hong Kong within hours of the shootdown? Or were these details already "on file" for use should the Chinese succeed in shooting down the B-29? Did the Chinese know Colonel Arnold was on the crew? Did they know the scheduled flight route? Was Colonel Arnold's presence the only reason for what appeared to be a preplanned aerial ambush? Or was the Communists' extreme sensitivity to the 581st psywar mission a major factor as well? How else could the near-instantaneous reporting of the aircrew's names be accounted for? The answers to these questions remain a mystery to this day.

The Night Shift

The collocation of the 581st B-29s with the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron provided both the necessary maintenance support and the equally useful operational deception cover for the 581st psywar mission. This successful formula would be used elsewhere in Korea, with the 581st helicopters stationed at Seoul City

Airfield. There they would blend in with the 2157th Air Rescue Squadron, another unit flying the same H-19A type helicopter. There were, however, some "adjustments" made as the "white hat" rescue crowd made room for the "black hat" special operations pilots suddenly thrown into their midst.

Like owls, bats, and other aerial "things" that go bump in the night, the 581st aircrews flying behind the lines during the Korean War did their best work in the dark. This did not sit well with the commander of the 3d Air Rescue Group (ARG)—the unit tasked with providing maintenance support and living arrangements for the 581st helicopters (helos) at K-16. The commander made no bones in giving his views to Lt Col George Pittman, the 581st deputy commander, including his opinion that "helicopter flying at night is too dangerous." In a tense meeting, Pittman reminded the 3d ARG commander that his responsibilities ended with support of the ARCW helicopters, adding, "It's none of your business, don't worry about what they're doing."

The 2157th ARS commander did, however, succeed in having "RESCUE" removed from the sides of the black-hat H-19s. To the 581st helo pilots, it seemed the more conservative rescue squadron didn't want the North Koreans confusing them with the 581st should a helo go down in "Indian country." Considering the fate of the 581st B-29 crewmen in the previous story, the air rescue concerns were not totally without merit.

The first ARCW helicopter pilots had a few adjustments of their own to make, beginning with the basic fact that they arrived in Korea with no helicopters and no idea of the ARCW mission. When the newly arrived pilots approached Fifth Air Force staff officers for both their aircraft and a mission, the initial response was denial that the 581st even existed! It did, of course, and by October 1952, six pilots, one NCO, and 12 airmen fresh from technical school comprised the Helicopter Flight, 581st ARC Squadron, commanded by Capt Frank Westerman. A long way from their parent wing in the Philippines, they learned early to shift for themselves. With four brand-new H-19A helicopters in their possession, the ARCW helo pilots next learned why Fifth Air Force had been so reluctant to answer their initial questions. Their primary mission was to insert United Nations intelligence agents behind enemy lines by means of infiltration flights at night at the lowest possible altitudes to avoid enemy radar. They would soon learn that this invariably called for them to fly from US-controlled islands off Korea's west coast, skimming the freezing waters of the Yellow Sea as they flew to their blacked-out landing point on the (hopefully) deserted coast.

Without the benefit of today's reliable radar altimeters, night-vision goggles, and sophisticated navigation equipment, these missions demanded superb airmanship at the rawest "stick and rudder" level. Close calls were inevitable. Robert Sullivan, then a second lieutenant, vividly recalls the night he felt the nose of the helicopter tug and dip slightly as he flew the helo's nose wheels into the frigid ocean waters; it would happen again to others.

The Helicopter Flight soon received another lesson on just how far Fifth Air Force was prepared to go to hide the flight's existence from unwanted scrutiny. Though housed with the 2157th Air Rescue Squadron at K-16 and supported by the 3d Air Rescue Group in Japan, it took its missions from B Flight, 6167th Air Base Squadron, another classified unit also based at K-16—except when Fifth Air Force Intelligence (A-2) itself chose to directly assign a mission to the flight. One can hardly fault the Communists (or Fifth Air Force staffers!) if questions regarding the Helicopter Flight generated blank faces and not much else.

The final launching pad for agent-insertion missions was usually Cho-do Island, a bleak rock located only 10 miles from the North Korean coast. . . but 60 miles behind enemy lines. While the British navy protected the coastal islands from retaliatory seaborne attacks, Cho-do's proximity to the coastline provided an ideal platform from which to conduct unconventional warfare missions at night.

Flying solo and in complete radio silence, they could only hope that North Korean coastal security forces were not waiting for them at the drop-off point. Not all threats were ground threats. On one night mission, Lt Robert Sullivan heard "Kodak," the UN radar tracking site on Cho-do, asking him for his location, distance from the dropoff point, and expected time of arrival. Lieutenant Sullivan noticed the controller had a slight oriental accent, and so he chose to remain radio silent.

As dangerous as the night missions were, the special operators at least had the element of surprise and safety of darkness on their side. But both were lost before the mission ever began when it came to their secondary mission: combat rescue of downed pilots. When called into combat rescue, the ARCW helo pilots attempted to reach the downed pilot before the enemy had a chance to prepare antiaircraft defenses for the inevitable rescue attempt. In contrast, the more conservative air rescue philosophy called for more thorough, but time-consuming mission planning. While the former approach was unquestionably riskier to the helicopter crew, the latter also had a major drawback—the enemy got the same additional time to prepare for the Americans' arrival.

Whatever the choice of tactics, there was simply no way out of a knock-down brawl if the North Koreans were near enough the downed pilot to smell blood. And on 24 February 1953, there was enough blood, enemy soldiers, firepower, and bad weather near a downed Marine Corps pilot to produce three Silver Star medals for two ARCW helicopter pilots and their Air Rescue Service crewman.

Things were not going particularly well for Marine Major Dave Cleeland on this cold February morning. His 100th combat mission had left him wounded, freezing, and lying next to the fuselage of his crashed F4U Corsair in the middle of a frozen reservoir surrounded by North Korean troops about to take him prisoner, if not kill him outright. A lack of local maps and subsequent radio confusion had already deterred two Air Rescue Service helicopters before ARCW helicopter pilot Joe Barrett and his crew were scrambled from K-16. Time was running out . . . and the bad news outweighed the good news.

The good news was that the ARCW helicopter was soon approaching the reservoir and had the crashed F4U in sight. The bad news was that the North Koreans were charging out onto the ice from their positions along the shoreline in a last-ditch attempt to capture or kill Cleeland. Whether what happened next is good news or bad news has a lot to do with whether the reader is American or North Korean.

As the North Koreans rushed toward the pilot, a combination of just-arrived Corsair and USAF F-80 jets orbiting overhead reacted instantaneously, raking the exposed enemy on the ice with their .50-caliber heavy machine guns and 20-millimeter cannon fire. In response, the entire rim of the reservoir seemed to explode with flashes of gunfire as the North Koreans opened up on the dangerously low-flying fighters. In the midst of this air-ground frenzy, the ARCW H-19 swooped through a hail of ground fire seemingly coming from every direction. Picking up the Marine, experiencing a good fright, and taking on several bullet holes (including one to a fuel cell and another through the hand of A2C Thomas Thornton, the 46-year-old crewman), the H-19 crew fled the firefight enroute to some well-deserved recognition.

Sometimes the collocated ARCW and Air Rescue Service crews crossed paths in odd ways. This was never more true than on 12 April 1953, when two F-86 fighter

Capt Joseph McConnell, Jr. is shown leaving the cockpit of his F-86 "Sabre" jet. (Photo courtesy of US Air Force)

pilots bailed out of their battle-damaged jets over the Yellow Sea. One of the two, Capt Joe McConnell, was already an ace enroute to becoming the leading jet ace of the war and a nationally recognized hero. With one ARCW and one Air Rescue helo searching over water for the two pilots, McConnell splashed into the near freezing waters right in front of Lieutenant Sullivan's helicopter and received a quick pick-up courtesy of the 581st. Or at least that's what Sullivan thought until he saw newspaper descriptions of the rescue featuring photographs of an H-19 with RESCUE markings hoisting "McConnell" out of the water. Sullivan later learned that the photograph came from an Air Rescue Service reenactment of the rescue, conducted in a fresh-water lake in Japan." C'est la guerre!

During the operational period described here, the six ARCW pilots flew approximately 1,000 hours total on its four helos in the process of flying innumerable ARCW and ARS missions. It remains a matter of considerable (and justifiable) pride to the flight's veterans that these missions were completed without a single accident, combat loss, or fatality. Sullivan, now a retired major, recently offered his assessment of these operational accomplishments with the comment "Not too shabby for a bunch of beginners, huh?"

About the Author: Dr. Ronald Dains presently serves as the USAF Air Command and Staff College Dean of Education Support and Professor of Military and Security Studies.

DON NICHOLS' ONE-MAN WAR

By Michael E. Haas, Col, USAF (Retired)

> "If I were called upon to name the most amazing and unusual man among all those with whom I was associated during my military service, I would not hesitate for a second in picking out Donald Nichols as that individual. I have often referred to him as a One-Man War."
>
> Earle E. Partridge, Commanding General
> Fifth Air Force, 1948-1951

General Partridge had good reason to recall Donald Nichols in such vivid terms. Commanding Fifth Air Force from his headquarters at Yokota AB, Japan, when war suddenly erupted on the Korean peninsula, the general had been quick to comprehend the implausible but pivotal role this 27-year-old Air Force Master Sergeant would play in the conflict. The general knew already that Nichols was destined for "bigger things."

Unlike the general's big picture thinking however, Donald Nichols' immediate concerns were of a much more personal nature. Some 100,000 North Korean soldiers were pouring over the 38th parallel on the morning of 25 June 1950, and the capitol city of Seoul—only 35 miles to the south—was already under attack. Nichols just barely escaped the burning city, and then only by clinging to a small boat while fleeing southward across the Han River.

It was a bitter pill to swallow for the man who had repeatedly warned an unresponsive Far East Command (FECOM) headquarters in Tokyo that a North Korean attack was imminent. As it turned out his warnings had been in vain. As Partridge later observed, Nichols' reports were suppressed and disregarded. His last report had predicted within 72 hours the "surprise" attack that stunned FECOM and the US government.

Partridge knew his man, though at the time no one could foresee the incredible extent to which Nichols would influence not only the course of the war, but also Air Force intelligence services and special operations in the 21st century. In particular he transformed human intelligence (HUMINT) collection into the deceptively bland term "positive intelligence." Under his leadership the Special Activities Unit developed an aggressive, covert campaign of sabotage, deception, assassination, signals intelligence (SIGINT), technical intelligence, and HUMINT operations that roamed violently throughout the entire Korean peninsula.

Arguably the most successful Allied special operations unit of the war, the Special Activities Unit would bring

Nichols to unimagined levels of political-military power in Korea. And in the process, it led to the total psychological and moral ruin of this tortured soul; a term he himself uses in his haunting autobiography *How Many Times Can I Die?* How could this all have possibly happened?

Indeed, how did this former motor pool sergeant with a sixth-grade education, rise to the level of unquestioned 24/7 access to both the Fifth Air Force commander and South Korean President Syngman Rhee, as well as a host of other shadowy Asian characters whose names will never be seen in print? The spymaster who was wounded in close quarters combat while leading infantry patrols against North Korean guerrillas ... the counter-intelligence agent who was awarded the Silver Star and then the Distinguished Service Cross for planning and leading technical intelligence collection missions deep into enemy-held territory to strip parts from a Russian-built T-34 tank, subsequently a downed MiG-15 fighter jet, the latter at the time the most highly sought-after intelligence prize of the war ... the innovator of something called positive intelligence?

Nichols himself describes coining the term positive intelligence (PI), following his assignment in 1946 to command a three-man Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC) detachment in Seoul, South Korea. Already street smart and soon fluent in the Korean language, Nichols began building a powerful intelligence apparatus both south and north of the 38th parallel separating the two Koreas. Fortune blessed his enormous energy and initiative with a combination of timing and politics.

First, in the late-1940s Korea was of so little interest to the Departments of State and Defense that no one was paying much attention to Nichols' activities on the peninsula. Second, the one person who was paying attention was South Korean President Syngman Rhee, who soon took Nichols under his wing. In his autobiography *How Many Times Can I Die?* Nichols recalls:

> By this time (1947-48) our unit was really moving in, "high, very high" South Korean government circles. All doors were open to us. In those days no one in this area knew or even thought about Positive (i.e., Covert) Intelligence. We invented it for this area and taught others, as we saw fit, for our own benefit.

"Our unit" [Special Activities Unit 1] was doing all this with just four USAF NCOs, by making extensive use of Korean civilian agents. These were later augmented by South Korean Coast Guard and air force personnel assigned—at President Rhee's personal orders—under operational control of "Mr" Nichols. By the outbreak of war, Nichols' CIC detachment was a well-oiled intelligence collection team with deep penetrations throughout both South and North Korea. Incredibly, no one in the US government seems to have had any real understanding of what Nichols was doing; this despite the fact he dutifully submitted his reports through Fifth Air Force to FECOM headquarters.

What would soon take Nichols' PI operations far beyond the normal scope of then-standard HUMINT practices, was a second coming together of timing and politics: A brutal war on the Korean peninsula, a just-established (in 1947) US Air Force that was still not certain of its limitations, and the trust President Rhee had come to place in this singular, young American. As Partridge succinctly put it in his foreword to Nichols' autobiography, the man has a "genius" for intelligence operations.

As for the aforementioned "bigger things" in Nichols' future, they began immediately when during the retreat from Seoul he encountered the American ambassador to South Korea. On the spot, Ambassador John J. Muccio asked just-promoted Warrant Officer 1 Nichols, to be his personal liaison with the heads of the South Korean military services. It was an enormous leap to a position normally filled by US flag rank officers. Still bigger things were coming and coming soon, as General Partridge was not a commander with a lot of time on his hands.

Partridge's first tasking to Nichols' was to "secure by any means" a Russian-built T-34 tank, a weapon that Fifth Air Force fighters had enjoyed little luck destroying in their strafing runs. Nichols promptly "borrowed" a tank-retriever from a frontline US Army unit and secured under enemy fire, the desired T-34. A grateful Partridge subsequently awarded Nichols a Silver Star for his valor and initiative.

Seemingly appreciating "those who can and those who will," the general then asked Nichols' help in subduing the North Korean guerrillas sniping at Fifth Air Force aircraft operating out of the vital airfield at Taegu. An odd assignment for an Airman perhaps, but Nichols promptly led ambush patrols in the hills around the airfield, leading to both a notable diminishment of the problem and a Purple Heart for grenade fragments that lodged in one of his legs. What followed next was an impressive display of Nichols' other leadership qualities, especially his organizational skills.

Photo courtesy of USAF

This was Partridge's most challenging tasking to date, this time asking Nichols' for intelligence that would provide Fifth Air Force with a sorely needed, credible target list. In response Nichols' infiltrated some 48 South Korean agents into North Korean-held territory by parachute, in 13 separate missions. Active in supporting these agent parachute drops was the irrepressible Captain Harry 'Heinie' Aderholt, then Special Air Missions [aka Unit 4] Commander of the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron. The two worked well together and soon provided the most complete target list yet made

available to the Fifth Air Force. The two would continue to collaborate with success, often with the mindset "better to beg for forgiveness than ask for permission."

One example of this creativity and initiative was the crude parachute school Nichols had established for just such missions. While observing the training one day, he observed a plane loaded with Korean jump students landing for no apparent reason. Upon learning they had refused to jump, he determined to set the example by strapping on a parachute and warning the student jumpers of the consequences if they refused to follow him. From Nichols' autobiography:

> I really didn't at this time think it would be necessary for me to jump. However, after we became airborne, I noticed all eyes were on me. When we went over the DZ, old man Nichols jumped. I was quite elated to see the blossoming of every other chute from the plane spread out above me as I dropped.

The problem Nichols' had just encountered was also experienced by US Army and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) trainers, who had neither the time nor facilities to train fully qualified parachutists. To the contrary, they de-emphasized the parachute infiltration phase after

Donald Nichols, center, forecast war on the Korean Peninsula in 1950, but he was ignored. (Photo courtesy of Lindsay Morgan)

discovering that many Koreans viewed the frightening night jump as the most difficult phase of their much more dangerous intelligence mission. And this, in turn, led to one of the most dismal chapters in the American leadership of covert operations during the war.

During the first year of the war the battlefield situation remained so fluid that agents parachuted behind communist lines stood a better than even chance of accomplishing their mission before walking back to friendly lines. According to former US Army captain and agent case officer Bob Brewer, the survival rate was approximately 70% in such missions. The Army and CIA, as well as Nichols' operation, scored some notable successes during this period.

As the war dragged on, though, and the communists tightened their grip on the North Korean population, the survival rate of the parachute-infiltrated agents plummeted to nil. The agents were not blind to this reality as they could see for themselves that of those who went out, virtually none came back. Agents began to balk, and refused to jump on their operational missions. The American response—including Nichols—can only be described as callous in the extreme.

By this stage of the war the B-26 medium bomber, converted to drop parachutists from its bomb bay, had become the aircraft of choice for covert agencies conducting such airborne insertions. The platform modification to the bomb bay provided wood benches on the bomb racks, on which a maximum of six parachutists could sit enroute their drop zones. There was still another modification, one not briefed to the parachutists. As one of the B-26 navigators recalls:

> When we gave the green light for the parachutists to jump, they simply slid off the wood benches and dropped. In the event they hesitated, we had a toggle switch in the cockpit that dropped the whole lot ... bomb racks, benches, and parachutists from the aircraft.

In his autobiography, a guilt-ridden Nichols emotionally confessed sending agents on missions from which he knew they would never return and had virtually no hope of accomplishing their missions before dying. The cruelty of the decisions were stripping Nichols' of his humanity and the strain shows in his dark memoirs:

> I hate to call myself a man. I had to be the one to give the actual orders when I knew someone was going to be killed. Maybe some of my bosses could have told me how to go about filling some of those requirements; however, I doubt it. They wanted little to do with them. They wanted the answers, and in some cases didn't want to be told how I got them. They knew it meant lives; sometimes many.
>
> It's easy to give an order such as "I want a MiG-15" or "I want some enemy officers [to interrogate], a few enemy tanks, to experiment with, some of their 85-m tank ammo, etc." However, filling these requirements is another problem which requires lives.

For the Fifth Air Force, Nichols had become Clint Eastwood's 'Dirty Harry' character in the movie of the same name. As the war progressed, death haunted these behind-the-lines operations to such an extreme that it frequently blurred the distinction between "high risk" and "suicide" missions.

By the second year of the war the death rate for Korean partisans parachuted into North Korea had reached such a level that one postwar study concluded, "These decisions [by American officers] to use partisans against enemy supply routes in airborne operations appears to have been futile and callous."

Perhaps Nichols, given his unrivaled understanding of the Korean temperament, should have seen it coming, but the inevitable blowback to such "futile and callous" behavior nearly cost him his life in the spring of 1951. From *King of Spies*:

> Apparently alarmed at the high death rate and disappearance among agents being sent behind enemy lines ... six angry agents burst into Nichols' quarters [late one night] intending to kill him. According to Kim Gye-son, who claims to have worked for Nichols' unit ... Nichols responded with gunfire and shot three of the agents to death. The other three were court-martialed.

Other more sinister problems were surfacing around Nichols' operations, some of them clearly pointing to the mental strain on Nichols as well as the lack of supervision over his detachment. Again, from *King of Spies*:

> By the spring of 1951, no one seems to have been supervising or reviewing the day-to-day activities of his unit. His orders were to report directly to Partridge, the general running the entire air war in Korea. Nichols had the authority to send individuals on flights over North Korea and drop them behind enemy lines—and he appears to have used it to punish those who angered him.

It wasn't simply a matter of senior officers turning a blind eye to dark rumors of Nichols' deteriorating behavior. After all, who could be found to replace such a unique and operationally effective individual? Both the Army and the CIA had made efforts to snatch him away from the Fifth Air Force, moves Partridge terminated with vigor. So too, Nichols had always claimed the Fifth Air Force Commander had given him a "blank check" to act regardless of regulations, and available records tend to support his claim of "having a license to murder" as Nichols put it.

Nichols' was problematic in other ways, some of them quite clearly not his fault. As a major, he was far below the rank one would expect to see commanding a unit with such organizational size and operational authority. A Fifth Air Force assessment of the detachment notes:

> While an exact parallel with CIA's operations and Navy's cannot be drawn, it may be noted that in Korea we now have a detachment (Detachment 2) functioning on an equal basis with a CIA operation of regimental strength and a Navy operation equivalent to a group.

Well before this assessment Nichols was working closely and in frequent, direct contact with American generals and admirals, senior CIA officers, and as earlier mentioned, the president of South Korea. The major was in fact punching far above his weight class, and not without cause this created a distinct sense of uneasiness among many senior officials in the Departments of Defense and State. The Air Force had promoted Nichols to the rank of major, but perhaps hearing the dark rumors of his personal behavior, would go no further.

Seldom known to wear a military uniform indicating his rank, this diabetic routinely consumed a case of Coca-Cola on a daily basis. His fondness for his dogs extended to them eating with him on his dinner table. The South Koreans in what had now become Detachment 2, 6004th Air Intelligence Service Squadron both feared and respected him. His contacts extended into North Korea, as well as into the South Korean criminal underworld. No one but Nichols himself had a complete picture of what he was willing and capable of doing. Similarities with "Lawrence of Arabia" and the mad Colonel Kurtz in the movie *Apocalypse Now* are inescapable.

Air Force NCO and Korean War veteran Ray Dawson recalls the night he went to Nichols' compound in downtown Seoul to discuss operations with him:

> The first thing I noticed was the presence of a large number of US Air Force security police outside Nichols' building; usually it was just Korean military police. As I entered Nichols' room it was so dark it took a minute for my eyes to adjust to the light coming from one small oil lamp of some sort. When they did adjust, I saw the reason for the Air Force security outside ... I was looking at General Partridge and General Doolittle! They were sitting cross-legged on the floor, talking to a casually dressed Nichols.

US Air Force intelligence officer, Donald Nichols ran a covert network of spies who infiltrated North Korea and fed information back to Nichols' headquarters in South Korea. He trained and deployed hundreds of agents, many of whom were sent on suicide missions to the North. (USAF Photo courtesy of Blaine Harden)

In *King of Spies: The Dark Reign of America's Spymaster in Korea*, author Blaine Harden adds further insight into this one-of-a-kind individual:

> Quick tempered and pushy, fast talking and fleshy ... he stood 6'2" and weighed up to 260 pounds ... but was very agile and could run fast ... he did not smoke and rarely consumed alcohol ... had zero interest in women ... year after year he rarely took a day off.

Worth noting is that in his entire career—from enlisted to field grade officer—this 7th grade drop-out never attended a single professional development course; not a senior NCO course, Officer Candidate School, Squadron Officers School. Nada. Little surprise then that Nichols' self-taught concept of leadership came about from commanding Koreans, not Americans. It came down to a short, simple set of rules later described by US Army partisan commander Archie Johnston:

1. Never allow the partisans to question an order from an American advisor.

2. Never ask a Korean to do anything; tell him.
3. Never lie to a Korean
4. Never get drunk in front of a Korean
5. Never make a "pass" at a Korean woman.

As intelligent and pragmatic as such guidance was, it was obviously all focused on the Korean culture, a far cry from Air Force regulations and societal norms of the time. But even as Nichols continued sinking deeper into his own world, he also continued proving his intelligence value to his superiors.

A year into the war, Nichols' the workaholic was providing Fifth Air Force with "one stop shopping" for Fifth Air Force intelligence requirements. His scope of operations was near-limitless, ranging from sensitive HUMINT and SIGINT collection, to guerilla assaults on high-priority targets. In the first 18 months of the war his operation had grown from 4 NCOs to an assigned strength of 665 personnel, less than 40 of whom were Americans. Beyond this, of course, were the inestimable number of unknown contacts only he could reach out to in his private universe. Major George Gregory, one of Nichols' executive officers during this period, describes the diverse kind of people Nichols brought to his enterprise:

> His [Nichols'] men included scholars with advanced degrees, and burly athletic types without higher education, but who could walk all night through enemy forests, ride horses, paddle canoes, parachute from low altitudes, kill a man with a single karate blow, and speak three or four languages.

With such men at his disposal, the entrepreneurial Nichols soon turned his attention to the maritime possibilities of infiltrating his agents along North Korea's rugged, remote coastlines. Operating primarily from islands bordering North Korea ("north of the bomb line" was the discrete bureaucratic euphemism), his boat crews overcame Yellow Sea tides that rose and fell twice a day with the height of a three-story building. Though his partisan raiders made effective use of the fast, armed gunboats provided by the Air Force's crash rescue boat crews, stealth and deception remained the keys to mission success for Nichols' agents. And to this end he found the money to acquire local, shallow-draft boats identical to those used by Korean fishermen.

By the close of 1952, Detachment 2's boat fleet had grown to 30 vessels of all sizes and descriptions. In addition, he had ready access to larger vessels to support his operational bases on several islands off North Korea's west coast. So it was that even as the war was stagnating, stumbling toward the Armistice that took place the following summer (July 1953), Nichols' air, land, and sea covert war was actually accelerating. Such success would soon pose a serious problem for both Nichols and the US government.

In fact it wasn't a problem, it was a mess. Nichols knew that a post-war assignment outside Korea would leave him as just one more major in the Air Force, and he wasn't about to accept that fate.

Pulling strings with his longtime mentor General Partridge, Nichols remained in Korea as the commander of the 6004th AISS until his world fell apart in 1957. Despite pulling off some notable intelligence coups that often made the headlines, he was by now a functional, mental, and physical wreck. The same supervisor who had strongly recommended Nichols' promotion to lieutenant colonel only the year before, now wrote a performance report calling for his relief from command and expulsion from Korea, "never again to command USAF personnel."

Rumors of corruption and official complaints of abnormal behavior from his American subordinates, now made the once irreplaceable Nichols a corporate liability. So too, his long-known closeness to the fiercely independent President Rhee had always raised questions as to his primary loyalties and to his questionable contacts in the South Korean government.

The story darkens considerably from this point forward, when Nichols was returned to the US and submitted to physical and involuntary psychological examinations. Placed in a psychiatric ward at Eglin AFB, Florida, his reviewing doctors concluded "... this man is a deteriorating schizophrenic ... obviously no longer of potential value to the service." Despite given strong dosages of the powerful drug Thorazine, Nichols condition continued to spiral down. In response, the medical staff turned to electro-shock therapy in an attempt to relieve his diagnosed anxiety and depression.

It began with fourteen consecutive rounds of electro-shock, according the records. Debate surrounds his diagnoses as a schizophrenic, as Blaine Harden writes:

> His decade of high-wire stress as a spymaster, his fear of assassination, and his guilt about sending agents to their death in North Korea—all might have heightened his risk of mental illness. But his sudden fall from Intelligence prince to psych-ward untouchable appears to have been the trigger for what today would be described as a reactive psychosis marked by severe depression.

Nichols was released from active duty in 1958, after some 50 electro-shock treatments left doctors concluding a poor prognosis for his future. Such proved true, as his remaining years were a travail of trouble until an apparent stroke in the psychiatric ward of the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, ended his pain on 2 June 1992. Few attended his burial and today he lies in Brooksville Cemetery, Brooksville, Florida.

About the Author: Michael Haas began his career as a private in the US Army and served in airborne, Ranger, and Special Forces units. He was an assault helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War, flying 968 combat flying hours and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Following an interservice transfer to the Air Force, Haas served in special operations and special tactics units, in the Defense Intelligence Agency, and commanded a pararescue squadron. He is the author of Apollo's Warriors: USAF Special Operations During the Cold War *and* In the Devil's Shadow: U.N. Special Operations During the Korean War.

Black Knights Find a Home

By Gene Correll, Col, USAF (Retired)

Photo of 31st SOS coin courtesy of Andrea Hunt

The Beginning and the Background

On 12 June 1991, the volcano, Mt Pinatubo in the Philippines, erupted and caused the evacuation of Clark AB. The 353rd Special Operations Wing went to Kadena AB, Okinawa, Japan. There were many challenges getting three of the 31st SOS MH-53 Pave Low helicopters moved, but they arrived at Kadena AB on 29 June; sailing most of the way aboard the USS *Midway*. Our fourth Pave Low finally arrived, with air refueling support from the 17th SOS, on 2 July. At the time there were Okinawan and Japanese political sensitivities to having the MH-53s at Kadena and as a result, Brig Gen Joseph Hurd, 313th Air Division commander, felt they might blend in better if they were relocated with other helicopter assets on Okinawa. Col Robert Stankovich, 353rd Special Operation Group commander, sent a survey team to Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma to determine if the option was feasible. The Marine Corps leadership at Futenma was very open and accommodating to support our requirements, knowing we had just fled the Philippines and on 9 July the 31st SOS relocated to MCAS Futenma. Our maintenance team operated from two buildings located on the flight line; one building for personnel and the other for storing parts and supplies. The operations personnel settled into another building very near the flight line helping facilitate our flying operations.

The initial billeting situation wasn't optimal, but the unit made it work. The maintenance personnel were billeted in Marine barracks and the pilots were sent to the bachelor officers quarters, both on Futenma. The enlisted aircrew and operations support personnel were billeted in a dormitory on Kadena. These Air Commandos were assigned an Air Force blue bus for transportation between Kadena and Futenma to support flight operations and daily work schedules…not optimum, but again, the Black Knights made it work.

Flying training and currency were problematic on Okinawa. The 31st generally flew one or two lines in the day and then one or two lines at night. There were no low-level areas to maintain radar terrain following currency, only a couple remote landing areas, and the air refueling track was totally over water, so the squadron spent a lot of time TDY for training during this time.

I joined the 31st SOS early in September. Joe Becker and Jeff Walls met me at the Naha commercial airport and drove me across the island to MCAS Futenma. The next day we headed to Kadena for the 353rd Wing change-of-command from Col Lee Hess to Col Robert Stankovich.

After the change of command, we thought a final beddown location and decision would be made in a relatively short time. However, the AFSOC Manpower & Personnel office may not have shared our vision. In mid-September we received a message telling us that an "Assignments Action Team" from the Air Force Manpower Center and AFSOC would visit in early October to work the personnel moves. Lt Col Ken Poole presented the plan for 31st PCS moves. The operations personnel would drawdown in November, December, and January. These crews were the initial cadre at Clark AB when the unit converted from HH-3s to the MH-53s and by January 1992, the 31st SOS would be supported by the 20th SOS sending crews TDY. Many of the 31st original members felt a strong connection with the squadron and wanted to stay with

the unit until the new beddown was complete. AFSOC realized that there would not be a final beddown decision in the near future and told the members that remaining with the unit could be detrimental to their careers, and would violate the Air Force 180-day TDY (in one place) rule, without waivers for all concerned. As a result, there was a very short list of personnel that would remain with the unit. These 13 officers and enlisted became the initial cadre for a future beddown location. This was the first time I became aware that very few maintenance personnel would be staying with us.

On 18 December 1991, I took command of the 31st SOS Black Knights from Lt Col Lee Massey in a hangar on MCAS Futenma. We stood down over the Christmas break and resumed flying operations in January.

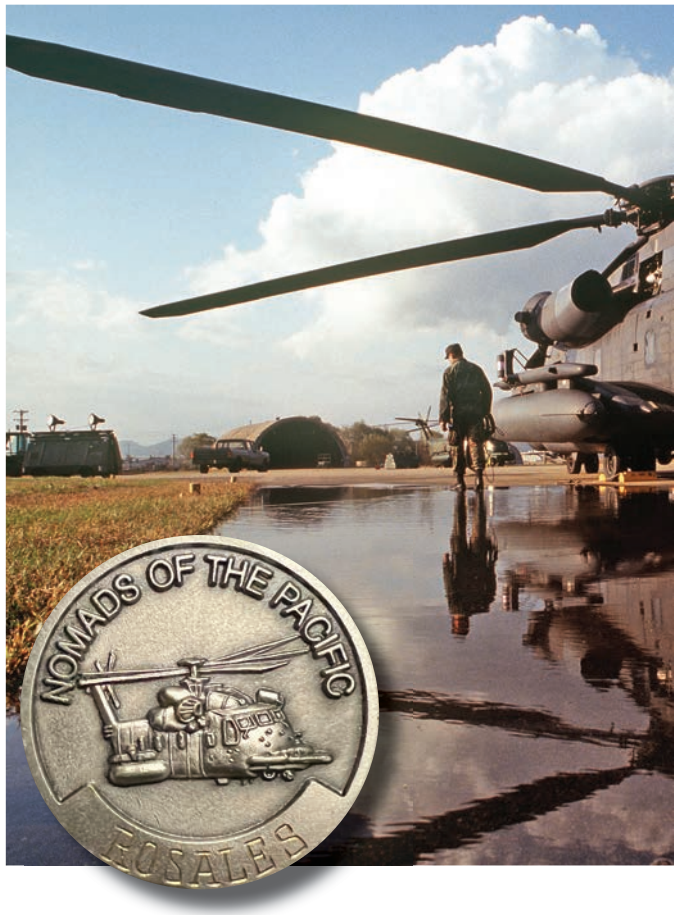
First Site Activation Task Force (SATAF)

In February 1992, the US and Japanese governments completed agreements and issued a directive declaring Kadena as the beddown location for 353rd Special Operations Wing, excluding the 31st SOS. Classified Department of Defense documents directed the 31st SOS to beddown at Osan AB, Korea. In March 1992, an AFSOC SATAF team went to Osan to negotiate the beddown facilities and other details. Even though the beddown decision had been made by DOD, the team had no control over the location and worse, the host 51st Fighter Wing was almost openly hostile to our coming there. The wing staff offered little assistance and attempted to provide us the least desirable facilities.

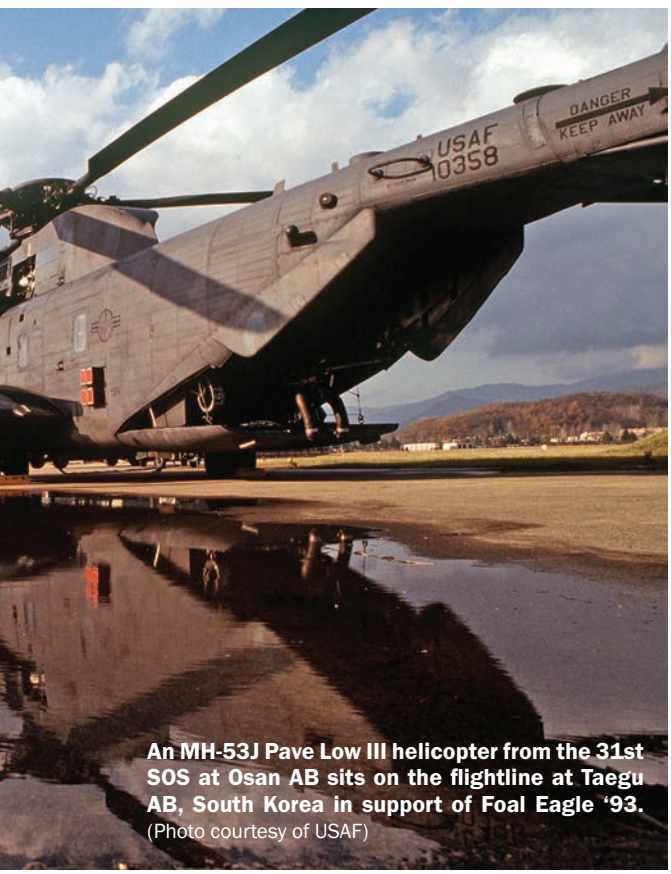
One goal of the SATAF was to obtain enough hangar space where all the MH-53s could be hangared during the winter months. At the time, we only had four helicopters but, the squadron was projected to have six helicopters. The 51st Wing offered us an older hanger that at best would hold two helicopters. Upon inspection, Mr. Dave Villane, a civil engineer with the SATAF noted the height of the hangar was too low to support the MH-53s without removing one tail rotor blade every time a bird needed to go into the hangar and wasn't practical. At about this time, Capt Kyle Cunningham told the SATAF team that during his previous assignment at Osan as an H-3 pilot, Hangar 4 was emptied and the space used for visiting concert groups and other events. The SATAF went to inspect Hangar 4 and found it held one A-10 and one F-16 used for weapons load training. The SATAF team went back to the 51st, and without much argument or pushback, were given Hanger 4 for our maintenance operations. It could hold four MH-53 helicopters and had additional space for offices. We were also given one spot in nearby Hangar 3 for our phase inspections.

SATAF Communications Efforts

Many on the host wing staff did not understand the complexity of the MH-53 Pave Low's communications and navigation suite. They thought that it is only a helicopter with old technology needing a minimum back shop work area. I believe fighters tend to have smaller plug-and-play black boxes and require much less space for testing and repair work. Not so with the MH-53. SMSgt Mike Stephens was the communications member of the SATAF and knew just how much space was needed. For proper space requirements we needed a building of our own, but that was not in the offering. The 51st Wing wanted us to share their communications building giving us half the space in their facility. Sergeant Stephens said this was too small and we would need the entire building to have sufficient space. The back and forth went on for some period of time, but since we didn't have our helicopters on station, the SATAF tabled this requirement leaving it as an open item when they departed. A short time after, I was called for a meeting in the wing commander's office to discuss our communication requirements and was offered half of the building to share with the 51st communications unit. I was reluctant to accept because of what SMSgt Stephens told me. At that point, the wing commander said I was not leaving his office until we came to an agreement. Ultimately, the 51st communications officer and I agreed to half of his building. As the helicopters arrived and our requirements became more obvious to the 51st comm/nav leadership, we were eventually given our own building for our comm/nav work. The building was modified to have lexan "glass" for radar work, sufficient work space that we no longer shared, and a secure area for working the classified secure communications equipment. The down-side to the building was that it frequently flooded and had to have permanent sandbags around the exterior. I think this is a story of the senior leadership not understanding the complexity of the Pave Low helicopter and the actual



workers in both the 51st Wing and 31st SOS realizing that the limited and inadequate working space was never going to work. I don't remember ever being involved in any discussion after my agreeing in the wing commander's office, but somehow we were given a new facility. I think the senior NCOs made it happen and suspect Maj Joe Brozena, our maintenance officer, was involved as well; I know that I wasn't.



An MH-53J Pave Low III helicopter from the 31st SOS at Osan AB sits on the flightline at Taegu AB, South Korea in support of Foal Eagle '93. (Photo courtesy of USAF)

The Beddown Begins

In late March 1992, the 31st was participating in an exercise called Badge Tram at Udorn AB, Thailand when we received word of the final beddown decision. We were told that we would have to have our initial cadre in place at Osan no later than 1 April. I requested a delay on moving personnel until after the exercise was completed, but was denied. We had to be on Osan AB by 1 April. Capt Kyle Cunningham was in Okinawa and became the point man for arranging all of the necessary appointments for our departure. This was a monumental task considering the short notice. Kyle made it happen. The intended departure was 28 March 1992, but we delayed 24-hours due to a maintenance issue. The next day, we boarded a C-141 in warm tropical Okinawa and arrived to an ice-cold ramp at Osan. The flight was met by Capt Ron Richard, from the 353rd Special Operations Wing OL-A on Osan AB. On 29 March 1992, the 31st SOS was physically present in Korea and met the 1 April requirement.

When we first arrived, we were given building 1171 which the 51st Wing used for visiting units. On the first few days in country, we met in this building at 0800 and formulated the plan for the day of the beddown tasks that needed to be completed. The 51st Wing expected us to accept this building as our squadron operations building, but it was too small, needed significant repairs, and was poorly laid out for an operations building. Colonel Stankovich knew that building 1182, the F-15 Eagle alert facility, would be vacated shortly. This was a top notch, well-maintained facility used by the F-15s standing alert at Osan. I don't know how he managed to work the issue, but he told me not to accept building 1171 and be patient. After a few weeks, we were advised that we could move into building 1182 and that became the 31st SOS squadron operations building until the unit closed. It was slightly small, but workable. The facility was built to sustain combat operations and had two thick blast doors for entrance, a chemical filtration system, a place for crews to sleep, and a full decontamination shower and dressing area.

The 353rd SOW maintained two special operations manpower billets at Osan. The manning document for these two positions listed the 353rd Special Operations Wing OL-A as the unit of assignment. The base manpower office had some personnel read-in to the classified nature of the move and provided top cover to ensure no one became overly concerned when the first 11 initial cadre and eventually 24 of the first arrivals were manned against these two positions. We all used the OL-A unit designation for permanent billeting, household goods shipments, and all other actions needing a unit designation for completion. This smoothed many situations caused by the classification that the 31st SOS did not exist.

The first arrivals in early April were some of the recent Pave Low school graduates, support staff and maintenance. They were the second phase of the initial cadre and would set up the flight operations, supply chain, medical operations/hospital liaison, and maintenance offices and functions in Hangar 4. They were the foundation and prepared the unit for the arrival of the aircraft.

The 31st SOS move was declassified on 27 April 1992 and we now formally "existed." There were 24 people manned against the two position 353rd OL-A manning document, but now, they were moved to the official 31st SOS manning document and all new arrivals would instantly be part of the 31st SOS.

As a geographically separated unit, the 31st was unique in AFSOC in that it was the only unit where the squadron commander led both operations and maintenance functions. Also, we were a tenant unit on Osan, so I had two bosses, my operational boss and the boss who controlled much of our support and day-to-day training. Luckily for me, both of my bosses were very fair and patient. Colonel Stankovich was a previous MH-53 Pave Low pilot and extremely knowledgeable of our needs and capabilities. Brigadier General Jenkins and his staff were great to work with and treated us as if we were one of their own squadrons.

Early on, Lt Gen Robert Rutherford, the PACAF Commander, visited Osan and dropped by the 31st for a quick tour of Hangar 4. One of my biggest challenges was having

young maintenance personnel arrive for a one-year remote tour with minimal or no experience working on the MH-53; they stayed for a year and returned to their primary airframe. I was explaining this to General Rutherford as we toured the facilities, and asked him to quiz any of the maintainers he met to see what aircraft they were experienced on and 100 percent of the people he spoke with came from a variety other airframes. When he left he shook my hand, thanked me for the tour and said, "Good luck, you are going to need it."

There was limited parking on base, so technical sergeants and below were not authorized to have a vehicle on Osan. This meant that the majority of the 31st SOS either walked or rode bicycles to and from work. I was able to get one exception for one of our maintainers, SrA Rob 'Chewy' Marchewka. Chewy wrote a letter to General Jenkins, which I supported, stating his Harley had been sitting in all the ash from Pinatubo and that to prevent further damage and assess the amount of damage it had already sustained, the motorcycle needed to be run and exercised. The idea floated and wing commander allowed 'Chewy' to have his Harley on Osan. He may be the only Airman in the history of Osan authorized to have a Harley on base.

Photo courtesy of USAF

Command Sponsored Positions

An assignment to Osan was normally an unaccompanied, one-year tour. The assignment can also be a two-year accompanied tour, if the assignment fills a command sponsored position and becomes eligible for base housing. During the initial beddown, I was given eight command sponsored positions. Knowing that the squadron would eventually grow to around 250 people, I felt that only eight two-year positions was severely inadequate. I passed my concerns on to Colonel Stankovich stating I thought special operators might want to come for longer tours and we probably needed 25 command sponsored billets. Colonel Stankovich passed my thoughts to the base commander, Col Thomas Case, but no positions were forthcoming. On 23 June, Colonel Case passed command of the 51st Fighter Wing to General Jenkins (mentioned earlier). I voiced my concerns again over only having eight command sponsored billets when I met with the new commander. I was told that there was an annual review of command sponsored positions and the commander said I could bring my concerns forward to the review. I attended the review and after some discussion walked away from the table with the same eight command sponsored positions. It seems most of the other unit commanders had similar small numbers of positions and had the same concerns. Our eight positions were carved from the already established units on Osan. I was deflated after the meeting.

Fast forward some months, I soon found out that very few of our aircrew and maintainers wanted a two-year tour to Korea. Following the initial cadre, most of the inbounds were from the 20th SOS who had family in the Hurlburt area with kids in school and wives with jobs or other roots. They did not want to leave for two years and then most likely return to Hurlburt. It was much easier to complete a one-year remote and leave the family established. Another factor was the view of the 21st SOS in England alternative. The option was a tour to the 21st SOS as a three-year accompanied tour, but the assigned member would spend two-thirds of that time at San Vito away from the family. The choice was to uproot the family for three years and then return to Hurlburt or perhaps Albuquerque or remain established with family schools and jobs at Hurlburt for the duration of the one-year remote tour This was something unexpected and unique to the MH-53 world where the only flying options were the 20th, 21st, 31st or 1550th. This further reduced the number of command sponsored positions I needed at Osan. After one year, I was unable to fill the eight positions I possessed and I was very happy I had not prevailed for the 25 I thought I needed…not real leadership, just blind luck.

In December 1992, Maj Gen Bruce Fister, the AFSOC commander, came to visit the 31st SOS. As part of his visit, he had an office call with the 7th Air Force commander, Lt Gen Ronald Fogleman. General Fogleman was looking at some storage options and played a VHS tape of an aluminum Quonset-type shelter that was easily constructed and thought perhaps General Fister might consider an option like this for the final two helicopters that needed protection. The idea gained some traction and Dave Villane lent his expertise to assist. He determined that even the largest building the company could construct would not accommodate the 72-foot rotor blade span due to the curvature of the roof. However, closer to the base of the structure, there was room to fit the helicopter with the blades on. Dave determined that a foundation, with sufficient height to raise the base of the aluminum building could be

made to work. The obstacle was cost because we needed to bring the hangar cost below a military construction or MILCON funding limit. Dave Villane worked with his base civil engineer counterparts and was able to design a hangar with either a cement or concrete block foundation to raise the aluminum structure high enough to accommodate the blades and brought the project in under the MILCON ceiling. The down-side was the total cost was so close to the MILCON limit that the hangar would not have a fire suppression system, so actual maintenance work on the aircraft inside the hangar was prohibited and could only be used for weather protection. We found the compromise acceptable and the work on two hangars began after design and contracting. I departed before the hangars were completed, but saw them on a return visit in 2001.

The Dormitory

Newcomers to the squadron were not offered the finest of dormitory facilities. The 51st Wing initially gave us an older dormitory and I got word from my airmen that the kitchen facility was less than adequate and civil engineers said it would take $25,000 to make modifications. During General Fister's visit I gave him a tour of the dormitory and mentioned the kitchen issue, hoping he could have the staff find the funds. Dave Villane took on the project and designed a kitchen for us. In the end, the airmen got a nice kitchen for around $17,000. Dave Villane was our champion and I was grateful for his advice and help on this and many other beddown issues.

Beddown Reclaim and Refurbish

The 31st and the other 353rd units at Kadena were expected to keep the furniture replacement costs to a minimum and where possible use furniture and equipment resurrected from the items shipped from the Clark AB. Most of the furniture in the 31st operations building was from Clark. Maintenance did not have a large furniture requirement, but what they accomplished in refurbishment was truly amazing.

Maintenance also received lots of hand tools, specialty tools, storage bins. tool chests (CTKs), and test equipment salvaged from Clark AB. Capt Laura Berry, one of our maintenance officers, led a team to sort through piles of tools and equipment to determine what could be reused. The team couldn't salvage much of the test equipment, due to volcanic ash, but a large amount of the hand tools were serviceable. Laura also had all the tool storage bins and CTKs painted red from the variety of black, yellow and red containers she received. She then had the tools "shadowed" in the bins and CTKs for accountability. General Fister saw the tool recovery efforts in the other 353rd units and he was obviously very impressed with the work of Captain Berry and her team. After General Fister went home, he briefed his staff on the 353rd SOW's recovery efforts and gave the 31st SOS, Captain Berry, and the young maintainers kudos for saving the command a lot of money and making the equipment look great in the process. As a flier, I would never have known to paint and shadow the tool bins. Captain Berry and her team salvaged over $15 million in parts, tools, test benches, equipment and furniture.

The Aircraft Arrive

In 1992, Exercise Tandem Thrust was held stateside. Two aircraft from the 31st SOS were sent to support the exercise, leaving two on the ramp at MCAS Futenma. In mid-July, Colonel Stankovich, Sergeant Clay Engle, our flight engineer, SrA Marchewka, and I flew the first 31st SOS Pave Low from Okinawa to Osan AB. When we landed at Osan, we were greeted on the ramp by General Jenkins, the 51st Wing Commander. The beddown now had a helicopter on the ramp. Following the exercise, our two helicopters arrived at Osan in the belly of a C-5A. Our fourth helicopter was flown from Okinawa to Osan later in July. With our aircraft on-station, the pilots coordinated with Korean authorities on airspace restrictions, low-level routes, remote landing zones, firing ranges, and an air refueling track and our training took off.

In November 1993, the 31st SOS joined our 353rd Special Operations Group teammates at Taegu, Korea for Exercise Foal Eagle. The exercise also served as our Operational Readiness Inspection. The 31st SOS flew multiple complex ORI missions, supported by outstanding maintenance reliability and received an overall grade of 'Excellent'. My thanks goes to the leadership of Lt Col Jensen and Maj Joe Brozena, and all the other great officers and enlisted members.

The Beddown Complete

By December 1993, the unit grew to 240 personnel and either 'owned' outright or shared ownership in 11 buildings. Approximately 200 personnel turned over every year, usually in June and July to accommodate the exercises Ulchi Focus Lens and Foal Eagle that prepared the new arrivals for defending Korea. The 31st SOS Black Knights began executing our 1,700 hour flying program with our own assigned crews and maintenance team.

On 20 December 1993, we held the 31st SOS change of command and after two challenging, but rewarding years, I turned command of the squadron over to Lt Col Craig Jensen. The beddown was complete and the squadron's future looked bright.

About the Author: Colonel Gene Correll started flying the HH-53 in Hawaii with the 6594th Test Group and continued with an assignment teaching rescue at the schoolhouse at Kirtland AFB. He transitioned to the MH-53J and moved to the 20th SOS in 1989 holding various positions and was the operations officer during Desert Storm in 1991. In December 1991, Colonel Correll was selected to command the 31st SOS and led the squadron's beddown in Korea. Following his command tour, Colonel Correll was assigned to HQ AFSOC as the Chief of Operations Readiness. Colonel Correll's final assignment was the deputy commander of the 353rd Special Operations Group at Kadena AB.

Maj Gen R

Fighte

By Paul Harmon, Colonel, USAF (Retired)

Richard Secord comes from a patriotic family. His distant relative, Laura Secord, was a French-Canadian spy during the War of 1812, and was hailed as a Canadian national hero after she slipped through the American lines to warn the British of an impending attack. The family's allegiance moved south to the US and the sense of obligation to one's country continues as a persistent family trait.

His grandfather, Vernon, was a second-generation American and master craftsman with brick and stone and had an appreciation for doing things as best he could. His father, Lowell, carried the principle forward into a trucking business he started.

Lowell Secord believed in getting a good education and felt the Service academies provided a first-rate education and encouraged Richard to consider West Point or the Naval Academy. After high school, he applied for a congressional appointment to West Point, ultimately, securing a place in 1951 as a "plebe" with the Class of 1955. Richard Secord graduated in the top-third of his class and Capt Alexander Haig administered the oath of office and pinned on his second lieutenant bars making Richard Secord an Air Force officer.

Young Secord spent hours droning around in his father's Aeronca and had received a ride in a jet trainer during a field trip to Eglin AFB, FL. In those days, the US Air Force Academy didn't exist (the US Air Force Academy graduated its first class in 1959), so the Air Force got its regular officers from the other Service academies.

Second Lieutenant Secord began flight school in Marianna, FL in Piper Cubs and later the T-6G Texan doing well and was selected for fighter training. He flew the T-28 and then the T-33 at Greenville AFB in Mississippi and was awarded his wings in the summer of 1956. His first assignment to fly the F-86 Sabre, the "famous MIG-killer" of the Korean war, was derailed because the country's emphasis, at the time, was on the Strategic Air Command's bombers and tanker fleets. Several wings of tactical fighters were getting mothballed, so instead he went to Air Training Command as an instructor pilot in the T-33 at Laredo AFB in Texas.

The instructor assignment was cut short when he received orders to the University of Oklahoma to study for a masters of arts degree in English literature because the Air Force wanted to staff the new Air Force Academy with some Service academy graduates to teach the young cadets. Nearby Tinker AFB was home to Oklahoma City Air Material Area and 1Lt Secord was able to continue maintaining flying status in the T-33, F-86, and also got some multi-engined time in the C-54 and the C-97.

While he was going through the masters program, he was given the opportunity to volunteer for a temporary duty assignment in the top secret program called Project JUNGLE JIM. The invitation included the caveat, "May include combat." Secord quickly raised his hand to volunteer.

The program required psychological screening to determine a volunteer's suitability for special operations, so he went to Lackland AFB TX and met several hundred other volunteers, some of whom became his lifelong friends. The selected group of volunteers spent several weeks in an intense survival school program in the High Sierras evading mock captors, trying to stay warm, and finding something to eat. Secord knew from his time at West Point that these ordeals were designed to winnow out the weak. A few weeks later the group made its way to Hurlburt Field.

Hurlburt Field in the early 1960s was home to the 4400th Combat CrewTraining Squadron, which back then had a veritable museum of vintage aircraft with many in the Hurlburt Field Air Park today. Secord was assigned to the 'strike section', which flew World War II era A-26s and AT-28Bs. The AT-28Bs were similar to the T-28 he flew in flight school, but had guns, ordnance stations, and a more powerful 1425 horsepower engine.

The airlift section had 40 pilots and navigators and flew C-47 "Goony Birds" and other utility aircraft, like the UC-10, that had short takeoff and landing capabilities. All the aircraft were painted a dull gray with very few markings on them, unlike other Air Force aircraft.

Col Ben King was the commander of the 4400th at the time. King and the instructors were all highly qualified, mostly from the Second World War and Korea. Secord and the strike section practiced air-to-ground gunnery and a variety of low-level tactics over the Florida and Alabama swamps and target ranges, becoming equally proficient in dropping ordnance in the daytime or at night.

RICHARD V. SECORD

ter Pilot ... Air Commando

The US Special Operations Command Medal was introduced in 1994 to recognize individuals for outstanding contributions to, and in support of, special operations. Major General Secord was awarded this honor in 2007 for service and accomplishments as a pilot and Air Advisor during the war in Southeast Asia in 1962, assisting the Iranian government in suppressing a Russian-backed Kurdish insurrection in 1964-1965, and later supporting the CIA from 1966-1968. Further, he coordinated a capability demonstration, deployment, and further funding of the AC-130 gunship in 1969. General Secord who also served as Deputy Joint Task Force Commander for a follow-on rescue attempt of hostages in Iran (1980), where, through his personal tenacity, had most of the SOF aircraft modified with much needed defensive equipment and secure satellite communications systems.

Three months into training the unit was given orders to deploy under the code name Detachment Two Alpha, to Bien Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam, not later than 1 March 1962. The mission was to assist the South Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) and the army in the suppressing a North Vietnamese-sponsored insurgency group known as the Viet Cong. The strategic objective was to assist the South in putting down the pro-communist insurrection and drive the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) back north across the border.

Captain Secord had nearly 2,000 hours flying time and was the junior officer in the unit, giving one a sense of experience in Detachment Two Alpha. Major Robert Allison was the operations officer and a great pilot. Capt Tom Temple was an expert dive-bomber who amazed even the World War II veterans. Both Allison and Temple flew P-51 Mustangs over Hitler's Europe and their experience in prop-planes was evident.

Officially, the unit wasn't stationed anywhere near Vietnam. The cover story for Detachment Two Alpha was they were 'instructors' for the VNAF pilots. The Americans didn't wear name tags, unit patches, or rank; just dog tags. The men also gave up their Geneva Convention cards, which every serviceman carries to show he was entitled to humane treatment as a POW. The Vietnamese pilots, on the other hand, usually flew in impressive uniforms with all the ropes and whistles of a Lord Mountbatten or Idi Amin. Regardless, the most important lesson given to the "students" was to keep their hands off the flight controls when the Americans were flying.

In the early days, the unit did not keep track of flying hours and missions. Gen Curtis LeMay, the Air Force Chief of Staff, made a visit and stopped in front of Captain Secord who promptly rendered LeMay a crisp West Point salute. LeMay returned the salute like a man in shock and asked Secord how many missions he had flown, perhaps suspecting battle fatigue. Captain Secord replied, "I don't know, sir." General LeMay responded, "What do you mean you don't know…did you just report for duty?" Secord replied,"No sir, I've been here two months and we aren't permitted to log them, so they all kind of run together after a while—sir." LeMay's staff was unhappy, but Secord felt he owed

Gen Curtis LeMay and Capt Richard Secord. (Photo courtesy of USAF)

the general a truthful answer. LeMay didn't answer and continued with his inspection, but a few days later the unit received an order to start logging all the missions and try to recreate all the past missions.

After a short-time, Secord was promoted to flight commander and began to lead strike missions providing air support for the infantry. Each mission was controlled by forward air controllers (FAC). The unit flew missions even during the monsoon season, which didn't really affect them because they flew between the bands of clouds and rain. Night time missions were a double edged sword—it was difficult for the enemy to see the fighters, but there was always the terrain to worry about. The C-47s dropped parachute flares, which effectively blinded the enemy, but when the pilots pulled up out of the light, they flew into the blackness of the night.

Secord finished his first tour in Vietnam in September 1962 and returned to the US. He was replaced by a captain who had a lot less fighter time. Secord urged him to, "Be cautious, learn the terrain, and master the tricks of the trade before you get too aggressive." Sadly, a few days later the pilot was killed in action. This was a shock to Secord and foretold of things to come. By 1964 the strike section would lose over 22 men, about the same number of Air Commandos they started with in 1961.

Captain Secord stayed at Hurlburt Field until 1965, but had multiple temporary duty assignments to southeast Asia and other places. In February of 1963, he deployed to the rugged mountains of northwest Iran, which was home to the Kurdish people and the site of a top-secret war that few Americans have ever read about.

The Kurds are an independent-minded people with a warrior tradition going back to antiquity with their ancestral homeland overlapping into Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. One attempt at Kurdish independence was instigated by the Soviet Union and Secord went to assist the young Shah in helping secure the Iranian border. Back in the 60s and 70s, the US was friendly with the government of Iran because of its strategic location. This was the first of several assignments Secord would have to Iran, which became familiar territory for him throughout his career.

The deployed team consisted of an 80-man Army Special Forces (SF) contingent and two Air Force officers, Captain Secord and Maj Arnie Tillman. Tillman had experience with SF, but Secord had more recent combat experience. Tillman was a B-17 pilot who had been shot down over Russia during the Second World War and was repatriated through Tehran.

The team arrived in Iran in March 1963, in the dead of winter. They weren't issued winter clothing and they slept in the basement of the Military Assistance & Advisory Group (MAAG) compound, which was like a palace compared to the pup tents on ice ledges in the field.

When the team got to the front they found four heavy infantry divisions under an Iranian general bogged down not only by the weather and tough terrain, but also a lack of discipline, disorganization, poor communications, logistics,

Capt Secord in the cockpit of an AT-28. (Photo courtesy of USAF)

training, and inappropriate tactics. The US team's first goal was to help the Iranians seal the Kurdish border between Iraq and Iran by helping them become a more effective fighting force. The advisors went to work and after the training, the US advisors went into the field with the Iranians as observers

and coaches critiquing them afterward bringing back information for the US and Iranian intelligence teams.

Secord's air contingent had a different task. The Kurdish insurrection was a real threat to the Shah, but the whole theater was treated like a leper colony. Fighting guerrillas wasn't glorious and those who supported the operation didn't want to get too involved. Secord dealt with a junkyard air force of a dozen C-47s and 15 T-6Gs trainers that didn't have weapons hard-points. They operated from a gravel strip manned mostly by misfits and malcontents from the Iranian air force (IAF). The real IAF flew F-86Fs at bases just beyond a comfortable combat radius from the scene of action.

The good news was the foundation of the 'air campaign' was the local pilots who knew their equipment and were competent military pilots. Secord had the Iranians rig the T-6s with 30 caliber machine gun pods and racks of Zuni rockets for an air-strike capability and helped them build sound air-to-ground tactics. The real value of these aircraft was the ability to FAC and get artillery on target, which gave a psychological boost to the Iranians on the ground seeing their aircraft overhead.

With six months of work, the training began bearing fruit. There were no big decisive battles, but the Iranians fought numerous firefights and ambushes, generally coming out on top and by the fall of 1963, the threat to the Shah's government evaporated. Secord was invited back to Iran in 1964 and again in 1965 to help improve other Iranian joint operational capabilities.

At the same time, Col Heinie Aderholt took command of the wing at Hurlburt. He was a superb officer, gutsy pilot, and experienced combat leader. Heinie flew B-17s and C-47s in the Second World War, special operations aircraft in Korea, and served on loan to the CIA in Europe earlier in his career. He was a very charismatic leader and his men loved him.

Secord returned to Hurlburt Field in March 1965 and helped train replacements for the ongoing operations in Vietnam. Aderholt was subsequently transferred to Southeast Asia to take command of the 56th Air Commando Wing at Nakon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, but before he left he recommended Major Secord for Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

As mentioned, Aderholt previously served with the CIA in the late 1950s and early 60s. The CIA fills positions that are not normally staffed for with people from other government services. The war in Southeast Asia was expanding and there were more positions than the CIA could fill. One of these positions came down to Secord while finishing ACSC and he jumped at the opportunity. Major Secord returned to Vietnam as an air operations officer at the CIA station in Saigon.

At first, Secord was tasked with helping manage Air America's fleet of aircraft in routine "trash hauling" missions. Air America was a proprietary airline used by the CIA. Major Secord also had the tedious job of coordinating VIP itineraries. In his mind, this was not what a West Point trained, veteran combat pilot was supposed to be doing. After six weeks, he went to his boss and told him that he wanted a transfer to where the real action was and after some more wrangling a cable came in from CIA headquarters ordering Secord to report to CIA Station Vientiane, Laos. His boss pushed back with his own cable, but the CIA's reply was: Referenced cable was not a request, but directive in nature.

Excited about the new job, Secord grabbed the first flight to Udorn AB in Thailand. Udorn AB, was home to the 7/13th AF headquarters, the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, and also a 1st Air Commando Wing detachment under code name WATERPUMP with 70 AT-28s.

Secord met a CIA staff officer, Bob Blake, an AF Academy graduate who left the service for a full time job with the CIA. Blake ran the tactical air operations for Laos. Some historians and analysts made the operations in Laos out to be a sideshow to Vietnam, but there were nearly 80,000 troops, mostly tribesmen, on the ground in Laos and Secord knew it was a real war played for high stakes.

Richard Secord, standing in the background on the right, served as liaison officer and air advisor to the CIA in South East Asia from 1966 to 1968, a period of intense combat operations, including the Tet Offense. (Photo courtesy of USAF)

Richard Secord was an air advisor in Laos until 1968. During the time he flew another 285 combat missions while serving in Southeast Asia. He returned to the Eglin AFB in September 1968, and was assigned to the AF Special Operations Force, under Tactical Air Command (TAC) as assistant deputy chief of staff and began work training aircrews for the kind of missions he had just left behind in the field.

Secord was soon promoted to lieutenant colonel and given command of the the 603rd Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, a brand new unit equipped with A-37B jets. These jets had the same engines as the T-38s, without afterburner, but flew more like a prop-driven fighter, like the A-1 and AT-28s.

In 1971, Secord attended Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Graduating a ten months later, he went to the Pentagon as a staff assistant in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). This was out of the ordinary

A KC-97 refulels an A-37 Dragonfly flown by Secord (Photo courtesy of Jim Ifland)

because usually first-time staff officers spent two years on the Air Staff before going over to OSD. He worked as the desk officer for issues concerning Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam under the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ISA).

In the new job, Colonel Secord, prepared policy and analysis papers for the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF), Melvin Laird. This was mid-1972 and the US was committed to the policy of 'Vietnamization,' code for America's unilateral withdrawal from Vietnam. Peace was being negotiated in Paris and the government in Hanoi was committed, but in its own way by keeping up the military pressure up because they felt victory was close at hand. By March 1972 , the NVA crossed the demilitarized zone and captured Quang Tri in the north. President Nixon responded with the Linebacker I air offensive where B-52s bombed targets over the lower reaches of North Vietnam. The sudden ramp-up of violence sobered the North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris and they drew up a cease fire plan. However, the president of South Vietnam rejected the plan and many people in the Pentagon were wary as well. Colonel Secord offered his superiors that the agreement had no penalties for North Vietnamese violations and no punitive consequences existed in case of a later invasion of the south.

In October, Secord's team was asked to prepare a talking paper that outlined plans to widely expand the air war, to be delivered by Laird to the President. The group was a proponent for the expanded use of the B-52s. Unfortunately, the Joint Chiefs didn't like the proposal, especially the Air Force. It was a classic Catch-22 situation. The North Vietnamese had sophisticated Soviet SA-2s and if the B-52s used their electronic counter-measures equipment to protect themselves against the SA-2s, it would also tip off the Soviets that the US had the capability.

In mid-December, Secord was told to dust off the plan; the SECDEF and President decided, due to the stalled Paris peace talks, they would try it. Secord's team drafted the initial order, "Commencing on 18 December and continue until further directed, you will make maximum effort utilizing all assets currently assigned, including B-52s and naval aircraft, to attack the following targets, which are validated for strike within 48-hour period herewith. Further orders to follow."

Some senior officers on the staff had trouble with the meaning of 'maximum effort.' Secord explained, "Sir, it means, Engage the enemy with both hands, kick him in the ass, and get this damned war over with…"

As history has been written, Linebacker II or the "Twelve Days of Christmas" bombing campaign worked and Hanoi sued for peace. The US lost multiple B-52s and other aircraft, but the war was over with the Paris Peace Treaty signed in January 1973, followed by the rapid release of American POWs, some held for eight years.

In the spring of 1973, the OSD staff was being downsized and Colonel Secord interviewed for a job in the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA). DSAA is a little known agency that was responsible for implementing America's arms transfers to over 70 countries worldwide. During that time, Secord helped resupply the Israelis during the 1973 Yom Kippur War with badly needed ordnance, allowing the Israeli Defense Force to ultimately prevail.

Secord was sent to Iran with two 3-star generals to conduct a low key investigation of a program called Project Peace Crown, a multi-million dollar, developmental air-defense system for the Shah that had run into unexpected troubles. The team helped smooth the feathers of the Iranians and the contractors to keep the program going.

In March 1975, Colonel Secord was selected as the deputy commander for operations with the 29th Flying Training Wing at Craig AFB AL. The wing flew T-37s and T-38s and he flew both aircraft types, regularly. Several months later, the wing commander took emergency leave and left Colonel Secord temporally in command and faced with a short-notice IG inspection on the base.

As the IG team settled in, Colonel Secord was told to report to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General David Jones, the next day, because he was being considered for a high-level assignment in Iran. The position in the Air Force

MAAG was a brigadier general's billet and ten days later the Chairman picked Secord for the job.

In September 1975, Secord returned to Iran as the Chief, Air Force Section, Military Assistance Advisory Group and was the chief advisor to the commander of the Iranian air force. He managed all the Air Force programs for Iran, which were considerable, as well as some Army and Navy security assistance programs.

After three tough, but productive years, General Secord departed Iran. It was bittersweet after working with the Iranians at the highest levels and in close cooperation with the Near East intelligence community developing many friends. While there he worked a multitude of programs such as I-Hawk missile project and the equipment for the Iranian F-14s. The job was made easier because of the rapport he had with the many Iranian officers he met on previous assignments. By the fall of 1978, the Shah was beginning to have problems with his health and with religious factions when the name Ayatollah Khomeini first came to the fore, sadly it wouldn't be the last.

Secord returned to the US in July 1978 and was appointed director of military assistance and sales, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics and Engineering at Headquarters Air Force. He and his staff managed several hundred billion dollars worth of defense programs in 60 different countries. In those years, all total the USAF international programs were comparable to the sales volumes of General Motors and Ford combined… exceeding the gross national product of many countries. One of the main duties was to look into each contract submission and disassemble the data to determine reasonableness and what the program should cost.

In 1979, after President Carter negotiated the Camp David Peace Accord between Egypt and Israel. Secord was sent to Cairo to assist the Egyptian high command allocate its first US foreign military sales credits. This was a tangible reward for President Sadat doing the right thing by settling some old disputes with Israel. The highest priority was getting the first F-4 squadron in place and ready to fly.

Late in the Carter administration, General Secord was tasked to work with the Saudis on a planned $7 billion sale of the several AWACS aircraft. There were many sides to the issue, but probably the most sensitive one was the reaction of the Israelis and pro-Israel lobby in the US. Maj Gen Jim Ahmann and Secord met with Prince Bandar, the Saudi air attache and future ambassador to the US, to work out the language and other particulars of the deal. It was a delicate process just before the 1980 election because they didn't know what a possible new administration might think about the terms or even the willingness to sell the systems to Saudi Arabia.

Just after President Reagan's inauguration in January 1981, the Air Force Chief of Staff told General Secord, he was being transferred to OSD under the new Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, because of his familiarity with the AWACS program. This was a surprise because acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near East, Africa, and South Asia was normally a political appointment and it never had an active duty military officer in that seat. In April 1981, the temporary assignment was made permanent and as such, General Secord held two US government commissions: one as an active duty officer and the other as a political appointee.

Major General Secord jumped at the opportunity and was excited to blaze a new trail. Secord's direct boss was Bing West, the Assistant Secretary of Defense-ISA, but on the issue of working with the Saudis and Israelis, Secord reported directly to Caspar Weinberger and his deputy, Frank Carlucci. There were many political and legislative issues with the AWACS sale, far too many to discuss in this work, but Secord's early respect for Weinberger grew to admiration because of his strong principles and willingness to stand behind them. Ultimately, after many arguments and bruised egos, the AWACS sale passed the Senate, 52-48 in October 1981.

Leroy 'Swede' Svendsen (far left) and Richard Secord (third from the left) attend a social function. (Photo courtesy of Richard Secord)

General Secord's last campaign in uniform came in April 1983, when he led an effort to sell F-16s to Pakistan. The deal raised a lot of ire on multiple fronts, including the Air Force because of the AN/ALR-69 radar warning receiver on the F-16s. The US used the same equipment and there was much back and forth about giving away secrets. After weeks of handwringing and appearances before a congressional committee, General Secord informed the committee that

the same system microprocessor used for the ALR-69 was already a part of the ground-based intercept radar previously sold to Pakistan.

General Secord made multiple visits to Congress to provide testimony on the deal. The last visit was particularly acrimonious and finally Secord informed the chairman of the hearings, "These hearings are at an end" and walked out without looking back. Ultimately, F-16s were sold to Pakistan.

Major General Richard V. Secord's retirement ceremony was held in May 1983, in the Secretary of Defense's conference room, officiated by Caspar Weinberger himself. The Secretary commended General Secord for his tireless efforts and presented him with his second Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the highest peacetime award the department can offer a military man. General Secord's first DDSM was authorized by President Reagan for, "Service above and beyond the strict call of duty" during the aforementioned AWACS battle. When the small quiet ceremony was finished, General Richard Secord's 32 years in uniform quietly came to an end.

After his business career, General Secord also made huge contributions in his various roles in the Air Commando Association. In 1969, then Colonel Aderholt stood up the ACA. Aderholt and Secord's careers intersected several

Both Generals Aderholt and Secord sign prints at the ACA building in 2008. (Photo by ACA)

times from the early 1960s on and as a result, General Secord became a very close confidant to Heinie and even served as the executor of his will.

In July of 2010, General Secord was the Vice President of the organization and when the president, CMSgt Chuck Keeler, suddenly passed away, General Secord stepped in to become the president of the ACA serving in that role until 2014. At that point, General Secord was voted to be the first Chairman of the Board as the association continued to evolve and move forward with the times.

In his role as president and later, chairman of the board, General Secord led the organization through one of its most turbulent times. It was during this period that the ACA transformed itself from a primarily fraternal organization to one that truly serves Air Commandos and their families past, present, and future. As the Association started this reinvention there were many long-time, senior members that were not keen to see the changes. General Secord had the bona fides as one of the original members to stave off even the most ardent nay sayers and moved the Association forward. It was during this period that ACA published the first, now highly renowned, *Air Commando Journal*, and even more importantly, established the philanthropic arm of the ACA in the form of the Air Commando Foundation. The Foundation helps Air Commandos, past and present,

Mrs JoAnn Secord and Richard Secord attend an ACA holiday function. (Photo by Scott Photo Works)

financially in times of great stress and need. Further, the ACA actively reached out and embraced the active duty Air Commandos with various award and recognition programs, thus ensuring that ACA survived and took a forward looking posture as well as honoring the past. For his leadership during the transition forward, the ACA and all Air Commandos owe General Secord a huge debt of gratitude.

Note: the source for this article is, *Honored and Betrayed* by Richard V. Secord with Charles J. Wurts (Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1992). A large portion of the text is used and/or excerpted from the book in order to accurately detail General Secord's military career. I highly recommend the book to those interested for more in-depth detail of the general's military and business careers.

About the author: Colonel Harmon retired from the USAF in 2010 after 30 years of service. He held several command positions in operations and training, and served three tours as the Director, Special Operations Liaison Element in Central Command's Combined Air Operations Center during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

OPERATION ATLAS RESPONSE

A local man waits for the signal from SSgt Greg Sanford, an Aerial Gunner assigned to the 56th Rescue Squadron at Keflavik, Iceland, to help unload tents for the people in the town of Machanga, south of Beira, Mozambique. (Photo by TSgt Cary Humphries)

By Mike Russell, Colonel, USAF (Retired)

Author's Note: This article was composed from data and events recorded in the United States Special Operations Command study titled Special Operations Forces in Operation ATLAS RESPONSE, Flood Relief in Mozambique, March 2000.

THE BEGINNING

During late February and early March 2000, two tropical cyclones, Connie and Eline, dumped heavy rain on southeast Africa, causing extensive flooding that left approximately one million people homeless. In Mozambique, one of the hardest hit countries, hundreds of thousands of residents fled their homes and sought refuge on high ground. Dramatic news footage showed desperate flood victims huddling on roofs and clinging to the tops of trees. Germany, France, Britain, Spain, Portugal, Malawi, and the Netherlands responded with a multinational humanitarian relief effort. Working in concert with those nations, the United States sent Joint Task Force-ATLAS RESPONSE (JTF-AR) to provide assistance to the devastated region. At the end of the mission, the United States had delivered more than 1.5 million pounds of humanitarian relief supplies and cargo and had moved more than 1,100 aid workers, medical personnel, assessment team members, US military, and other passengers as part of the international relief effort.

JTF-AR included conventional military as well as special operations forces (SOF). Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) provided the SOF who were organized into the Joint Special Operations Task Force-ATLAS RESPONSE (JSOTF-AR). JSOTF-AR included a headquarters, a special operations communication element (SOCE), a joint special operations air component (JSOAC), and civil affairs (CA) personnel who worked in the two civil-military operations centers (CMOC). The JSOTF integrated into the JTF structure, enabling SOF to make a

number of contributions that were critical to the success of the US humanitarian efforts in Mozambique, to include: SOCEUR CA personnel who were well versed in assessment missions and had experience working with the various non-governmental organizations (NGO), private volunteer organizations (PVO), and international organizations (IO)

US ambassador to Mozambique, Brian Curran, left, and USAF Maj Gen Joe Wehrle, commander of Joint Task Force Operation Atlas Response, discuss the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies with Colonel Joachim Wundrak, the head of the German contingent. (Photo by TSgt Cary Humphries)

who had already been providing relief before JTF-AR arrived. The JSOTF also provided air-refuelable helicopters and MC-130P Combat Shadow tankers that permitted the JSOTF to reach outlying areas beyond the range of non-refuelable helicopters, a reliable long-haul theater deployable communications system (TDC) that ultimately formed the backbone of the JTF's communications capability, and SOF intelligence resources to augment JTF capabilities. By integrating special operations aircraft into the surveys of flooded and damaged areas, intelligence personnel were able to take high quality digital photographs of flooded and damaged areas from the low flying special operations aircraft which significantly increased both the quantity and quality of intelligence products for the JTF.

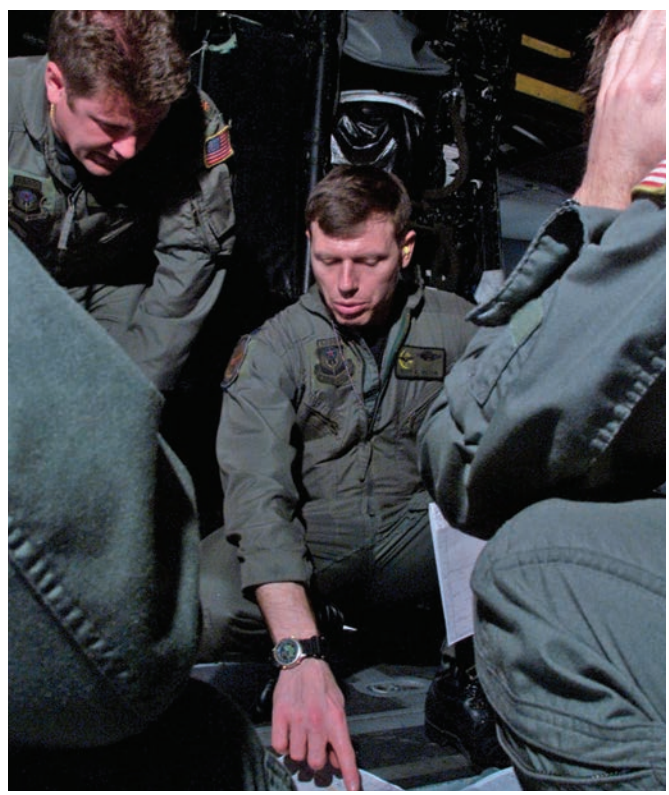
THE PLANNING

On 7 February, US Ambassador to Mozambique, Brian Curran, declared a disaster and, on 15 February, Secretary of Defense William Cohen visited the area and promised to send aid, albeit unspecified at that time.

Anticipating a formal tasking, USEUCOM directed United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) to deploy a humanitarian assistance survey team (HAST) to the disaster region, conduct an assessment of the emergency, establish a US military presence, and make recommendations to the Commander in Chief European Command (CINCEUR) regarding further actions. Maj Gen Joseph Wehrle, 3rd Air Force (AF) Commander, put Lt Col Steven Dreyer in charge of the HAST which deployed to Mozambique on 17 February. Surprisingly, the SOCEUR CA director, Maj Greg Mehall, had to lobby for positions on the HAST. Mehall was sufficiently persuasive and he and another SOCEUR CA soldier deployed with the HAST, arriving in Maputo, Mozambique, the next day.

When the HAST toured the hardest hit areas to the north, they found washed out roads, but saw no flooding or any significant damage to the infrastructure. The HAST concluded that floodwaters had started to subside, and with the help of the international relief organizations already on site the country seemed to be returning back to normal. Dreyer recommended no further action was needed.

That changed on 22 February when Cyclone Eline made landfall. Rainfall from Eline swelled rivers to as much as 26 feet above normal and left an additional 23,000 people homeless. At the same time, unrelenting rain in Zimbabwe and South Africa forced water releases from several stressed Mozambican dams, which exacerbated the flooding and prompted the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)



Commander of the 67th SOS, RAF Mildenhall, Lt Col Ross Victor, reviews the day's mission with his MC-130P Shadow crew before departing from AFB Hoedspruit, South Africa, where they are deployed in support of Operation ATLAS RESPONSE. (Photo by TSgt Cary Humphries)

to recommend the United States take action.

On 28 February, President Clinton pledged $1,000,000 through USAID to support "aircraft for critical search and rescue (SAR) operations and the delivery of relief supplies." However, on 1 March, he committed additional resources, including a joint task force and specifically mentioned special operations forces, including MH-53 helicopters, as well as Green Berets and Navy SEALS.

On 3 March 2000, the Joint Staff issued an execute order that included a SOF command element, up to six MH-53s, three MC-130Ps, three MC-130Hs, and two rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIB). USEUCOM established JTF-AR and appointed Maj Gen Joseph Wehrle as the JTF-AR Commander. I was the SOCEUR Deputy Commander at the time and was selected to command the JSOTF. Lt Col Raymond Kruelskie, SOCEUR Deputy J3, would serve as my deputy.

Believing the MH-53s to be the wrong assets for the mission due to their strong rotor downwash and the extremely long logistic pipeline to South Africa, I recommended either Air Force Rescue HH-60s or Army 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) MH-60s be deployed from the United States instead. However, because the President had specifically mentioned MH-53s in his press briefing, there was extreme reluctance among the leadership to exclude them. Fortuitously, three HH-60 Rescue helicopters, crews, and maintenance personnel were in the process of redeploying from Operation NORTHERN WATCH in Turkey. Acting quickly, USEUCOM was able to stop the HH-60 redeployment and redirect the Rescue assets to support JTF-AR. Subsequently, Maj Gen Wehrle decided to use both the MH-53s and HH-60s.

Ultimately, the JSOTF-AR would consist of a command element and SOCE from SOCEUR, three MH-53 Pave Lows, two MC-130P Combat Shadows, and pararescue specialists (PJ) and combat controllers (CCT) from the 352nd Special Operations Group (SOG) at RAF Mildenhall, UK, as well as three HH-60G Pave Hawks from the 41st Rescue Squadron (RQS) at Moody AFB, Georgia that would fall under the tactical control (TACON) of the JSOTF-AR.

THE DEPLOYMENT

Because of airfield conditions in the affected area, the late US response, and the large size of the deployment, Hoedspruit, South Africa, across the southwestern border of Mozambique, was chosen as the JTF-AR intermediate staging base (ISB). On 4 March, after considerable diplomatic wrangling, approval to use Hoedspruit was obtained from South Africa and the deployment began. The HAST, led by Lt Col Dreyer split into three groups: Dreyer took his team to Hoedspruit, Major Mehall stayed with his team at Maputo, and Major John Burns took his team to Biera, Mozambique, where the JSOTF-AR would bed down. There, the individual teams coordinated for lodging, workspace, warehouse space, transportation, and fuel. Once the JTF arrived, the HASTs folded into the JTF and JSOTF as CMOCs where they provided liaison between JTF-AR, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), and the government of Mozambique.

Maj Gen Wehrle and his core staff arrived at Hoedspruit on 6 March. The next day he took a small staff to Maputo to establish a JTF HQ there, but left the bulk of the JTF-AR at Hoedspruit. Colonel Russell also arrived on 6 March and immediately began the process of preparing to move the JSOTF forward to Biera as soon as the airport assessment was completed and airlift could be arranged. Two C-5s carrying the HH-60s, aircrews, maintenance, and support personnel and equipment arrived at Hoedspruit on 7 and 8 March. The last C-5, carrying the MH-53s, arrived on 11 March. By the time the aircraft arrived in theater, the mission focus had changed from rescue to humanitarian relief.

Due mainly to logistical considerations, it was decided that the MH-53s and MC-130Ps would base out of Hoedspruit where they would support the southern region of Mozambique while the HH-60s would move forward to Biera

with the JSOTF to support the northern region.

The move to Biera, originally planned for early on 8 March was delayed by C-130 maintenance problems and crew duty day restrictions. Thus, the JSOTF did not arrive at Biera until the evening of 8 March. With the airport and relief operations at Biera in the process of shutting down for the day, Colonel Russell set up communications with the JTF, secured the JSOTF equipment, and then met with his JSOTF staff to prioritize tasks for the next day before bedding down for the night. The HAST that had moved to Biera earlier had done a great job of securing quarters, transportation, and work space which enabled the JSOTF to hit the ground running very early the next day, to set up the JSOTF, prepare for the HH-60s arrival, coordinate with the wide variety of foreign military and humanitarian support organizations, and figure out how to meld into the existing air asset allocation process. With multiple military and civilian organizations from different countries all contributing,

General Wehrle did not want it to appear that the Americans were taking over the flying operations. Therefore, he asked us to "tread lightly" in our dealings with the other organizations.

With so much to be done and a hard arrival time for the HH-60s amidst a media frenzy, the next day proved to be hectic. The CMOC and the Contingency Response Air Mobility Squadron that arrived earlier in the operation, had already established contacts with nearly all the

An undentified HH-60G planner, Lt Col Corby Martin, Col John Zahrt at Biera Airport. (USAF photo)

relevant players at Biera. This allowed me to quickly begin coordination with relief participants while the JSOTF staff and SOCE set up their equipment and organized the workspace to be ready to conduct operations. With just five minutes to spare until the announced HH-60 arrival time, the JSOTF-AR was fully operational. The HH-60s were on initial approach and I, SGM Phil Clayton, and Maj Giles Kyser from the JSOTF J3 were physically pushing civilian aircraft out of the designated HH-60 parking area to make room for the arriving helicopters.

Keeping in mind that President Clinton had specifically mentioned Green Berets during his press briefing, I designated LTC Burt Brasher, the SOCEUR Legal Advisor and also a Special Forces officer, to be my Public Affairs Officer. When the HH-60s arrived, LTC Brasher was standing in front of the CNN and international news cameras wearing his green beret and tactfully keeping that part of the President's promise.

The decision to keep the MH-53s and MC-130s at Hoedspruit, drove the requirement to split the JSOTF-AR into two elements: the JSOTF HQ at Beira and a special operation liaison element (SOLE) with the JTF staff at Hoedspruit. Colonel Kruelskie headed up the SOLE while Col John Zahrt, the 352nd Special Operations Group (SOG) commander, became the JSOAC commander, exercising operational control of all SOF air assets and TACON of the HH-60s. Kruelkskie and Zahrt worked closely together. They attended all meetings with the JTF-AR staff as well as the twice daily teleconferences with General Wehrle.

Two Navy planners from Naval Special Warfare Unit Two also deployed as part of the JSOTF to determine if Naval Special Warfare assets were required for rescue operations in the flooded riverine areas. They determined that there was no requirement and were released to return to Germany, however, this initial deployment of a couple SEALs kept the rest of the President's promise to deploy Green Berets and Navy SEALs.

THE OPERATIONS

While the JSOTF staff was setting up at the Beira, I met with key personnel from the various relief organizations and foreign militaries to figure out the best way for the JSOTF to be helpful and work with their system. Peter Carrington, a British civilian from the World Food Program, wanted to turn the operation over to the United States as soon as possible, but in keeping with General Wehrle's guidance, I demurred. Instead, I emphasized that the US intended to augment and support the relief system already in place.

Carrington put the JSOTF in touch with a Malawian officer, Maj Masamba, who had been a key player from the beginning of the emergency response operation. He had coordinated early relief efforts after the disaster and because of his personal rescue efforts, was regarded as something of a hero. Masamba organized regular meetings where NGOs, PVOs, and IOs with operational needs could connect with

MH-53J build up. (USAF photo)

aircraft owners and operators to get relief supplies to needy areas. Lt Col Corby Martin, the JSOAC representative within the JSOTF, worked closely with Masamba to build an effective, cooperative operation. With Maj Masamba's assistance, Colonel Martin procured a load of corn for delivery to a flood damaged area as soon as the HH-60s arrived. Within hours of touchdown, the helicopters were in the air again, delivering relief supplies to northern regions of Mozambique. JSOTF-AR was open for business!

On 10 and 11 March, the MH-53s finally arrived at the ISB and, once built up, immediately started flying missions in support of the southern Mozambique relief effort. The Combat Shadows refueled the helicopters in-flight, which made extended flights to outlying areas possible and also

SPECIAL OPERATIONS WARRIOR FOUNDATION

In 1980, during Operation Eagle Claw, a courageous, but failed, attempt was made to rescue 52 Americans held hostage in Iran. On that tragic day, eight Special Operations Forces lost their lives, leaving behind 17 children.

In memory, an immediate enduring battlefield promise was made by their teammates to take care of those and subsequent surviving children by providing full educations, and additional educational opportunities, "cradle to career" (preschool – college), to the surviving children of Special Operations Forces lost in the line of duty. The feeling then was, and will continue to be, it is the least we can do to honor those who made, and unfortunately will make, the ultimate sacrifice.

In 2020, Special Operations Warrior Foundation enhanced eligibility to include children of all Medal of Honor Recipients. SOWF continues to provide financial assistance to severely wounded, ill, and injured Special Operations Personnel.

Honoring the fallen by taking care of their children... to ensure future happiness through academic success... it's the least we can do.

Your Gift Encompasses:

Scholarship support, including tuition, books, fees, room and board, transportation and associated miscellaneous expenses at the student's school of choice.

Our funded college educations and additional educational opportunities, "cradle to career," include:

- Preschool programs for children ages 2 – 5 (up to $8,000 per year)
- Private school tuition assistance (up to $5,000 per student, per year, kindergarten - 12th grade)
- Educational programs specifically designed for students with disabilities
- Unlimited private tutoring for students of all ages (kindergarten through college graduation)
- Reimbursement for home school costs
- Access to online tools for ACT/SAT test preparation
- High school summer academic, leadership, & professional programs
- College planning conference (EPIC) hosted by SOWF for high school students
- Access to online college planning platform, College Success Academy
- College to Career transition program, including funds available for internship relocation and an opportunity to study abroad

To learn more, visit:

specialops.org

If you, or someone you know, may be eligible for our programs, please email us at: scholarships@specialops.org

Contact Us

PO Box 89367
Tampa, FL 33689

warrior@specialops.org
(813) 805-9400

relieved the pressure on fuel supplies in Mozambique. Between aerial refueling and delivery operations, the Pave Lows, Pave Hawks, and Combat Shadows also served as real time reconnaissance platforms by taking digital photos of the region. Images provided by the MC-130Ps were designated LOR image for "Lieutenant on a Rope," referring to the intelligence specialists that took the photos from an open aircraft doorway while secured with a gunner's harness. The JSOTF's digital imagery proved to be clearer than that of the Keen Sage OC-130 photo reconnaissance aircraft and also provided a below-the-clouds capability. As ATLAS RESPONSE unfolded, 50 percent or more of the JTF's aerial survey photos came from JSOAC personnel taking pictures from helicopters and MC-130Ps.

By 11 March, Operation ATLAS RESPONSE was in full swing. With communications support provided by the TDC, the headquarters staff managed the JSOTF-AR from the second floor of the Beira air terminal. The three HH-60s operated out of Beira, the three MH-53s from Hoedspruit used Maputo as a staging area, and the MC-130Ps provided fuel from Hoedspruit for all the USAF helicopters. Conventional C-130s staged relief supplies among the three airfields while the Keen Sage OC-130s collected survey and assessment images. General Wehrle controlled the missions from his headquarters at Maputo where the main CMOC was also located. The Maputo and Beira CMOCs operated independently, and other than exchanging daily SITREPs, contact between the two was minimal.

When the JSOTF arrived at Beira we found more than 50 NGOs, PVOs, and IOs competing for cargo space on aircraft from five nations. Even though the NGOs had an infrastructure in place, the relief efforts were not well synchronized. We had trouble with relief teams not showing up on time, incomplete cargo loads, and inefficient ground loading operations. My direction to the staff and CMOC was to the point, "Get these people organized and get the helicopters full." I needed the CA soldiers to improve the efficiency of the relief effort by "supporting and augmenting'' the civilian agencies, but not by taking over." To that end, the CA team worked to transform the CMOC into a civilian-run disaster response cell. They established daily meetings where the UNDAC-led civilian groups would prioritize NGO, PVO, and IO requirements and coordinate missions with the air cell. With the civilians making the decisions, the JSOTF did not have to decide which relief agencies would get airlift and, therefore, could concentrate on making operations more efficient. Aircrews also shared information they gathered on missions, such as which areas appeared to have urgent needs and which appeared to have surplus relief supplies.

To increase the efficiency of air operations, the JSOTF had to resolve a cultural difference regarding schedules. Whereas the JSOTF-AR viewed scheduled times as hard, the IOs, PVOs and NGOs regarded scheduled times as approximate. To minimize the impact, Maj Burns assigned SSG Johnson, a CA NCO and former 3rd Special Forces Group soldier, the task of trouble shooter and expediter. After acquiring a truck and a radio, SSG Johnson moved from "crisis to crisis" and, through the strength of his personality, was able to build rapport with the airfield workers and get their cooperation to keep the relief efforts as close to "on-time" as possible.

With all the additional humanitarian relief sorties adding dramatically to the operational tempo at Biera, the local air traffic controllers were in danger of becoming overwhelmed. So, the JSOAC sent a three-man team from the 321st Special Tactics Squadron to assist. TSgt Epperson, the PJ on the team, was fluent in Portuguese, so the team was able to effectively communicate with the local controllers and quickly developed a good working relationship. The team provided assistance and advice without appearing to take over operations or offending the local controllers. With the large number of aircraft now using Beira, one of the main challenges was controlling the ground movement of aircraft. There was no clear parking or ground movement plan, so the situation on the ground was becoming dangerous. The combat controllers recognized the problems, devised an aircraft parking and ground movement plan and, with tact and diplomacy, were able to convince airport management, as well as host nation and foreign ground personnel and aircrews, to accept the plan.

21st SOS MH-53M and 67th SOS MC-130P from RAF Mildenhall, refuel over flooded Central Mozambique near the town of Chibuto. (USAF Photo)

Initially, all three HH-60s flew 12 hours a day, every day, but Maj Kyger, the HH-60 mission commander, cut back to two helicopters per day to allow for crew rest and aircraft maintenance. In the end, the Air Rescue crews and maintenance kept at least 2 helicopters in the air every day for 19 days straight.

The nature of the HH-60 missions varied. Typical missions included rice, food, tents, tools, and farming equipment deliveries. Many of the missions involved moving civilian relief workers and medical personnel throughout the relief area. One of the longest missions flown involved carrying the Mozambican Minister of the Environment to the

MH-53 landing at Hoedspruit Air Base (USAF photo)

PHOTO HAS BEEN REMOVED

SSgt Greg Sanford, 56 RQS unloads tents from an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter. (USAF photo)

Relief supplies at Palmeria, a staging area for international aid workers. (USAF photo)

Cahora Vasa Dam in the extreme northwest to try to persuade the dam operators to delay releasing more water into the valley despite the dam's stressed condition.

JSOTF also performed a few SAR missions. On 11 March, five boats from Britain's Royal National Lifeboat Association failed to arrive at their destination on time. The HH-60s searched for the boats until darkness, then resumed the search in the morning. They found the five boats that morning and radioed their position to the British contingent who sent their own Sea King helicopters to complete the rescue. In another incident, a German medical assistant had an accident that left shards of glass in his eye. The only hope of saving his eye was to get him to a hospital in Pretoria, South Africa, as soon as possible. Within minutes, the JSOTF was able to recall a conventional C-130 aircraft that had just departed Biera to transport the patient to Pretoria where they were able to save the man's eyesight. Other missions included evacuating a local national with gangrene and assisting in the medical evacuation of a British Royal Navy seaman who fell out of a helicopter and broke his leg. An HH-60 also carried two German physicians to a remote village to attend to a child with an advanced stage of cerebral malaria. Unfortunately, the young girl succumbed to the disease before the helicopter arrived.

Our emphasis on providing support, rather than usurping control, paid big dividends throughout the mission. Our "we-really-are-here-to-help" way of doing business facilitated early acceptance of the American forces by the NGOs, PVOs, IOs, and other military forces. Within days, ATLAS RESPONSE personnel had smoothly integrated with all other relief organizations. On numerous occasions, representatives from other military and civilian relief organizations expressed their appreciation for the cooperative attitude and team focus maintained by JSOTF-AR personnel.

The system for mission coordination for southern Mozambique differed from the one used at Beira. The Maputo CMOC secured office space conveniently located next to the United Nations' Joint Logistics Operations Center (JLOC) and effectively integrated with government, NGOs, and PVOs. Using information generated at JLOC meetings, the CMOC built a database of towns and villages that had been visited and their needs, enabling the NGOs, PVOs, and

IOs to efficiently identify mission requirements. CMOC staff members also helped to match up supplies with the most appropriate aircraft. The overall management of the effort in southern Mozambique was not as structured as the one implemented in the north and relied on a corkboard and notecard system to coordinate NGO, PVO, and IO needs with air assets. Though simple, it proved to be effective.

Maj Scott Howell from the 352nd Operations Support Squadron (OSS) served as the JSOAC liaison officer to the JTF-AR headquarters at Maputo and took the lead for collecting all JTF-AR requirements for the southern region. He identified missions at the CMOC, passed the missions back to the JTF-AR staff in Hoedspruit for dissemination to the JTF or JSOTF for approval, and managed the missions in Maputo. Maj Howell made it possible for me to maintain oversight of all JSOTF missions. Scott did a great job, and did virtually all the planning and coordination for mission support at each site. He was invaluable and key to successful ops in the southern region.

Col Zahrt received mission assignments from the Hoedspruit JTF-AR staff via the JSOTF. The JSOAC managed refueling operations for the JSOTF helicopters, coordinated survey missions, and maintained OPCON of the MH-53s, MC-130Ps, and STS. Lt Col Paul Harmon, commander of the 21st Special Operations Squadron, reviewed and approved all of the MH-53 mission assignments to ensure the Pave Lows were effectively used during the operation.

As in the north, missions in the south varied. The Pave Lows stayed busy moving relief supplies and personnel throughout the southern region. On 12 March, an MH-53 flew from Hoedspruit to the Maputo airfield where the crew met with General Wehrle, US Ambassador Curran, and the Vice Chief of Staff from the Mozambican armed forces. The helicopter then flew to Palmeria, a staging area for international aid workers, where it uploaded over two tons of relief supplies. It then flew over miles and miles of flooded countryside to the remote village of Xai-Xai where it was greeted by hundreds of cheering villagers, mostly children. The MH-53s also helped deliver a water purification system to one of the southern villages and approximately two tons of medicine, rice, and clothing to another remote village. Due to their size and heavy rotorwash, the MH-53's were sometimes unable to deliver relief supplies to some of the smaller landing zones. The JSOAC's MC-130Ps, in addition to providing in-flight refueling to the MH-53s and HH-60s, performed survey and assessment missions, and on occasion, moved relief supplies among the different airfields.

A CASUALTY

Near the end of the operation JSOTF-AR did suffer one casualty. On 24 March, an Airman from the 352nd Maintenance Squadron joined several of his co-workers for a trip to Lisbon falls near Graskop, South Africa, during their off-duty time. Against the advice of his friends, the Airman insisted on swimming in a prohibited area at the top of the falls where he got caught in a strong current, was swept over one of the smaller falls, and subsequently carried over the larger, 300-foot waterfall. Two JSOTF-AR MH-53s and one MC-130 responded immediately and joined South African Rescue personnel in conducting an air and ground search until darkness. The Airman's body was discovered the next morning at the base of the falls.

THE END

On 24 March, after much discussion, the government of Mozambique announced that it was time to transition relief efforts to its local governments. On 25 March, the HH-60s delivered 14 tons of food in their last day of operations and the C-130s moved 42.6 tons of agricultural seed to Maputo. On 26 March, the JSOTF flew three missions, delivering 5.52 tons of food, and also began packing for redeployment, concluding humanitarian relief efforts under JTF-AR.

During Operation ATLAS RESPONSE, more than 700 US personnel were deployed. Aircrew, maintenance, and support personnel flew approximately 600 sorties, delivered 970 tons of cargo, and moved 1,200 passengers from various relief organizations, foreign governments, and militaries. The Airmen and support personnel from JSOTF-AR flew 319 of those sorties, delivered 203 tons of the cargo, and moved 387 passengers. The HH-60s proved to be the workhorses of the operations, delivering over 177 of the 203 tons of food and cargo transported by JSOTF-AR assets.

Because they had been diverted to Mozambique while on their way home from a 120-day deployment, the HH-60 team was given priority for the return home. The Air Rescue personnel departed from Beira for Hoedspruit on 27 Mar and boarded C-5s for home on 2 April. JTF and JSOTF personnel, except for a handful of CMOC staff members, who remained behind to transition relief operations, departed Mozambique by 28 March and all remaining air assets and CMOC personnel left southern Africa by 7 April.

Operation ATLAS RESPONSE was the first major deployment of US military forces to Africa since Operation RESTORE HOPE (Somalia, 1993). JSOTF-AR demonstrated the flexibility and adaptability of SOF, especially special air operations personnel and units. Over a period of more than a month, SOCEUR and the 352nd SOG planned and deployed over 5,500 miles, from northern Europe to southern Africa, set up dispersed operations 400 miles apart, integrated with conventional and multinational air forces to ensure responsive support of more than 50 international aid organizations, and successfully redeployed all resources to home stations. It was a job well done and one we were rightly proud of.

About the Author: Colonel Mike Russell is a retired Air Commando and USAF pilot. He flew as a Primary Jet Instructor Pilot (T-37), Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Pilot (HH-53B/C Jolly Green Giant), and Special Operations Helicopter Pilot (MH-53H/J Pave Low III). Col Russell also served as the Commander, 21st SOS, Deputy Commander, 16th Special Operations Group, Commander of the 66th Air Operations Squadron, and Deputy Commander of Special Operations Command Europe, and JSOTF-AR Commander.

DAGRE

www.aircommando.org

Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element

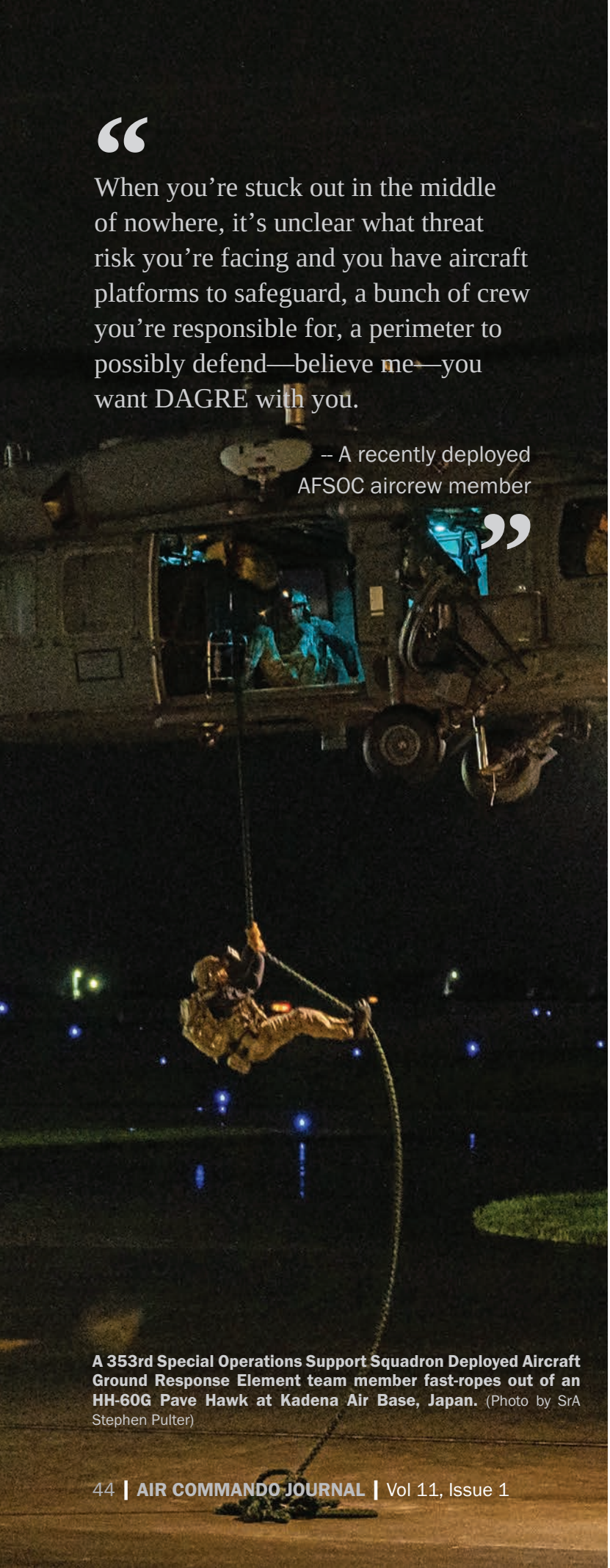
AFSOC's Specialized Security For Austere Environments

By Matthew Durham, Lt Colonel, USAF (Retired)

"Any place. Any time. Anywhere." Air Force Special Operations Command, and the Air Commandos before even the formation of a major command, have lived by this simple creed for decades. Notice the emphasis on the world-wide commitment. Two-thirds of the creed say basically the same thing: "Any place" and "Anywhere" means exactly that. AFSOC is expected to be able to operate, effectively, 'anywhere' on the globe, often on a very short notice.

This across-the-world commitment presents some unique challenges. The most basic being "how do we get there, what do we take, and where are we operating from?" That last question can present a myriad of challenges. AFSOC often works in underdeveloped nations with sometimes a possible physical threat just beyond the wire. AFSOC does not see a lot of real-world missions out of places like…Switzerland. Usually, what you need, you must take with you.

From the 1990s on, what AFSOC needed was security while forward deployed. Back in the day the aircrew itself often had to provide protection for the deployed platforms. However, as the extremist threat continued to grow in numbers and



> “When you’re stuck out in the middle of nowhere, it’s unclear what threat risk you’re facing and you have aircraft platforms to safeguard, a bunch of crew you’re responsible for, a perimeter to possibly defend—believe me—you want DAGRE with you.”
>
> -- A recently deployed AFSOC aircrew member

A 353rd Special Operations Support Squadron Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element team member fast-ropes out of an HH-60G Pave Hawk at Kadena Air Base, Japan. (Photo by SrA Stephen Pulter)

sophistication, the old way of depending on hopefully deployed ground troops or host-nation security was proving too risky. The genesis for AFSOC’s Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element or DAGRE was born. As is often the case, you have to take care of your own.

Actually, flyaway ground protection units was not a new concept for the Air Force. Air Mobility Command’s Phoenix Raven program, designed to guard AMC’s deployed aircraft worldwide, had been around since the late 1990s. However, AFSOC’s unique mission set required a ground protection unit that could be sent worldwide almost immediately, and this meant a new unit trained and managed within the confines of the command.

It was recognized there was a requirement, but where would the DAGRE candidates come from? Would it mean the dreaded new Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)?

A team leader said DAGRE is a specialty within Air Force security forces, or military police, not a mission or specific Unit Type Code. Thus, the paperwork nightmare of creating a new AFSC could be avoided.

The program would be open to all AFSOC security forces Airmen from senior airman to master sergeant who meet the AFSOC physical and professional standards. Once qualified, team members have the option to serve within the DAGRE sections for an extended period of time. Also, they can also go back to the broader security forces community after DAGRE.

What would be the specific mission of DAGRE and how would it differ from Phoenix Raven or other flyaway ground protection units? According to the USAF Police Association DAGRE fact sheet:

> SOF aircraft transit through higher threat areas and at times stay on the ground longer. Both expose our aircraft and Personnel to additional risk necessitating a higher skill level for their defenders. SOF fly-away security is tasked to perform HUMRO and NEO missions beyond simply securing the aircraft. They may secure food distribution points, escort PJ rescue elements, and set up processing points for evacuating US nationals. SOF fly-away security is also trained to secure FARP operations potentially forward of friendly lines. The equipment to meet these missions reflects their unique requirements. Team size is larger and tailorable; firepower is increased; non-lethal capability is added; and sensor suites reflect longer duration missions. In short, SOF fly-away security provide AFSOC and SOCOM mission commanders a security element that is capable of matching the enhanced mission sets demanded of SOF compared to AF operations units.

What makes DAGRE work is selecting the right individuals and continuous training.

"I look for individuals who are highly competent, critical thinkers who have great communication skills and have the flexibility/adaptability to execute any task that may be required in a multitude of environments," said a DAGRE Team Leader recently. "They must be skilled shooters who always increase their abilities and strive for perfection. They must be physically fit, since all DAGREs must maintain above a 90 percent Air Force physical fitness test score to be considered deployment eligible."

If selected, those eligible attend the eight-week DAGRE Course run by the 371st Combat Training Squadron at Hurlburt Field. To make sure no one can hide in the crowd students are often restricted to 14 or less per class. The course covers leadership includes force preparation, risk management, command and control; communications is a course in using the PRC-115 and PRC-117G radios and encryption devices; fly-away security featuring security operations, cross-cultural communications, and SOF aircraft mission tracking; combatives certifies DAGRE students at Level 1 in the US Army's Combative training; tactical security teaches land navigation, casualty care, and small unit tactics; tactical vehicle operations includes driving while under fire, engaging targets from a moving vehicle and IED recognition.

All of these skills are necessary for the final phase of the training, the DAGRE Qualification Course. This combines all the previous courses into a practicum setting designed to adapt the lessons into real-life scenarios. After successful completion the candidates are given a DAGRE selection number. Welcome to the team.

Of course, this is not the end of training. DAGRE members are expected to attend other Department of Defense courses, and not just Air Force-unique classes. Everything from Air Assault School to Ranger Training is possible.

DAGRE teams can now be found in all three CONUS-based AFSOC wings: the 1st Special Operations Security Squadron at Hurlburt, the 27th Special Operations Security Squadron at Cannon, and the 919th Special Operations Security Squadron at Duke Field. Also, some OCONUS AFSOC units host DAGRE teams. Since 2009, it would be a challenge to find a place on the globe that has seen AFSOC deployments or exercises and not had a DAGRE involved.

Is all of this training necessary for a mission set that, in the not-too-distant past, was occasionally handled by sometimes bored aircrew members, often stuck in the middle of an austere airfield? Well, the world has made it so. As the threat to AFSOC assets and personnel has increased, one of the solutions has been DAGRE. A unique AFSOC answer to an evolving and sometimes dangerous world.

About the Author: Matt Durham served on the AFSOC headquarters Public Affairs staff for over 19 years, under eight different commanders as both officer and civilian. He has deployed to Haiti, the Bosnian AOR, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Airpower Heritage

SA-16A Grumman Albatross

First flown in 1947, the SA-16 was a "flying boat" type aircraft originally intended to meet a Navy requirement for an amphibious utility aircraft. But soon after it was fielded, the Air Force adopted it for search and rescue missions and special operations. It was later redesignated HU-16 in 1962. Of the 297 SA-16As delivered to the Air Force, most went to the Air Rescue Service where it served with distinction. During the Korean War, the 'Albatrosses' rescued almost 1,000 United Nations personnel from coastal waters and rivers, often behind enemy lines, according to the US Air Force Museum. A later version, the HU-16B with longer wings and greater capacity, saw extensive combat service during the Vietnam War.

On 5 January 1951, the USAF gave the Military Air Transport Service the mission of organizing, training, and equipping two special operations wings, which for security reasons were designated air resupply and communications wings (ARCW). The 581st ARCW was assigned to the Clark Field in the Philippines and the 580th ARCW at Wheelus AB in Libya. The SA-16 Albatross, one of a variety types of helicopters and aircraft flown by the ARCWs, was a rugged and versatile aircraft that could move a special forces team, day or night for covert infiltration by parachute or by landing on remote runways or bodies of water for extraction.

During the Korean War SA-16s units from the 581st ARCW flew rescue and special operations missions. Two of their four SA-16s, with crews, were sent on extended temporary duty to Seoul City airport (K-16) in Korea to support B Flight, the 6167th ABG's unconventional warfare unit. These amphibian aircraft were painted black for coastal infiltration and exfiltration of spies from behind enemy lines at night.

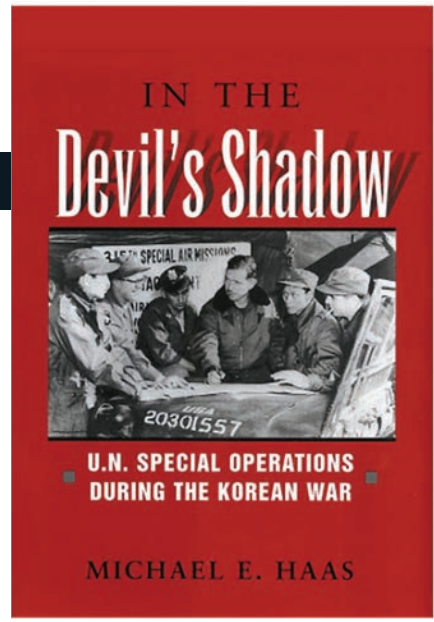
According to Col Michael Haas, USAF (retired) and author of *Apollo's Warriors,* SA-16s from the 580th ARCW flew classified courier missions involving material and personnel throughout the Mediterranean, southwest Asia, and southern Europe. On one highly classified mission in 1955 behind Stalin's Iron Curtain" near the border of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece, the crew made a night landing on a lake and exfiltrated three people and returned them to Greece. On another occasion in 1956, a U-2 spy plane lost its engine over eastern Europe and began to glide over Albania towards the Adriatic Sea. Unable to make a friendly base in Italy, the pilot ejected over the sea and was quickly rescued by another 580th ARCW crew.

Type:	Amphibious utility transport and air & sea rescue aircraft built by Grumman. Flown by a crew of 4; capable of carrying 10 passengers.
Powerplant:	Two Wright R-1820-76BA radial engines rated at 1425 hp each.
Performance:	Maximum cruise speed 205 mph; Ceiling 21,500 ft; Range 3,274 miles.
Weights:	Empty — 22,840 lb; Maximum takeoff 35,635 lb.
Dimensions:	Length 62 ft, 3 in; Wing span 97 ft, 8 in; Height 26 ft

In 1954, the Air Force decided to establish special air warfare groups within the Air National Guard and equipped them with SA-16 amphibians and other aircraft. The Maryland Air Guard's 135th Air Resupply Group was organized in 1955, it was one of only four such units nationwide with the others being the 129th Air Resupply Group in California, the 130th Air Resupply Group in West Virginia, and the 143rd Air Resupply Group in Rhode Island.

The final USAF HU-16 flight was the delivery of AF Serial No. 51-5282 to the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio in July 1973, after setting an altitude record of 32,883 ft earlier in the month.

Book Review



In the Devil's Shadow: U.N. Special Operations in Korea

By Michael E. Haas

(Naval Institute Press, 2000; 243pp.)

Reviewed by Scott E. McIntosh

Haas's most well-known book is certainly *Apollo's Warriors: United States Air Force Special Operations during the Cold War* (1997), a big, beautiful, glossy paperback narrating AFSOC's evolution from the Second World War to Son Tay, with 83 pages devoted to the Korean War. His own story, from US Army OCS to helicopter pilot to PJ, provides him credibility to tackle these topics from an operator's perspective, and *In the Devil's Shadow* provides his in-depth examination of how non-conventional operations were rushed into the peninsula to meet the threat from the north in 1950. His prose and style are effective in conveying his arguments, but the trends he highlights within them are depressingly familiar.

First, to put it bluntly—placing unconventional forces under conventional commanders may not universally turn out badly, but in Korea it certainly did. Haas provides the USS *Perch* as a prime example of the phenomenon—a submarine modified to carry 110 raiders and their equipment up close to an adversary's beach, then to launch these amphibious forces and await their return at periscope depth. The 35-man crew would train for months with Marine raiders, Underwater Demolitions Teams (UDT), or Army Special Activities Companies, only to have the operators repeatedly siphoned off for other missions as the situation worsened in the conventional fighting. "[T]he obviously higher priority of simply maintaining a UN foothold in Korea," writes Haas,0to the repeated frustrating events experienced by the *Perch* crew." (140) To hear later, for example, that "commanders committed to the last-ditch defense of the Pusan perimeter had wasted no time in pulling… 'submarine raiders' into the meat grinder of combat on the peninsula," then that these units were "shot up so bad" that they subsequently only existed on paper (138), took its toll on the ship's morale. Indeed, the most successful *Perch* operation may have occurred after the arrival—and operational success—of 41 Independent Commando, Royal Marines, a British unit which may have cleaned out the sub's galley, but was left alone to train and execute its intended amphibious raider mission with the *Perch*.

This case is, however, part and parcel of a second theme within the work—the sine wave of SOF capability between major conflicts. After 1945, with the drawdown, unconventional capabilities atrophied, and had to be spun back up when war broke out in Korea. UDT is but one example of a specialized unit rushed back into readiness from nothing to produce less-than-optimal "results that invariably follow when suddenly hard-pressed commanders attempt to overcome years of neglect with the raw courage of an elite few." (142) To compound the effects of both these trends, conventional officers neither understood nor wanted to use these specialized assets to exploit opportunities in the war; even if this weren't the case, optimal relationships were never forged to overcome headquarters bureaucracy—and Haas highlights the G-2 and G-3 at MacArthur's headquarters as particularly nettlesome—especially when it interacted with the newly-created CIA and its unconventional effort to insert agents north of the 38th parallel.

The CIA's Special Missions Group is repeatedly described in the book as bumping up against obstacles in the theater in its "commitment to field [its] own intelligence networks and guerrilla forces in North Korea, independent of similar efforts undertaken by MacArthur's Far East Command. An effort of this magnitude still required military support, however, and this reality frequently led to acrimonious fights" with the aforementioned headquarters. (150) The CIA thus began instead to approach both the USAF and Navy directly to acquire the necessary support for inserting its Korean agents behind enemy lines. This program was extensive, and consumed a significant amount

of treasure and time to support, but yielded little in return. Haas describes it as an "unconscionable, two-year-long continuance of suicide missions," (60) and the fact that most of these agents either disappeared or likely were coopted to radio for more agents and equipment under duress supports his assertion.

In the book's conclusion, the author clearly and concisely provides the takeaways—and they are eerily similar to Richard Schultz, Jr.'s assessment of MACVSOG's efforts later on in Southeast Asia *(The Secret War Against Hanoi: The Untold Story of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam*; reviewed in *ACJ* Vol. 9, Issue 2, October 2020). While these partisan operations in the north forced the adversary to devote resources to security against them, the operations themselves were hamstrung by "conventional officers with neither the interest nor understanding of special operations necessary to exploit such opportunities… [and] amorphous headquarters bureaucracies in the form of decisions that neither terminated weak programs nor reinforced successful ones." (208) By contrast, the CIA program had the funding and people to make its clandestine program a success with Far Eastern Command's cooperation, but instead the two entities "fell into a counterproductive squabble from which only the Communists would benefit." (211) In the end, the author argues, "the special operations effort had no strategic impact on the outcome of the war, or even its major turning points," (208) but Haas emphasizes that there were plenty of opportunities to rectify this. High-demand, low-density assets like the UDTs, personnel recovery, and marine raiders, after all, were pushed into the theater as quickly as possible—so the human capital was present. The resources, in the form of the brand-new successor to the Office of Strategic Services, were also available, but Haas describes a supreme headquarters that didn't want the CIA in theater, and subordinate entities that had little idea how to employ agency assets even if they were integrated into the strategic plan for Korea. Again, this is disturbingly similar to MACVSOG's experiences with higher headquarters organization and coordination a decade later.

The book's photos support the narrative well, but each component chapter (Army, Navy, Air Force, and CIA) deserves a good map to depict the special operations described within it. Scanning the endnotes, it is clear that Haas has done the research and culled an impressive list of unclassified sources to support his arguments. He closes the book on a positive note, pointing out that activating USSOCOM in 1987 represented progress in alleviating the issues that *In the Devil's Shadow* describes:

> Army, Navy, and Air Force flag-rank officers with career-long expertise in special operations now serve on its staff—as does a senior representative from the Central Intelligence Agency, who serves as a principal, and, by all accounts, valued advisor to the commander in chief, USSOCOM. I wish USSOCOM well. So, too, I suspect, would the unknown numbers of special operators who sortied into the dark mountains of North Korea… and never returned. (212)

About the Author: Scott E. McIntosh is Assistant Professor of Business & Strategic Intelligence at Newman University, Wichita, Kansas, where he teaches classes on the Cold War, International Relations, and Critical Thinking in Intelligence Analysis.

Anytime Flight

We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to all those who donated.

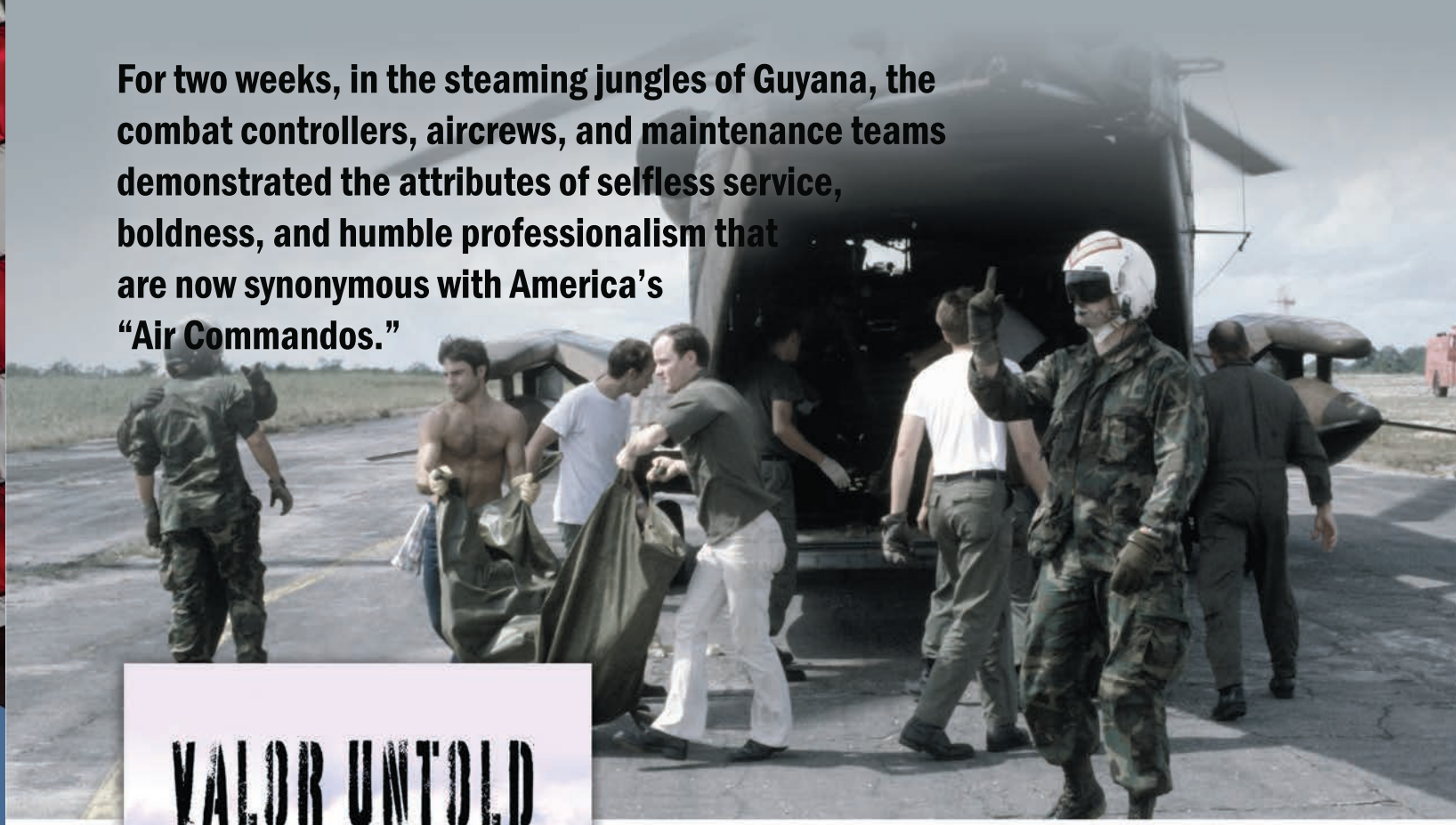
Anne (Mrs. Harry C."Heinie") Aderholt
Kenneth Alnwick
The Alsid Family
Jody Amerson
Augie Archer
Joe Arthur
A. Dwight & Nancy Davis
Susan Ault-Davis
Dennis & Pat Barnett
Juan Bazan
Greg Bentley
Rick & Linda Bethea
Norman A Bild
Tim Bischoff
The Blom Family
Hobart Ray Bower
George Boyce
Thomas Bradley
Bob Brenci
James Brickell
Harry Bright Life Member #4040
Bud Britain
Craig Brotchie
Charles Brown, Zorro 16
Norm Brozenick Jr.
Heather Bueter
Kenneth Burton
Mike Burton & Donna Young
Herbert "Mac" Busby
Maile McCoskrie Busby
Michael Byers
Rory Cahoon
Rick Carroll
Brenda Cartier
The Castlen Family
Bobby Clark
Stephen Clark
Dave & Floreen Clark
Travis Clovis
Steve Connelly
Jim Connors
Philip Conran
J R Cooper
Rory Crews
Gary E. Crowther
Rick Crutchfield
Erik & Mary Davis
Pete & Mary Dawson
Stephen Deranian
Craig Dock
Mike Dugan
John Easley
Kenneth N. Engleson III
Young E Fitzpatrick & Sons
Christopher Foltz
Ted and Shara Fordyce
Max Friedauer
Ann Garcia-Lucas
John Gargus
Mr & Mrs Arthur Gordon, Jr
Tom Green
Al Greenup
In Memory of James Galluzzi
The Hale Family
Lifemember Richard & Christine Hallion
Dave & Rachel Halvorson
Paul & Ede Harmon
Chris Harriman
Paul Hastert
Rich Heagwood
Gary (GUNZ) Heinz
Dan & Melissa Henkel
Steve Herberth (Waterpump/ Project 404)
Lee & Ginny Hess-In memory of Col Jim Kyle
William J. Houston
Eddie M. Howard
James Humphrey
Jimmy & Jacque Ifland
Lindsey & James Isbell
Richard Ivey
Randal 'Jake' Jacobson
Martin Jester
Stan Jones, 605th ACS & 5th SOS

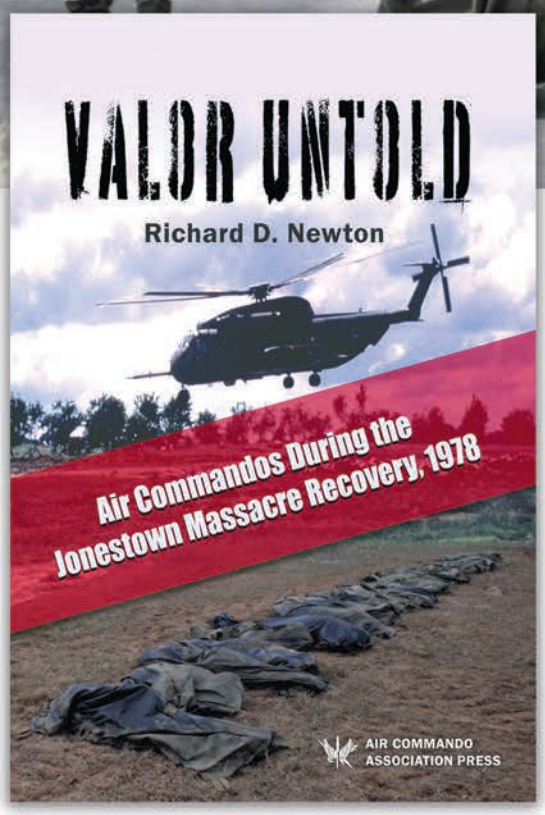
Anytime Flight

Lt Col PJ Kendall & Family
The Kersh Family
Michael Kingsley
The Kisner Family
Jack Krause
Chris Lauderdale 7th SOS
Phil & Stephanie Lawlor
Micah & Eddie Lombera
Col Dick MacLeod, USAF (Ret)
Brian A. Maher
O.G. Mannon
Andrew & Monica Maresh
Will and Charity Markham
Tom Markland
Harry H Marklin
Andrew "AM" Martin
Rodney Martin
Dann & Jean Mattiza
Chainsaw & Ranee McCollum
James McConnell
John McCoskrie
Clay McCutchan
Bob & Barrie Meller
Ted & Carol Mervosh in memory of Rod Toth
William V. Miller
David Mobley
Kenneth Moerscher
Charles Mohrmann
Larry Moore
R. Wayne Moorhead
Janice Morrow
The Mueller AFSOC Family
Larry & Lida Munz
Tom Nelson
Rick & Kathy Newton
Wayne G. Norrad
Jay & Ellen Norton, Life Member #168
Travis Norton
Randy O'Boyle
Albert Olsen Jr.
Frank Orr Jr.
Bill & Kathy Phillips
Ken & Sarah Poole
Mike and Ann Reynolds
Destry Rogers
Bill Rone
Gene and Linda Ronsick
The Ross Family
Larry D. Rutledge
Felix Sambogna
Janice Sanborn
Scott & Kathi Schafer
Suzie & Norty Schwartz
Richard Secord
In loving memory of James 'Shaff' Shaffer
Dennie & Cathy Sides
Terry & Janet Silvester
Jim Slife
Charles "Snuffy" Smith
John 'Smitty' & Charlye Smith
Cat & Jack Spitler
Dennis & Cathy Stanley
Michael Steinbeck
Mike Stoico
Wild Bill & Stormy
John Taylor
Russ Tharp
Chris Tidwell
Hollis Tompkins
Tom & Karin Trask
Dan & Barbara Turney
Gregory Van Hyning
Gregory L. Van Rossum
David & Janice Weakley
Jim Westfall 130th ACS WVANG AF 29372
Steve & Susan Whitson
Willie Wood
Donny & Ronda Wurster
Tony Youngblood
In Memory of Ratchet 33
In Memory of Jockey 14, Wrath 11, Spirit 03 & Eagle Claw
In Honor of Wrath 11

*Some members chose to remain anonymous.

Visit www.AirCommando.org to learn more about the ACA's Anytime Flight Membership





FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER:
The untold story of Air Commandos responding to the Jonestown Massacre

It has been 42 years since the tragic November 1978 mass suicide/murder of American citizens at the Peoples Temple Agricultural Settlement in Jonestown, Guyana. In the intervening four decades, so much has happened to US special operations forces and the US Air Force, brought about in large part by world events that demonstrated the unquestionable need for fully resourced, trained, and ready joint special operations forces. This monograph tells the heretofore untold story of what the Airmen who would, a few years later, form the nucleus of Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), did to help recover the victims' bodies – a special air operation that pushed the limits of what their training and previous combat experiences had prepared them for.

HURRY! While Supplies Last!

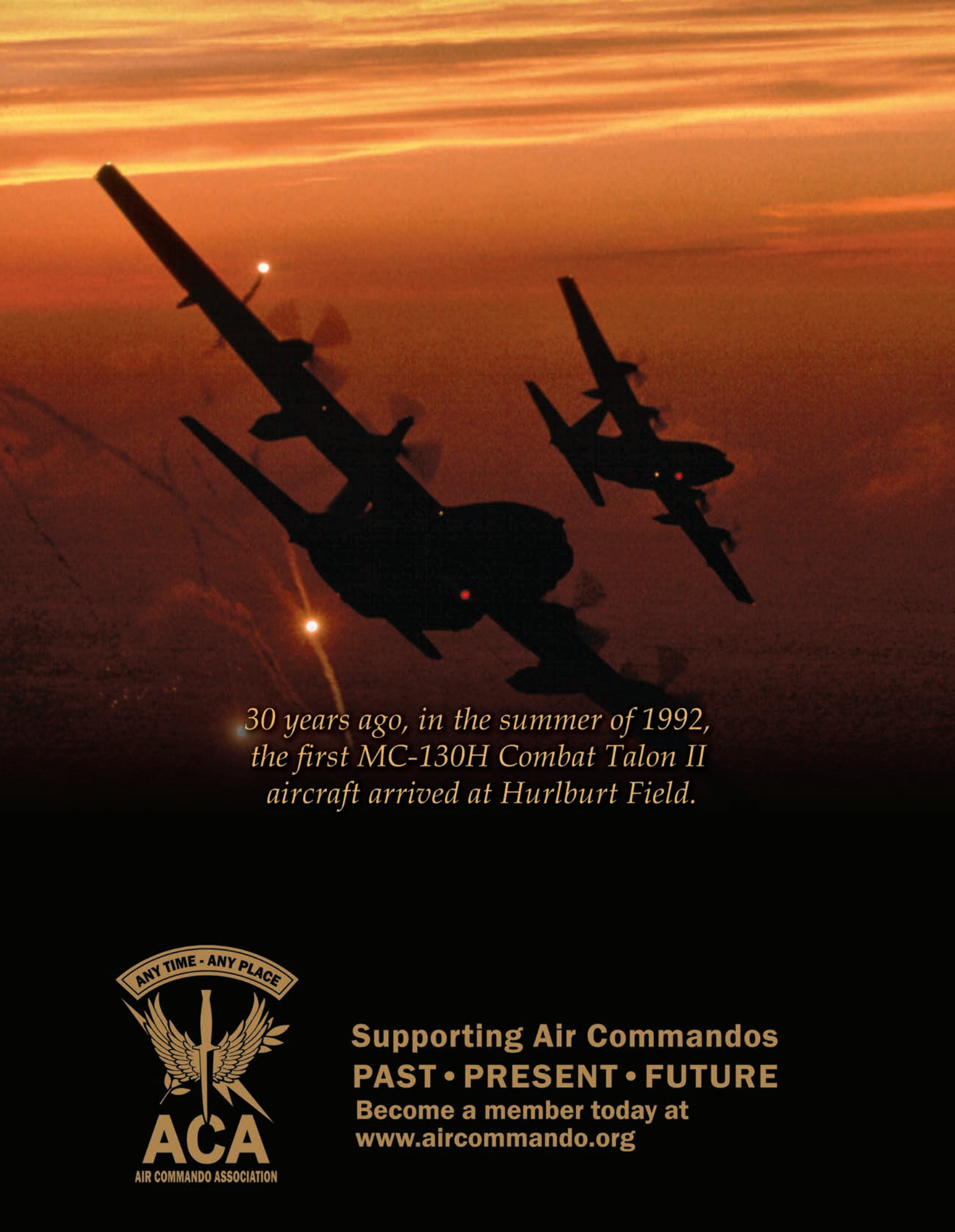
$12

Order your copy today at www.AirCommando.org

Brought to You by ACA Press

Or call 850-581-0099 and order over the phone.
Includes shipping & handling • Proceeds benefit ACA Press

Valor Untold: Air Commandos During the Jonestown massacre Recovery, 1978 By Richard D. Newton
Published by: Air Commando Association Press, 2021, 38 pages



30 years ago, in the summer of 1992, the first MC-130H Combat Talon II aircraft arrived at Hurlburt Field.

ANY TIME - ANY PLACE

ACA

AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

Supporting Air Commandos

PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE

Become a member today at www.aircommando.org