THE ACCA FLYER

The Newsletter of the

Strategic Air Command Airborne Command Control Association

Volume 4, Issue 1 March 1998

PUBLICATION DATE: This issue of your newsletter is being delivered later than planned due to late - breaking developments concerning the October 1998 reunion and related activities. We regret any inconvenience this has caused.

LOOKING GLASS CLOSURE: The final mission of LOOKING GLASS will be flown in an EC-135 aircraft of the 7th Airborne Command Control Squadron, 55th Wing, from Offutt AFB, NE, on Friday, 25 September 1998. This flight will close out the LOOKING GLASS operation after more than thirty - seven years as a vital element in our nation's strategic military posture. In recognition of this closure, a dinner and appropriate ceremonies will be held that evening at the SAC Museum in its new location southwest of Omaha. Although complete details of the final mission and the closure dinner are still being developed, it is expected that the occasion will be a gala (and a somber) one. The Project Officer, Captain Wayne Blanchette of the 7thACCS, has been promised the cooperation of our Association, as well as that of other organizations such as the 34th Air Refueling Squadron Association and the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association, to help insure that this gesture fits the occasion of the demise of LOOKING GLASS. Full details will be provided in the next edition of *The ACCA Flyer*.

SPECIAL EVENTS AT THE 1998 REUNION: The last remaining LOOKING GLASS EC - 135 aircraft will be flown into Peterson AFB, Colorado Springs, CO, on Friday, 9 October 1998, as part of our SAC/ACCA reunion activities. The aircraft will be on static display and available for on - board tours by ACCA members and invited guests on Friday at time(s) to be announced. The aircraft will then be flown on its final mission on Saturday, 10 October, performing a farewell fly - over as part of the pre-game festivities prior to the football game between Air Force and Navy and then proceeding directly to the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center, more commonly known as "the boneyard", at Davis - Monthan AFB, AZ. Again, complete details will be forthcoming.

THE MYSTERY MALFUNCTION: In our July 1997 edition, Jack Suggs ' harrowing story of an eighteen minute, aborted STEPMOTHER flight out of March AFB, ended without telling us of the mystery malfunction that created the in - flight emergency. The red-X condition had been written off as "unable to duplicate on the ground". After completing their sortie in the back-up aircraft, the flight crew did some maintenance analysis of their own. It seems that an air inlet valve to the auxiliary power unit (APU) failed in the open position. As the aircraft was pressurized on climbout, cabin pressure, venting overboard through the open inlet line, was making the APU turbine "windmill" in reverse. This created a critical overheat condition and severe vibration in the APU due to inadequate lubrication. The result was a flash fire in the APU. As many of us know, a fire on an engine way out there on a wing is a real attention - getter, but when there is a fire in the cabin where you live — PANICSVILLE ! Thanks, Mr. Prez, for a great *Can You Top This ?* yarn.

HISTORY OF THE AIRBORNE LAUNCH CONTROL SYSTEM SCHOOL

by Major Greg Ogletree (SAC/ACCA Historian)

An important element of the Strategic Air Command's(SAC)Post-Attack Command and Control System (PACCS) was the airborne capability to launch our country's Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles(ICBMs). Indeed, this weapon system outlived both SAC and PACCS--and it appears as though it will survive the demise of the last Air Force squadron to fly the Looking Glass Airborne Command Post (ABNCP), as well, when the 7th Airborne Command and Control Squadron (7 ACCS--formerly 2ACCS) is inactivated later this year.

The idea for an airborne launch control system (ALCS) for Minuteman missiles was conceived in 1966 when SAC concluded that a backup launch capability for US ICBMs was desirable. The ALCS plan ultimately would require missile launch officers to fly aboard modified EC-135 aircraft stationed at three bases: Offutt AFB, Nebraska; Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota; and Minot AFB, North Dakota. The crew members assigned to Ellsworth and Minot AFBs would be experienced Minuteman crew members, and the launch officers assigned to Offutt AFB would be operations and communications controllers ("DOCOs" and "COMMOs") on the SAC ABNCP who, in addition to their primary battlestaff duties, would also have responsibility for operating the ALCS.

All of these personnel had to be trained in the proper operation of the weapon system and associated procedures. In February 1967, Air Training Command (ATC) personnel stationed at Chanute AFB, Illinois, came to SAC Headquarters (HQ) at Offutt AFB to conduct the first ALCS training. All of the original ALCS crew members at the three units attended this ATC course. ALCS training continued at Offutt AFB until February 1968 (Endnote 1) when it was established at Vandenberg AFB, California, as part of the 4315th Combat Crew Training Squadron (Missile). This squadron was frequently referred to as "the CCTS" by missileers (it was the only missile CCTS in SAC), but more commonly was called "the schoolhouse" or "Missile University."

The ALCS course was assigned to the Development Section of the CCTS. Major Bernard Howard was the first ALCS supervisor. Captain Donald Paige and Lt James Dunlap, also assigned to the section, were tasked with the additional duty of instructing in the ALCS. Although the schoolhouse now had ALCS personnel assigned, it did not have a trainer--essential for effective instruction. On 1 August 1967, HQ AC authorized the CCTS to construct a "training aid" as an interim instruction device. Most of the planning and designing was accomplished by Maj. Howard. The training aid would be limited to a one-on-one, hard-wired device. Although designed to be as realistic as possible, it had limitations with regard to communications and self-support equipment. This first ALCS training device took 6 months to design and construct. The parts came primarily from surplus and obsolete components. (Endnote 2) The senior instructor crew from the 44th Strategic Missile Wing (SMW) at Ellsworth AFB evaluated the capabilities of the trainer in early 1968 and certified it as suitable for the training of ALCS crew members. (Endnote 3)

The 44th also transferred Capt. Allen J. Tiedman to the schoolhouse to add more expertise to the ALCS instructor cadre. He was a Minuteman I instructor and evaluator at Ellsworth.

The first ALCS class at Vandenberg commenced in February 1968 (4) and graduated on 6 March 1968. (Endnote 4) The 2-man class consisted of Lt Col John T. Williams and Maj. Norman L. Soucie, both from Offutt AFB. The next class had four officers: three missileers from Minot AFB and a commo from Offutt. This class contained the first ALCS Distinguished Graduate (DG), Capt. Stewart W. Bentley (from Minot). The following class contained the first students from Ellsworth. The last class of the year (#9) was the first to contain students auditing the course for familiarization rather than qualification; both were plans officers (from Ellsworth and Minot).

The ALCS trainer was shutdown during May 1969 for an extensive modification. As a result, Class #13 was canceled. This modification incorporated a new self-destructible K-plug and added the High Altitude Radiation Detection System (HARDS) to the trainer. The modification was accomplished by CCTS personnel--primarily Mr. George Wright and TSgt Donald Shifflett--under the supervision of Capt. Tiedman, maintenance officer for ALCS. (Endnote 5). The trainer was returned to service in early June.

May was also the month that a major reorganization took place within the 4315th. In this realignment, the ALCS instructors were removed from the Development Section and placed within their own section. The first chief of the new ALCS Operational Readiness Training (ORT) Section was Capt. Wendell W. "Early" Winn (who soon pinned on major's rank). He was assisted by Capt. Edward Bender, the Senior Instructor/Evaluator. Other section members were Captains Allen Tiedman, Robert Parker (Endnote 6) and Thomas Cardoze. (Endnote 7).

Class #14 (2 Jun-3 Jul 69) holds the distinction of being the largest class ever to matriculate in the ALCS ORT program. (Endnote 8). Eight crew members were graduated; the ninth student was the ALCS Operations Officer from Minot who was just auditing the course. The 4315 CCTS continued the 25-day course through 2 October 1970, graduating a total of 113 airborne missileers (Endnote 9).

(To be continued)

ENDNOTES:

1. One source says that ALCS training was transferred to the 4315th in August 1967. This may have been the date ATC conducted its final training at Offutt rather than the date training actually commenced at Vandenberg--which was definitely in 1968.
2. Ltr, undated, from 28 BMW/CC to CINCSAC/DPRA03; subject: Reassignment of MSgt Morton.
3. It's interesting to note that for a period of several years there were no technical orders or operating manuals associated with the training device to indicate to a technician how simulation was accomplished by the trainer! (Ibid.)
4. This was actually Class #3. Classes #1 and #2 were canceled because the training aid was not yet completed.
5. Although cost was minimal, 1500 man-hours were required to complete this modification.

6. Parker eventually retired as a Major General and held the position of Commander, Twentieth Air Force--in charge of all US ICBM units. Several other ALCS captains also later achieved general officer rank, among them Linhard and Curtin.
7. "4315th CCTS Unit Redesignated ORT," Mesa Missilier (Vandenberg base paper), 16 May 1969 (p 13A).
8. At the other extreme, several subsequent classes contained only one student!
9. "4315th CCTS Holds Last ORT Course," Mesa Missilier, 9 Oct 70.

AIR FORCE MAKES CUTS IN WEST: (AP Washington, DC, 11 Feb 98): "The Air Force announced a series of cuts and consolidations — at domestic bases, including some directed by Congress, that will cost thousands of jobs in some states but will add jobs in others. — Some of the adjustments reflect decisions by the Defense Department to reassign key missions. For example; Offutt AFB, NE, will lose 419 jobs as the Navy takes over the mission of providing an emergency airborne command post which the Air Force had done for decades with EC-135 LOOKING GLASS planes. The transition is projected to save $250 million a year. —"

1998 REUNION UPDATE: The addition of the LOOKING GLASS static display has generated some possible changes in the reunion schedule. Full and (hopefully) final firm information will be provided in the next issue of *THE FLYER*, including registration forms, an accurate list of costs and a schedule of activities and other information. CINC/Golf Jan Suggs wants everyone to know that her golf tournament will be **strictly a fun affair.** The "scramble format" will insure that all players can contribute to their team effort, regardless of their skill level. So sign up to play !

BUSINESS MEETING: All members are asked to start thinking about several items of Association business which must be addressed at a brief meeting at the reunion. Among those are (1) Election of new officers, including a publisher for *THE FLYER,* (2) Selecting a site for Reunion 2000 (3) Possible changes in dues and fees policy and (4) Other business as necessary.

THE PREZ SEZ: What excitement - having the last "Glass" paying a visit to Peterson AFB during our reunion. It will be a heart-rending experience for many of us to see the last symbol of the Post Attack Command Control System, established by the leaders of the Strategic Air Command back in 1961, fade into the sunset. Time marches on. The current plan is to have the static display on Friday. The crew will join us on Friday night as our guests at the *Flying W* western dinner and, on Saturday, they will participate in the fly-over parade before the game. From there they fly will directly to the bone yard at Davis-Monthan AFB.

The next major item is the last flight of the Glass followed by the closure dinner at the SAC Museum on the 28th of September 1998. We encourage all of our members, who can, to participate in those festivities. There will be more detailed information on these happenings in the next newsletter.

WELCOME

SAC AIRBORNE ASSOCIATION
OCTOBER 7 - 11, 1998

Accommodations have been reserved at two locations. (approximately 200 yards apart)

EMBASSY SUITES
7290 COMMERCE CENTER DRIVE
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80919
RESERVATIONS DEPARTMENT 719-599-9100

* **a luxury two room suite**
* **complimentary cooked-to-order breakfast in the West Atrium**
* **complimentary cocktails in West Atrium from 5:30-7:30 p.m.**
* **complimentary coffee service in every suite**
* **iron and ironing board in every suite**
* **USA Today delivered daily to each suite**
* **microwave, refrigerator and wet bar in each suite**

$ 100.00 Single **$ 110.00 Double**

MICROTEL INN & SUITE
7365 COMMERCE CENTER DRIVE
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80919
RESERVATIONS DEPARTMENT 719-598-7500

* **junior suites & traditional guest rooms**
* **complimentary continental breakfast**

$ 79.00 Single or Double

Be sure to make reservations early at the hotel of your choice. Each hotel has a specific group block. The group rate is available until September 6, 1998 or until the block is filled.

Please have your credit card number available when making reservations. Also your date of arrival and departure.

Or mail to your hotel choice.

SAC AIRBORNE ASSOCIATION, OCTOBER 7 - 11, 1998

NAME_____
ADDRESS_____
CITY & STATE_____ ZIP_____
PHONE NUMBER_____
HOTEL SELECTED_____
ARRIVAL DATE_____
DEPARTURE DATE_____
NUMBER OF GUESTS_____
CREDIT CARD NUMBER_____
EXPIRATION DATE OF CREDIT CARD_____
Reservations will be confirmed as received.

ASSOCIATION DUES: If your address label on this issue of the newsletter does not have the figures 1981 or 1991 following your name (or the phrase ICourtesy Copyl which is used in addressing copies which are sent to former CINC/SACs and other VIPs, related associations, active USAF units, etc), then

YOU ARE DELINQUENT AND WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE MAILING LIST !

Please use the attached dues payment slip and mail to:

SAC AIRBORNE COMMAND CONTROL ASSOCIATION
Jack W. Suggs, Colonel, USAF-Retired
855 Crenshaw Loop North
Keizer, OR 97303-7465

PLEASE SEND ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO THIS SAME ADDRESS

1998 Annual Dues Payment 1998

SAC AIRBORNE COMMAND CONTROL ASSOCIATION (SAC/ACCA)

Annual Dues: $15.00 New Member Initiation Fee: $10.00

Name: _____ Spouse: _____
Last First MI

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Rank: _____ Retired ( ) Active ( ) Other/Explain: _____

Your affiliation with SAC Airborne Command Control Syetem:

Dates: _____ Organizations: _____

Duties: _____ Remarks: _____

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Two questions: 1st: Where do you want to hold the year 2000 reunion ?
2nd: Who is willing to be the host and committee chairman ?

From experience, we have found that many associations book their reunion hotels three years in advance. We are behind the power curve for the year 2000. It is time to act. We need your input now, A list will be published on the three top preferred locations in the next newsletter for further consideration. Please indicate your preference and, briefly, the reasons behind your selection. The final choice will be made at the reunion business meeting. We will also be electing Association officers for the next two year period. Please send your response to our Secretary, Jack E. Gatewood, 358 Sharon Drive, Niceville, FL 32578-1708, Phone 850-678-6464, E-mail Jgatew@aol.com.

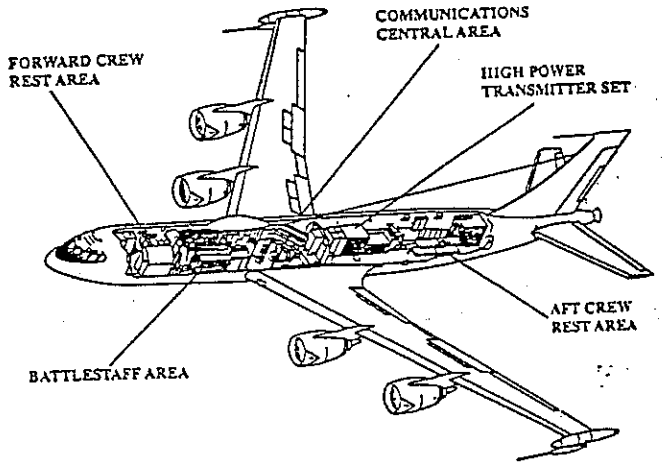
Hope to see you at the reunion in Colorado Springs in October.. JS//Jack Suggs

THE U.S. NAVY E-6B "MERCURY"

This appropriately named winged messenger operates in the TACAMO (Take Charge and Move Out) role, providing a survivable airborne communications link between the national command authorities (NCA) and the Navy's fleet of Trident nuclear submarines (SSBNs). It retains, at least initially, the airborne VLF communications system formerly used in the EC-130Q and has a nuclear/EMP-hardened airframe. Derived from the 707-320 airframe, the E-6A has wingtip ESM/Satcom pods and CFM turbofans similar to those powering USAF's KC-135Rs. In operational use, the AN/ALR-66(V)4 ESM (electronic support measures) systems in each wingtip pod provide threat information (detection, identification, bearing, and range). Communications can be relayed upward to other airborne command posts, such as the Presidential E-4 or satellites, or downward to VLF ground stations and the SSBN fleet, using two trailing wire antennas (TWAs): one 26,000 ft long (LTWA) reeled out from an underfuselage hatch and a 4,000-ft antenna (STWA) winched out from the tailcone to act as a dipole. To be effective operationally, the LTWA must be kept at least 70 percent vertical; this is achieved by weighting the end with a 90-lb drogue while the E-6A flies in a tight orbit.

One E-6A has been converted to E-6B standard with upgraded avionics, including a satellite communications antenna in a blister radome

The remainder of the fleet will be similarly modified to the standard of Airborne National Command Post, with the additional capability to authorize launch of Minuteman and Peacekeeper ICBMs. SCW-1 also has two Boeing 707 training aircraft operated under the designation **TC-18F.**



Contractor: Boeing Defense and Space Group.
Power Plant: four CFM International F108-CF-100 turbofans; each 24,000 lb st.
Accommodation: flight crew of four, plus mission crew of five including an airborne communications officer.
Dimensions: span 148 ft 2 in, length 152 ft 11 in, height 42 ft 5 in.
Weights: empty 172,795 lb, gross 342,000 lb.
Performance: cruising speed at 40,000 ft 523 mph, dash speed 610 mph, patrol altitude 25,000–30,000 ft, T-O distance 5,400 ft, landing distance 2,600 ft, mission range (unrefueled) 7,307 miles.

DEPARTMENT OF THE RED - FACED EDITOR: Twice, in this newsletter, I have attempted to give out valid notices of a program which was (I thought !) scheduled to appear on the TV *DISCOVERY CHANNEL* and twice it has not happened. I did finally catch it, almost by accident, on one of their *WINGS* segments and, although it was very interesting, it did not deal with airborne command control activities as I had been led to believe. The program, entitled *"Doomsday Mission"*, is an excellent review of U.S. strategic bombing capabilities, past and present, and had some outstanding footage of the B-1 (The Bone) in low-level operations. It is well worth your time if you can catch it.

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(Address Correction Requested)

FIRST CLASS