



The SAC ACCA Flyer

Strategic Air Command
Airborne Command Control Assn.

Volume 10, Issue 2

June, 2004

Recording, Preserving and Celebrating the Legacy of PACCS

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Folded Wings

Lt Col SHEPHERD, RALPH V
April 13, 2004

REUNION 2004

The planning process for Reunion 2004 has now moved into the final stage. Finalize your planning for September 22nd through the 26th. We are looking forward to seeing you there. This is the last newsletter before the reunion, so let it be a reminder. Please make your **hotel reservations** soon and get your registration form sent to Jim Kroskey so we can schedule transportation and other events

knowing how many will attend.

The **Downtown Double Tree Hotel** located at 1616 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68102 is our reunion central. The agreement with the hotel requires that reservations be made by individual call-in, so if you haven't already made your reservations you should do so now. The telephone number for making that reservation is 1-800-222-8733. When you call, be sure to tell them that you are with the SAC Airborne Command Control Association (SAC ACCA) so that the Association gets credit for it and we don't have to pay penalties as we did in St. Louis. Make your reservations no later than Sunday, September 5, 2004. The deadline will soon be upon us.

Here is the current reunion schedule:

Wednesday September 22nd Last minute registration will continue throughout the day. In the evening we will join together for our traditional reception. This will be a casual dress affair; coats and/or ties are discouraged. The gathering offers an

| <i>Room</i> | <i>Single Rate</i> | <i>Double Rate</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Pres Suite</i> | <i>\$169.00</i> | <i>\$169.00</i> |
| <i>Deluxe Guest Rooms</i> | <i>\$95.00</i> | <i>\$105.00</i> |

informal environment to renew old friendships as well as to establish new ones. It is an excellent opportunity to speak of current events and days gone by.

Thursday September 23rd Features a trip to the Strategic Air & Space Museum at Ashland for those of you who may be interested. As far as I am aware the Looking Glass aircraft has not yet gone into restoration and remains on the back lot. Transportation to/from the museums as well as admission are included in the price, which is indicated on the registration form (a copy of the form is included elsewhere in this publication). The tour will be followed, that evening, with our equally traditional buffet. Again, dress is casual.

Friday September 24th Will feature a trip to Offutt AFB and aircraft tours during the day. Another highlight of this day is an evening cruise on the river aboard the River City Star. The cruise is scheduled to commence prior to 6:30 p.m. and continue to about 8:30 p.m. The cost of the events for this day (Offutt AFB and the dinner cruise) is \$49.00 including transportation. The cruise travels the Omaha riverfront at the blazing cruise speed of approximately four miles per hour. Additional information about the River City Star is available on their website at <http://www.rivercitystar.com/about.htm>.

Saturday September 25th The morning activity will begin with our business meeting. This meeting will, of course, include the election of new Association officers to serve for the following two years until the next reunion. Please give the election of officers due consideration well in advance of the reunion, nominate and chose those who will keep our Association moving forward for the forthcoming two years. If you can serve, please volunteer by letting the President or Vice President know of your availability. This Association, as with other volunteer organizations, can not long survive unless the membership is willing to participate actively.

The last event of the day is our evening

banquet. Who could forget that affair... all gathered together in this one room after all these years? This event is, of course, a coat and tie affair though the other events are more casual.

Sunday September 26th Will include a memorial service that is dedicated to those of our warrior brothers and sisters who have gone before us. They are a part of our heritage both then and now.

Any free time you have during the reunion can easily be filled with the many enjoyable locations that are a part of the present day Omaha scene.

You may wish to consider one or more of the following attractions as an independent venture. In addition to these there are many others in the Omaha/Council Bluffs area.

1. The Outlet Mall located to the west of Omaha and on the highway route to the Strategic Air & Space museum.
2. Mahoney Park is located almost adjacent to the Strategic Air & Space Museum. This is a nice place to just walk and enjoy the mid western fall season or it also offers horse back riding in the event any of you are up to the challenge. It also features a Lodge/dining facility that provides a quite nice noon time luncheon for a fee.

This newsletter is published three times per year by the Strategic Air Command, Airborne Command Control Association (SAC ACCA) and is free to Association members.

Information, general correspondence, changes of mailing address, newsletter articles or recommendations to:

SAC ACCA
Steve Leazer, Secretary
6141 Bagley Ave.
29 Palms, CA 92277-2502

New Memberships and renewals to:

SAC ACCA
James Kroskey, Treasurer
501 Foxwood Dr.
Jacksonville, AR 72076

3. There are several Casinos across the river in Council Bluffs if you are so inclined (It might be that there is transportation between the hotel and Casinos but I haven't confirmed that. Check it out if you are so inclined.).
4. Western Heritage Museum in the Old Market.
5. Henry Doorly Zoo. By any standard this is a first class zoo and can easily take up the day.

Now that you have all the individual pieces of the current reunion 2004 schedule. What follows is a capsulated version of the same information in a chronological sequence. Given the current world situation, it is subject to change.

September 2004

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>Wed 22nd</u> | Sign in and Evening Reception |
| <u>Thu 23rd</u> | Strategic Air & Space Museum Tour. Buffet Dinner |
| <u>Fri 24th</u> | Aircraft tours (at Offutt) Riverboat cruise aboard the River City Star. |
| <u>Sat 25th</u> | Business Meeting Evening Banquet |
| <u>Sun 26th</u> | Memorial Service |
-

Of note is the fact that the first reunion of the SAC Airborne Command Control Association (SAC ACCA) was held in Omaha in 1994 so that makes this the Ten-Year Anniversary of the Strategic Air Command, Airborne Command Control Association. So you

might want to make a special effort to attend this time.

ABCCC and Me

By Ken Witkin



EC-130 Aircraft, loading ABCCC module.
Photo courtesy of Ken Witkin

From July 1970 until July 1971, I flew as a radio operator and communications team chief on the 7th Air Force Airborne Battlefield Command & Control Center (ABCCC) while assigned to the 7th Airborne Command and Control Squadron (7ACCS), Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand.

The 7 ACCS was a truly unique flying squadron. We had 13 colonel (O-6) positions authorized for 400 people and while I was assigned to the squadron, there were 13 colonels assigned but not one chief master sergeant.

The ABCCC was really a huge self-contained capsule carried aloft by an EC-130E aircraft. Inside the capsule were crew positions for 13 or 14 battle staff crewmembers. The EC-130E front enders consisted of a pilot, copilot, navigator and flight engineer.

Udorn was a very hot, humid, rainy, dusty (during the dry season) and uncomfortable duty assignment. In the year that I was stationed there, I lost 22 pounds because of the intense heat.

The ABCCC flew over Laos. Yes, that's what I said: Laos. We provided 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week command, control and communications coverage to American and allied air, naval and ground forces fighting in Laos during the Vietnam War. Since the United States never admitted that it had troops in and over Laos during the Vietnam War, the ABCCC mission was deemed highly classified and all ABCCC aircrew members and ground personnel had to qualify for a top secret security clearance before being assigned to Udorn.

We flew four 13-hour missions covering two orbits named: Steel Tiger and Barrel Roll. Steel Tiger was located over Southern Laos and Barrel Roll was located over Northern Laos. The ABCCC call signs flying over Steel Tiger were Hillsboro and Alleycat. Hillsboro was the day mission and Alleycat was the night mission. Likewise, the ABCCC call signs flying over the Barrel Roll were Cricket and Moonbeam. Cricket was the day mission

and Moonbeam was the night mission.

Each ABCCC capsule had four high frequency (HF) radios, eight very high frequency (VHF) AM/FM radios, eight ultra high frequency (UHF) AM radios, secure voice capability, secure teletype capability and a switching matrix that enabled the communications team to provide relay capability from VHF to UHF to HF and vice versa. Oftentimes, the communications team would patch a recon (reconnaissance) aircraft flying over North Vietnam to Blue Chip, the Seventh Air Force Command Post, via an HF-to-UHF patch.

Capsule crew members consisted of the Director of the Airborne Battle Staff (DABS), the Battle Staff Operations Officer (BSOO), two fast mover weapons controllers (AWC), two slow mover weapons controllers (AWC), Airborne Intel Officer (AIO), Airborne Intel Technicians (AITs), two radio operators (ROs), one crypto operator (TTY), one radio maintenance technician (RMT), and, believe it or not, an airborne refrigeration specialist. *If the capsule air conditioning failed, the capsule temperature would reach 130 degrees within 30 minutes requiring us to abort the mission.* Occasionally, a Laotian liaison officer would also be on board to coordinate with allied ground forces.

Because our EC-130s flew over Laos, we were constantly in danger of being chased off our orbit by North Vietnamese MIG fighters. Luckily, each orbit was only 30 minutes flying time from Udorn and during the year that I was assigned to ABCCC, no EC-130 ABCCC aircraft was shot down by a MIG. However, twice during the 12 months that I flew on the ABCCC our aircraft was chased off orbit by North Vietnamese MIG fighters. Of course we had our own F-4 fighter combat air patrols (CAPs) supporting us, as well as good radar coverage by US ground radar stations in Thailand who immediately notified us when a MIG was inbound to our location. Still, it was always disconcerting to all of us knowing that a fully armed North Vietnamese MIG was

OUT-COUNTRY OPERATIONS

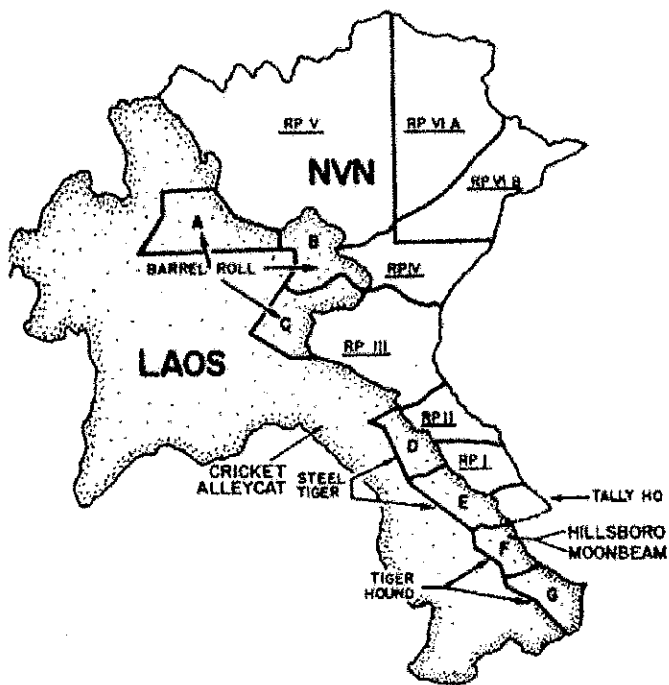


FIGURE 2

UNCLASSIFIED

ABCCC CAPSULE

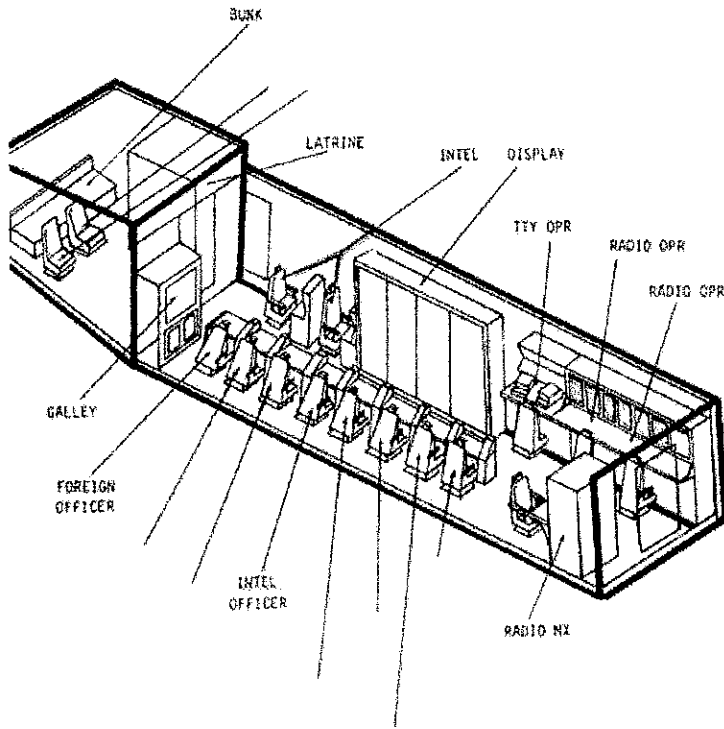


FIGURE 1

inbound to our position. Also, all crewmembers were armed with a pistol and the enlisted personnel carried an M-16 just in case we were shot down over Laos.

Each capsule crewmember would fly a combat mission every three days. We were given one day off after each mission and, normally, the day before the next mission was a training day. All of us had to report to our orbit headquarters (Hillsboro, Cricket, Alleycat or Moonbeam) for training and a pre-mission briefing the day before a mission. A normal 13-hour mission day for me would begin at 0430 when I awoke and lasted until 2130 when I finally returned to my quarters—totally exhausted. Since the radio operators drove the crew bus as an additional duty, it was my responsibility to pick up each ABCCC crewmember and then load the food for each mission. We were normally on orbit from 0730 until relieved by Alleycat around 2030 hours.

Flying an ABCCC mission during wartime was nothing at all like flying a WWABNCP mission over the US, Hawaii or Europe. Each ABCCC crewmember knew that American and allied lives depended on how well we performed our onboard duties and we never let them down. Oftentimes, we participated in air rescue missions providing the command, control and communications to the rescue aircraft and the downed American or allied pilot(s). Sometimes a rescue mission would go on for days and therefore, we had to brief the Alleycat relief crews on the rescue mission details in order that they could continue to provide the necessary command, control and communications to the rescue participants.

For me, the ABCCC capsule was a radio operator's dream come true. Often, when we were in a quiet period during a mission, I would use a spare HF transceiver to contact Upkeep, Looking Glass, Silver Dollar or even Seabell and check in with my friends flying on those airborne command posts. Also, since I was a licensed amateur radio operator (Ham), I was able to keep in touch with my wife while flying over Laos. As a matter of fact, I was participating in a mission when my son was born on October 25, 1970. Two hours after my son was born, I was talking to my father-in-law in Sacramento, California who informed me that my wife had given birth to our son.

During the 31 years since I departed Udorn in 1971, the 7 ACCS moved to Korat RTAFB, Thailand; Clark AB, the Philippines; Keesler AFB, Mississippi and finally—Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona, where it was redesignated the 42nd ACCS. The ABCCC was deactivated in September 2002. It was operational for 37 years.

Before it was deactivated, the ABCCC had participated in every war and/or combat action that United States military forces participated in since the Vietnam War. This included but is not limited to: The Mayaguez Rescue, Grenada, the ill-fated Iran hostage rescue mission where an ABCCC EC-130 aircraft crashed into a helicopter and everyone on board perished;

Panama, Sudan, Desert Storm, Bosnia and Kosovo. The ABCCC truly exemplified the Air Force concept of wartime command, control and communications but together with SAC, TAC and MAC, the ABCCC concept in warfare has evidently become obsolete in today's modern war fighting doctrine. What a shame!!!

Folded Wings

Lt Col SHEPHERD, RALPH V., age 70, of Mascotte, beloved father and friend of many, passed away Thursday morning from cancer. Funeral services will be held at 2PM Tuesday, April 13 at Woodlawn Memoriam. Viewing will be held Monday from 6-8PM. Mr. Shepherd was born August 10, 1933 in Blue Diamond, KY. He served in the United States Air Force, is a veteran of the Vietnam War, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1975 and moved to FL. He is survived by his four children, Rex Shepherd, MI, David Shepherd, WA, Anita Walker, Clermont, Leah Shepherd, Orlando; five grandchildren; three sisters and one brother. He is also survived by a multitude of friends near and far that he gathered over the years through the warmth and love he gave to all he met.

The above article was published in the Orlando Sentinel on 4/11/2004.

Blue Straw

By Steve Leazer

When I arrived at Offutt in 1963 I was assigned to the communications maintenance section of the 34th Air Refueling Squadron. We were located in the hangar on top of the hill to the North of the 34th ARS administrative building and crew ready room (I don't know if either building exists anymore). Anyway, also located in the hangar was a semi-trailer that had been modified to incorporate the same radio equipment as that then installed in the Looking Glass aircraft. It also included a small

cord operated switchboard.

On occasion we used this trailer to establish a link with the airborne bird. We used that to check the system and as a troubleshooting tool when particular types of problems existed in the system. We were even able to use the electronic switchboard in the aircraft via this link. That meant we could interconnect certain channels of the communications systems to evaluate or observe problems. It also provided order wire channels to enable continuing communications with the Radio Operators and maintainers in the link. This was not a continuous use system and was only used in particular circumstances.

It was said at the time that this system was built as part of the program supporting Operation Dominic. In my research on the internet and in various other sources concerning Operation Dominic (and there is a good bit of material out there) I can find no verification of this. Is there anyone out there in SAC ACCA land that is familiar with this trailer and its original intended use?

One last question about the past and the 34th. At the time I was there a mural had been painted on the wall of the crew ready room. It depicted an aircrew running for their alert KC-135. Does anyone recall the fate of that mural when the 34th left Offutt? My assumption is that either the building no longer exists or the mural has long since been painted over, but it is a matter of some curiosity for me as I was promoted and a picture taken in front of that mural.

From the Secretary

Please help the Association save a bit of money by sending me your change of address when you move. Each returned newsletter costs the Association \$0.70. More importantly, you may or may not get your newsletter

depending on the Post Office and how they feel that particular day.

We are now well into the year 2004, so if the number in parenthesis on the mailing label of this newsletter indicates 04 or higher, your dues are paid. If, on the other hand, there has been an oversight and you are not current, please ... before you forget, make use of the membership application which is included with this newsletter.

Just a continuing reminder! We need your assistance in order to keep this newsletter interesting and informative to the membership. Please, if you have a memory of an event associated with PACCS Command Post operations or the many great social events that are a part of our individual and collective history, take the time to share that with the membership by writing to me about it. I'll be happy to take your input in hand written format, typewritten or electronically via email.

If you can see your way clear to take over the job of Secretary and Newsletter Publisher, I sure would appreciate it if you would step forward from the ranks. I too, am retired and I too am very busy and would like to take this opportunity to enjoy a bit of travel, etc. So if the previously mentioned jobs would fit into your current life style, I sure would appreciate the relief.

A significant part of the mission and purpose of our Association is to hold the reunions so that we can get together and keep old friendships alive. Let's revitalize and maintain the camaraderie that characterized the Strategic Air Command and our Airborne Command & Control mission.

Remember the many nights involved in preparing for those long and difficult missions as well as the actual performance of them. If you were in the supporting role remember that same, sometimes painful preparation time. If you were a part of the maintenance team that supported the mission, then I am sure you remember the long nights and days spent

working to correct system malfunctions so that the aircraft was ready for its crew and mission.

Never forget that those missions were made possible through the continuing support of many men and women who stayed on the ground, but provided direct support for the planning and execution of them. So, if there is any way you can get to the next reunion, please start planning now.

Take a moment to remember too, that though our ABNCP mission is gone, many of our fellow men and women warriors are out there today executing similar missions and many new ones using equipment and aircraft that are more "cutting edge" than what we had in our day. AND, remember too, that many of our fellow warriors are now in harm's way.

... hope to see you in Omaha in September. — Steve



*Strategic Air Command
Airborne Command Control Association
SAC ACCA*

Recording, Preserving and celebrating the legacy of PACCS

Membership Application or Annual Dues

Name: _____ Spouse's name: _____

Last, First, Middle

Rank/Title: _____ Branch of Service: _____ Status: _____

Active, Retired, other

Mailing Address: _____

Phone No.: _____ Email address: _____

Indicate your affiliation with PACCS, ACCS: [Organization - Duty - (Dates)] Examples: [22nd ARS - IP (74-82)], [34ARS - BO (63-66)], [HQ SAC - ABS (69-71)], [2nd ACCS - In-flight Maint (69-72)], [5th SRW - Staff (72-73)], [(4th ACCS - Crew Chief (74-76)], [AEAO/40ADIV (74-76)], [SAC Hq - Planner (88-90)].

Amount Enclosed:

Initial Fee (\$10.00)

Annual Dues (\$15.00)

Reinstatement (\$10.00)

Initial membership requires the payment of the initial fee and dues for the year (\$25.00). Dues are for the period 1 Jan through 31 Dec. Dues are due the first day of January (\$15.00) each year. A reinstatement fee, plus current dues is due for inactive members who wish to reactivate their membership after an absence of two years or more (\$25.00).

Please indicate your preferences regarding the publication of you name and address on membership rosters which may be provided to the membership of ACCA.

I authorize my; Name and Address to be published on ACCA rosters to the general membership
 Neither are to be published on ACCA rosters to the general membership.

Send to: SAC/ACCA
James Kroskey, Treasurer
501 Foxwood Dr.
Jacksonville, AR 72076



SAC Airborne Command Control Assn. REUNION 2004 Registration Form Omaha, Nebraska: SEP 22 - 26, 2004

Attendee Name(s): _____
(List all attendees; member, spouse, guest)

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone No. _____

I am a former ACCS Squadron Commander?: Yes No

Mail Registration form to:
SAC ACCA
Jim Krosky, Treasurer
501 Foxwood Dr
Jacksonville, AR 72076
Tel (501) 982-9483

To obtain a reservation at the Downtown Double Tree hotel, Telephone 1-800-222-8733. This registration form does not include hotel reservation or cost.

Reunion Attendance requires current membership in the SAC ACCA. Members may bring guests.

The complete Reunion Package price is \$191.00 per attendee. It includes Registration, Reception (Wed), Buffet Dinner (Thu), Banquet (Sat) and the tours listed below. Registration must be received before 25 August 2004.

Note: You DO NOT have to select the package price, you may select individually those items priced out below. Enter the number that will be attending each event and multiply out the total line for each event if selecting individually.

| Event Date | Event | No. Persons | Cost Each | Total |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|--------------|-------|
| Sep 2004 | | | | |
| Wed 22 nd | Registration Fee (includes Wed reception) | | X \$45.00 | |
| Thu 23 rd | Strategic Air & Space Museum (includes transportation) | | X \$25.00 | |
| | Buffet Dinner | | X \$32.00 | |
| Fri 24 th | Offutt Aircraft Tour & River City Star Boat Cruise w/Dinner | | X \$49.00 | |
| Sat 25 th | Banquet (Beef & Chicken combo) | | X \$40.00 | |
| Total amount for all events selected: | | | | |

Note: Early submission of your registration form is greatly appreciated as it helps with planning the numbers, activities and especially transportation when required. Registration forms received after 5 September 2004 can not be accepted. SEE YOU IN Omaha for the 10th Anniversary of the SAC ACCA

*SAC Airborne Command Control Assn.
Steve Leazer, Secretary
6141 Bagley Avenue
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277-2502*

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SAC ACCA
Reunion 2004
Omaha, Nebraska
September 22—26, 2004