



The SAC ACCA Flyer

Strategic Air Command
Airborne Command Control Association

Recording, Preserving and Celebrating the Legacy of PACCS

Volume XVII Issue 2

June 2011

Letter Concerning Our President-Emeritus, Jack Suggs

Dear Friends:

Were he able to write, he would be doing so instead of me. I don't know many details of his time in the USAF but do know he loved his service career and all of you who were in some way connected to him. His mind is such now that he wouldn't be able to tell you what he had for lunch, but could tell you when, where and what occurred on almost any given day spent with a good many of you.

I do apologize for not sending Christmas greeting cards this year. The season was most difficult for both of us. In June, I had to put him in an assisted living complex where he would receive proper care. I had been his sole caretaker until I almost had a breakdown as I had some personal physical problems plus a couple of surgeries. Under my doctor's advice I had to do the most difficult thing I had ever done-find a nice care home for him. But I did and he is very content and happy as he has some new "ex-military" buddies to talk with, excellent food, personal care as needed and a wonderful staff.

His address is: Jack Suggs
River Road Assisted Living
592 Bever Drive NE
Keizer, OR 97303

Phone (503) 363-1247

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Folded Wings

Major Ronald W. Koeppel
September 8, 2010

Marjory Lyneille Leech
March 14, 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write my newsletter submission I'm struck by how fast time flies and how we are now about fourteen months from our next reunion. Planning for this reunion has been slower than I would like for a couple of reasons. First, work and travel have not let up and I find myself gone more than here at home. Second, as I try to map out a Washington D.C. reunion, it strikes me that we have too darn many places from which to pick and too short a time to see them all.

Before I get into the reunion, let me just say that Fred is still leading the charge to get 8049 inside and to get the restoration underway. He has written, called and spoken with many different people in the past several months. The Strategic Air & Space Museum in Ashland, Nebraska which was built to preserve the memory of SAC has done nothing when it comes to aircraft No. 63-8049. He has written them several

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The 2d Airborne Command and Control Squadron

Greg Ogletree, SAC ACCA Historian

Editor's Note: This is the concluding portion of an article that first appeared in the February 2011 issue.

Some SAC ABNCP veterans are prone to brag that during the entire time between 3 February 1961 and 24 July 1990, at least one *Looking Glass* aircraft was always in the air and on station, but that's not true. Some may find it comforting to know that, even in SAC, humanitarian concerns sometimes took priority over the desire to always be "on station and on alert." In 1963, the Airborne Command Post landed for 20 minutes to transfer a sick crew member to an ambulance. By February 1971, the tenth anniversary of continuous airborne alert operations, the 20 minutes had stretched to 3 hours and 34 minutes - Mother Nature and Murphy's Law sometimes win out despite our best efforts! The following year, the *Looking Glass* once again aborted airborne operations so that a heart attack victim could be rushed to a hospital. ¹⁶ Ironically, an unplanned landing of the "continuously airborne" *Looking Glass* was also featured in a fictional story told that very same year on the television.

The first national publicity for the squadron on "the tube" was when the *Looking Glass* was featured in several episodes of the popular series, *Lassie*. The story, titled "Peace Is Our Profession," was broadcast in 1972 in four back-to-back installments. In Part 2 (Season 18, Episode 15), *Lassie* befriends a diabetic poodle named Sparky who stows away on the *Looking Glass* to be with his owner - but Sparky hasn't had his daily insulin shot. The story continues in Part 3 (Season 18, Episode 16) when Sparky is discovered aboard the aircraft but, as the 8-hour tour of duty continues, he begins to show signs of sinking into a diabetic coma. Just in the nick of time, the aircraft is permitted to land early and Sparky is saved. The four-part story (Part 1 involved a *Minuteman* missile and Part 4 featured a B-52 bomber crew) was later released as a 93-minute movie with the same title. Viewers

¹⁶ Maj. Louis F. Borne, Jr., suffered what ended up being a fatal heart attack while acting as Airborne Battle Staff Chief on the *Looking Glass* flight. ("History and Facts on the SAC Airborne Command Post and the 2d Airborne Command and Control Squadron" - 1986; and abstract from Document K-WG-55 -HI V.1, Inclusive dates 72/04/01 to 72/06/30.)

2010-2012

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President-Emeritus Letter From Page 1

If you call, he is most lucid during the morning and early afternoon. They have their main meal at 12:00 so he's not in his room from 11:45 until 12:30.

Jack's neurologist is in Portland and she has added to and adjusted his medications for some improvement of his mind. He is most content now and has less confusion.

The VA has refused any monetary help at all as he apparently did not have "boots on the ground" and a possibility of being exposed to Agent Orange. If he said that happened and he had landed there his word alone was not sufficient- he had to have a log book to reveal this had occurred! I was also told that when he retired he was asked if he had anything wrong with him. He said "no" (apparently he should have said "yes"- Thirty years from now, I will have Parkinson's Disease as well as dementia!) Oh yes,- it's so invigorating dealing with government employees!!

I do hope you are all well and had a good time in Seattle- so sorry we weren't able to be there. I'm afraid our days of going anywhere have come to an end. Should any of you be in the Northwest, please know we would love a visit. We have a little used guest bedroom and bath.

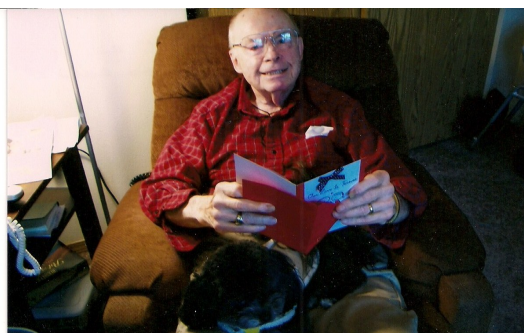
I have also enclosed a couple of pictures taken on February 14th-our 26th anniversary.

Love,

Jack & Jan



Living Room
at
The Woods



Reading a
Greeting Card
Received
on 26th
Anniversary

President's Message From Page 1

times but has received only one response.

In an attempt to get some help, Fred wrote to General Chain, a former CINCSAC, and now a member of the museum's Board of Directors. (See copy on pages 9 and 10.) He not only responded to Fred but also wrote a letter to Mr. Dave Scott, Chairman of the Museum's Board. General Chain's letter is a great endorsement of how important it is to preserve this aircraft and the mission it accomplished for so long noting "its importance in winning the cold war cannot be overstated. There is not an airplane in the museum that equals its importance."

With that in mind, Fred, George Birch and Clif Sonberg met with the Director of the PIMA Air & Space Museum in Tucson to see if they would take one of the aircraft and make it a "walk thru" display. Unfortunately, PIMA pointed out that the National Air Force Museum, which owns all the aircraft, does not allow this. In one last attempt, I asked Fred to see if PIMA might take a cross section of the aircraft from the Communications Compartment to the Battle Staff area, with glass at each end, to at least allow people to see the aircraft's configuration. This could be part of a larger display on the "135" with all the missions it's performed over the years.

I would ask each member of SAC ACCA to take a moment and please write and/or call the Strategic Air & Space Museum (28210 West Park Highway, Ashland, NE, 68003; 402-944-3100) to tell them how displeased you are that they are not living up to its mission of preserving the legacy of SAC and how disappointed you are that 8049 sits out back deteriorating for lack of a home.

Again, the reunion is coming along slowly. Ed Bowman, who volunteered to help me, and I have talked on the telephone and will be meeting to map out our plan for events. The good news is we have a hotel. It is the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, Old Town Alexandria. It provides free shuttle service to and from Reagan National Airport, Old Town Alexandria and the local Metro Rail station. The room rate is \$139 per night. In order to get a better room rate I asked in the October *Flyer* if anyone objected to moving the reunion dates to August. Based on that input, the dates are August 22-26, 2012. The hotel's website is www.hioldtownalexandriahotel.com and the phone number for reservations is 703-548-6300. We have a block of twenty rooms set under SAC ACCA.

By our next newsletter we will have the full agenda and associated costs ready for you. As I mentioned earlier, the problem isn't finding things to do but selecting the very best of all the things available.

of the movie who have flown *Looking Glass* missions will know that the crew was an actual 2 ACCS crew and the aircraft was a real EC-135. It was completely authentic.

Additional exposure on the TV followed in other programs. The second television broadcast was a documentary series called *First Strike*, aired in 1979 by CBS. Once again, the scenes of Air Force personnel aboard the SAC ABNCP are of actual 2 ACCS battle staff members responding to an exercise message, although the footage is edited in such a way that they appear to be receiving and responding to an actual go-to-war message. This footage was used again four years later in the very provocative movie, *The Day After*, broadcast in late 1983 by ABC. The next year, HBO featured the SAC ABNCP in their film, *Countdown to Looking Glass*. This production featured real-life newscasters Eric Sevareid and Nancy Dickerson as themselves, and also former United States Senator Eugene McCarthy and then-United States Representative Newt Gingrich, also appearing as themselves, which gave the story an air of authenticity - much like a docudrama. Finally, in 1990, another HBO Original Movie, called *By Dawn's Early Light*, was released. It not only featured the *Looking Glass* but also the NEACP! Unlike the previous HBO production, however, this film was pure drama. After the Cold War ended, there was much less interest in dramas about a nuclear holocaust.

The end of the Cold War brought with it the end of the Emergency Rocket Communications System (ERCS) at Whiteman AFB, Missouri. The system was decommissioned in 1991 and its related components on EC-135 ABNCP aircraft were switched off permanently. But new systems were being switched on for the first time. On 28 January 1991, the squadron flew its first 100 percent effective PACER LINK II operational *Looking Glass* sortie.

The next month marked the 30th anniversary of airborne operations for *Looking Glass*. Approximately 150 squadron and wing personnel, along with dignitaries from Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, attended the special ceremonies. And like for the Silver Anniversary, a special patch was made to commemorate the event.

Not quite two years after continuous airborne alerts ceased, rumors of the demise of the EC-135 fleet, itself, were appearing in print.¹⁷ The decision had been made to replace

¹⁷ "Last EC-135 retiring" by Neil Munro-Air Force Times, 23 Mar 1992, p.32.

the aircraft with the Navy's E-6 TACAMO, a much newer and more robust aircraft.

On 1 June 1992, SAC was inactivated but its airborne command post was considered too important to send to the "boneyard" yet. The battle staff, which previously had been all 2 ACCS personnel, became a multi-service organization staffed by the new US Strategic Command (STRATCOM), which was activated on the same day SAC furled its flag. The AEAO, who previously had always been a SAC general officer, could now be any flag officer (general or admiral). Each was the personal representative of the commander-in-chief of STRATCOM (i.e., essentially the wartime CINCSTRAT).

Not surprisingly, an attempt was made to officially replace the name *Looking Glass* with *ABNCP* (pronounced "ab-un-cop"). The regulations were changed, but old-timers clung tenaciously to the former name with an endearing loyalty and slowly but surely *Looking Glass* found its way back onto the printed page.

By 31 December 1992, the last of the old "Phase II" ALCS aircraft had either been retired or upgraded to the Common/PACER LINK configuration. This was something eagerly anticipated by the Nuclear Weapons System Safety Group because the old Phase II weapon system did not require the "SIOP unlock" codes to effect launch of the nation's ICBM fleet. The new Common ALCS system was useless in wartime without them.

Since the closure of the 4 ACCS at Ellsworth AFB in late 1992, and consequent relocation of ALCS initial training operations - a formal Air Force School - to the 2 ACCS at Offutt, the commander of the 2 ACCS had also officially been the Commandant, ALCS Operational Readiness Training School. The title changed when the school was officially renamed the ALCS Combat Crew Training School (CCTS) on 1 January 1994, but the commander didn't wear his commandant's hat very much longer because the ALCS CCTS was functionally transferred from the 2 ACCS to HQ AFSPC/DO on April 1st.¹⁸ Someone at Headquarters Space apparently had an inkling of what was going to happen in just a few more months.

¹⁸ HQ AFSPC/DOM msg, 111700Z Apr 94, to 55 OG/CC and 2 ACCS/CC & 2 ACCS/ALCS-CCTS

SAC ACCA Charter Renewal

Once again, a well-deserved *Thank You* is owed to Jack Gatewood for coordinating the renewal of SAC ACCA's charter with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations. Copies are maintained in the files of both the Association's Secretary and the Treasurer. He has faithfully accomplished this task annually since 1998.

Air Force Memories

Julia Knutson

My deceased husband, Gordon R. Knutson, Maj USAF Ret, was assigned to the 4th ACCS at Ellsworth AFB, 1970-72. (Reflex alert status to Minot AFB).

Upon commissioning in September of 1965 (Mustang, enlisted 9/8/60) through the Airman Education and Commissioning Program, with a BSEE, Oklahoma State University, he was assigned to HQ Security Service, Kelly AFB, San Antonio, TX. His work was classified.

He later told a story on himself: Entering an advanced degree program, he was reassigned to SAC, trained as a Minuteman (underground) crew member. During training, the class took a break. He was sitting on the corner of a desk, fiddling with the subject of the day, a "black box." The instructing Colonel, seeing this, became visibly upset, ordering him to immediately desist; "You'll break the codes!" His reply did not endear him to said officer: "Sir, if I did, it would be a defective unit. I built the thing!"

I am seriously considering the 2012 convention in Washington D.C. as I have a brother in Baltimore, with niece and nephew in the area, and also love Colonial Williamsburg. My email address, published in this issue's membership listing, reflects my past.

Editor's Comment: Mrs. Knutson was a teaching guide at 'London Town Publik House and Gardens', a county-owned museum south of Annapolis, which she recommends while you're in Washington DC next year, and still maintains her costumes and artifacts for occasional life-style lectures. She last appeared in the June 2007 issue of this newsletter on page 3 concerning a suggestion for donating USAF artifacts. A copy can be found on the association's website: www.sac-acca.org.

'Combat Lightning'

Wilton O. Curtis, *Flyer Editor*

Edwin L. Hersey, CMSgt., USAF [Ret.]

Charles L. Jones, SMSgt., USAF [Ret.]

According to information found on page 4 in *DefenseTODAY magazine* - www.ausairpower.net/DT-Smart-AAR-0705.pdf - "The KC-135 Combat Lightning and EC-130 airborne communications relays orbited areas of operation to provide wide area VHF/UHF coverage primarily for supporting air force operations. The seven Combat Lightning KC-135s were specifically tasked as relays to support fighter operations over North Vietnam, providing extended radio footprint coverage for up to three EC-121 College Eye AEW&C aircraft and a single EC-121K Rivet Top ELINT aircraft, with KC-135 relay orbits usually situated over the Gulf of Tonkin. Numerous sources credit the Combat Lightning relays with playing a critical role in defeating NVA MiG and SAM operations."

Footnote No. 7 of Historian Greg Ogletree's article, *At the Tail End of the Cold War: EC-135s Fly in a Hot War!*, stated that "at least two EC-135L's (0263 and 0281) were apparently used in Vietnam, based at U-Tapao, to augment the specially modified KC-135s performing 'Combat Lightning' missions during the early 1970s" (See SAC ACCA FLYER, February 2011). This reference caught the attention of member, Charlie Jones, who recalls being assigned as a Radio Operator on these modified KC-135A aircraft.

I went to Kadena AB, Okinawa in September 1972 to fly on 'Combat Lightning' and flew thirty-nine missions from 25 Sep 1972 - 1 Feb 1973, a total of 473 hours of flying time, before returning to Offutt AFB, Nebraska. There were seven aircraft involved - KC-135A tail numbers 61-0268, 270, 271, 280 303, 321 and 61-8881.

Our radio team consisted of two Radio Operators and two Radio Maintenance personnel. It was normally three hours of flying to arrive for changeover, six hours on station and three hours back to Kadena. If we stayed longer we went to U-Tapao (U.T.) for refueling and then returned to Kadena. One mission was sent to Clark AFB, Philippines for fuel and then back to Kadena.

In April 1975, I received orders to return to U.T. to run 'Combat Lightning,' my second tour to Southeast Asia. Arriving on a Friday evening and being told to re-

Just weeks before the 2 ACCS ceased to exist, the CINCSTRAT aircraft and Command Crew were merged into the squadron, effective 1 May 1994. Their office symbol was 2 ACCS/CCK. ¹⁹ That became "7 ACCS/CCK" in July, because...

On 20 July 1994, the 2 ACCS was inactivated in a ceremony conducted in the auditorium of the Billy L. Skipworth Operations Center. It was replaced by the 7 ACCS. In reality, though, only the squadron's name, guidon, and patch changed; the same people remained in the same place doing the same mission with the same aircraft. The final commander of the 2 ACCS, Lt Col Thomas L. Peterson, became the first commander of the 7 ACCS in its new location at Offutt.

The 2 ACCS did not die quietly; in fact, it went kicking and screaming. No one in the squadron or the wing thought replacing the 2 ACCS with the 7 ACCS was the right thing to do. For that matter, no one in the EC-130-equipped 7 ACCS wanted to assume the lineage and honors of the 42 ACCS either. The colonels were quite vocal in their opposition to these redesignations and made calls up the chain of command, but the order had come from the Chief of Staff, General Merrill A. McPeak, whose "Heritage Preservation Initiative" was intended "to prevent the piecemeal loss of our legacy." According to the U.S. Air Force's official website: "More than any chief before him, he was also determined to preserve the heritage of the Air Force. During organization downsizing, he introduced a systematic method for retaining historic units on the active list." McPeak's controversial focus on preserving the heritage of prominent units used a rather complicated formula that, without getting into the nitty-gritty details, ranked the 42 ACCS above the 7 ACCS, and both above the 2 ACCS. Ironically, the 7 ACCS and, eventually even the 42 ACCS, ultimately "folded their wings." From our perspective, anyway, it was a flawed initiative that only infuriated unit members and destroyed morale. But McPeak didn't care what the units wanted; in fact, he readily admitted that "We will no doubt take some criticism for this." ²⁰ In his mind, legacy was more important than morale - he was focused on tomorrow rather than the here-and-now.

¹⁹ 2 ACCS Weekly Times, 11 May 1994.

²⁰ Air Force Heritage - General Merrill A. McPeak, Air Force Chief of Staff (Air Force News Agency, undated).

Speaking of heritage, the 2 ACCS had an official patch; in fact, it had several of them! But their story is so long and convoluted that it warrants a separate article, which will be published soon.

During its two dozen years, the 2 ACCS was commanded by twenty-one colonels: ²¹

Col Billy L. Skipworth (1 Apr 1970-13 Jun 1971)
Lt Col Van E. Ross (13 Jun 1971-10 Oct 1971)
Lt Col Morton C. Blaisdale (10 Oct 1971-15 Oct 1972)
Lt Col Joe B. Purkhiser (15 Oct 1972-31 May 1973)
Col Donald M. Griffin (31 May 1973-12 Nov 1973)
Lt Col Jacob R. Gross (12 Nov 1973-11 Jan 1974)
Lt Col Richard S. Wallace (11 Jan 1974-19 Aug 1974)
Lt Col Donald M. Carter (19 Aug 1974-9 Apr 1976)
Lt Col James C. Clary (9 Apr 1976-1 Jul 1976)
Lt Col Paul R. O'Brien, Jr. (1 Jul 1976-1 Jul 1977)
Lt Col Merlin F. Stevens (1 Jul 1977-2 Jul 1978)
Lt Col James W. Morrow, Jr. (2 Jul 1978-2 Jul 1980)
Lt Col Bruce S. Goodhue (1 Jul 1980-9 Jul 1982)
Lt Col Robert D. Cords (9 Jul 1982-25 May 1984)
Lt Col Gene E. Englund (25 May 1984-1 Feb 1986)
Lt Col Thomas C. Fleckton (1 Feb 1986-8 Dec 1986)
Lt Col John J. McGuffee (8 Dec 1986-7 Oct 1988)
Lt Col Kenneth S. Turner (7 Oct 1988-8 Jan 1990)
Lt Col John W. Staley (8 Jan 1990-6 Jun 1991)
Lt Col Ralph L. Swan (6 Jun 1991-22 Jun 1992)
Lt Col Thomas L. Peterson (22 Jun 1992-19 Jul 1994)

Even though General McPeak killed the 2 ACCS, he could not tarnish its illustrious record. The 2d Airborne Command and Control Squadron was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award eight times, covering a cumulative period of just over 14 years - more than half of its life. Specifically, the periods were: 1 Jul 1970-30 Jun 1971; 1 Jul 1972-30 Jun 1974; 1 Jul 1974-30 Jun 1976; 1 Jul 1976-30 Jun 1978; 1 Jul 1978-30 Jun 1980; 1 Jul 1987-30 Jun 1989; 1 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1991; and 1 Apr 1993-30 Jun 1994. Coupled with its flight hours and total sorties, the squadron's record was one in which its members took great pride - and rightly so! >>>>

²¹ This is a consolidation of information contained in a list prepared on 11 Jun 2010 by Dr. Robert B. Kane of the Air Force Historical Research Agency, and a list titled "Previous Looking Glass Commanders" that was on the last page of the program folder for the 7 ACCS Change of Command Ceremony on 4 Oct 1994. Variances between the two were resolved by Dr. Kane using the official histories of the 55 SRW. Unfortunately, official orders were not available for review. If anyone has documentation that contradicts dates or name spellings, please forward it to me!

After all, many claim that, more than anything else, it was the presence of the *Looking Glass* that convinced the Soviets that a nuclear strike against the United States would be folly. A number of factors contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union but there can be no doubt that the 2 ACCS and its *Looking Glass* aircraft not only helped prevent Doomsday but were also principal players in the winning of the Cold War.

SOURCES: Some of the above has been extracted from my article, "A History of PACCS, ACCS and ALCS" that was published in four installments in *The SAC ACCA Flier* (Newsletter of the SAC Airborne Command Control Association) from October 1995 through February 1997, and in my article titled "History of the 'LOOKING GLASS' Airborne Command Post." Information not otherwise footnoted came from notes I made while reviewing the squadron's scrapbook in 1993; official Fact Sheets; the booklet, *Peace...is our Profession: Alert Operations and the Strategic Air Command, 1957-1991* (Office of the Historian, HQ SAC, 7 Dec 1991); *The Development of Strategic Air Command, 1946-1986* (Office of the Historian, HQ SAC, 1 Sep 1986); and reliable Internet sources, such as Carl Brown's site at 2ACCS.com. Until I visited his Website, I didn't know that one of those killed when the shuttle *Columbia* came apart during reentry had once piloted the *Looking Glass* while a member of the 2 ACCS.

Editor's Note: The articles published in the Association's newsletter, the Flyer, that are referenced above in his SOURCES can be found on the SAC ACCA Web Site:

www.sac-acca.org

Available SAC ACCA Merchandise

Item #	Item Description	Item Sale Price
101	Caps, SAC ACCA	\$12.00
111	Coin, PACCS Memorial, Silver	\$ 8.70
106	Lapel Pins, SAC ACCA	\$ 4.60
103	Patches, SAC ACCA	\$ 4.80

To order, contact the Treasurer. Please make your check payable to SAC ACCA. Note that the price includes shipping.

EMAIL ROSTER

The enclosed insert is considered confidential and for the use of members only. Do not copy or distribute to others. Please send the secretary any changes.



PATCHES

Wilton Curtis

These patches were presented at an appreciation luncheon for volunteers at the Virginian War Memorial in recognition of having the most volunteer hours last year. Knowing of my interest in PACCS history, they were obtained by the curator at an auction of the estate of a deceased collector who had a very large number of military patches which he had amassed over the years.

A contact with Jim Maloney, www.55wa.org web-guy, noted that "throughout the 1980s (and I'm sure other times) it became popular for crew members to design and wear (unofficial) patches on the right shoulder of their flight suit. Very often, the patches were made during a Recce TDY to Kadena AB. 'Mission' or 'hours' patches were very common during this time for both the 'Glass' and 'Recce' Crewmembers."

Perhaps some SAC ACCA members also recall them and might wish to comment. If so, please contact the Association's Secretary.

port for work the next morning, I advised that I had not yet cleared base or anything but they did not care.

Reporting to work on Saturday morning, I learned that they were going to support the evacuation of Phnom Penh. I did not fly that mission but got it off and it was successful. I ended up with MSgt Turner and eight other young operators, two of whom were female. I held classes on the equipment and procedures for the new R.O's and kept control of the eight. We would take extra personnel so we could train them on the mission. Some were quick to learn and did a good job for me. I flew thirty-two missions for a total of 189 hours during this time.

On 30 April 1975, we supported the evacuation of Saigon. We flew two aircraft on the first sortie and had one relief aircraft relieve us. I flew 9.4 hours on this mission and upon landing at U.T. was told to eat and be ready for a second mission as soon as the aircraft was turned around. The second mission, 8.9 hours, was flown at night and was cleared to return as soon as the U.S. Ambassador was out of Saigon about 3:00 AM.

Things were winding down by the end of December 1975 and we were told to start shutting down the operation. The other eight PCS'd to the States. I flew on the lead aircraft and did the HF reporting on movement of fighters to Clark and Guam for awhile until Sgt Turner and I returned to Kadena and volunteered to help in TAC COMM while awaiting orders. It was March 1976 when I finally transferred to Offutt AFB and flew on the "Glass" until retirement on 1 June 1978.

Charlie telephoned another member, Ed Hersey, who wrote that on Nov 28, 1972, he was assigned six months Temporary Duty (TDY) to the Combat Lightning Operation located at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan as NCOIC. (There was no Commissioned Officer assigned to this operation.) His account follows:

We were tasked with the responsibility of providing two radio operators per flight. We also had two Communications Repair Technicians on the Team. Our missions consisted of four 12-hour flights, per day, to the Gulf of Tonkin, where we orbited for six hours. Our EC-135 aircraft flight crew was made up of pilot, co-pilot, navigator and boom operator. The plane had been specially modified for this operation.

I flew eighteen of these missions while attached to the 376th Strat Wing at Kadena. Charlie Jones and I flew to-

gether on some of these missions.

During Linebacker II on a mission in December 1972, a B-52 bombing Hanoi and Haiphong, North Vietnam was hit over the target and directed to U-Tapao Air Base in Thailand for recovery. We were flying our mission in the Gulf of Tonkin and were held beyond our normal six-hour orbit. Because we could not be relieved during the B-52 bombing mission, we ran low on fuel. Our flight crew was directed to escort the damaged bomber to U-Tapao. We were critically low on fuel upon arriving there and were directed to land ahead of the B-52. After landing and while taxiing to Operations, we saw the bomber land. Because its hydraulics were shot out, it could not stop in time and crashed into a hill at the end of the runway. To the best of my recollection, the co-pilot and gunner survived but the latter was in critical condition so after we had been re-fueled, we were directed to air-evac him and a doctor to Clark AFB, Philippines.

On February 1, 1973, the Combat Lightning operation was relocated to U-Tapao Airfield, Thailand, and attached to the 310th Strat Wing where we continued our missions. On May 23, 1973, my six months TDY was up and I returned to Offutt AFB, Nebraska and resumed my position with the 2ACCS as NCOIC of Radio Operations with the Looking Glass operation until retiring in September 1975.

- (1) Note: The Linebacker II Mission was conducted with SAC B-52 aircraft bombing Hanoi and Haiphong which resulted in the North Vietnamese returning to the peace table in Paris, which brought about the end of the Vietnam conflict.
- (2) Note: After a Combat Lightning mission, the pilot remarked "That was the first time I had to fly a crew of non-commissioned officers to work."

Robert S. Hopkins, III, notes on page 126 in his excellent book, *Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker, More Than Just A Tanker*, that "The most widely known but least understood KC-135A airborne command post is the KC-135A-VIII 'Combat Lightning.' Along with two EC-135Ls serving in a temporary capacity, these seven KC-135As were part of the Air Force's Lockheed EC-121T AS&CS program, which provided long range air situation control in Southeast Asia."

Thanks go to Charlie and Ed for providing their personal recollections of this unique program. If there are other members who wish to share, please contact the association's secretary.



Strategic Air Command Airborne Command Control Association

Recording, Preserving and Celebrating the Legacy of PACCS

April 21, 2011

General John T. Chain, Jr., USAF [Ret.]
Board of Directors
Strategic Air & Space Museum
28210 West Park Highway
Ashland, Nebraska 68003

Dear General Chain:

Please permit us to extend heartfelt greetings on behalf of the members of the Strategic Air Command Airborne Command Control Association (SAC ACCA). A number of us had the privilege and honor of having served under your leadership when you were Commander in Chief of SAC. Especially memorable is the historical, final, continuous airborne alert mission of 'Looking Glass' on 24 July 1990 with you aboard as AEAO.

Our organization, which has conducted biennial reunions since 1994, is dedicated to recording, preserving and celebrating the legacy of PACCS. Towards this goal, on 16 October 2008, a polished granite bench was formally dedicated at the National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF) at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio. This was the culmination of President-Emeritus, Colonel Jack Suggs, USAF [Ret.], 3 ACCS Commander's vision to "develop a memorial to recognize those members of the Strategic Air Command who operated and maintained the Post Attack Command Control System."

We are now embarked on a mission to get EC-135C aircraft, tail number 63-8049, restored and placed inside the Strategic Air & Space Museum (SASM). Members of our, as well as fellow organizations, are deeply saddened by its current state of deterioration while parked behind the museum exposed to the harsh elements of weather. This plane represents an irreplaceable piece of Air Force history and deserves better as do the dedicated airmen who were fortunate enough to have been associated with it. Individuals like recently deceased member, John H. Miller, Lt. Col. USAF [Ret.], who stated in one of our past newsletters "my HQ SAC Airborne Command Post/Underground Command Post and 2AF AUXCP PACCS duties are among my most memorable assignments." He amassed more than three-hundred-fifty flights totaling 2,867.15 airborne hours with many of those missions as a battle staff member aboard aircraft 8049.

In communicating with the SASM's Interim Executive Director, Evonne Williams, as to the current status of the aircraft, she replied "I too, am disappointed that this aircraft has not yet been restored or moved one inch since it came to rest behind the Museum in 1998. I can tell you that there have been more discussions about this aircraft, but like everything, funding is an issue. I cannot tell you a

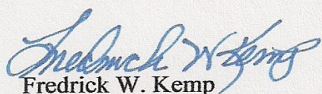
General John T. Chain, Jr.
April 21, 2011
Re: Restoration of Aircraft 8049
Page 2

timeline at this point in time, as my title is 'Interim' and I am unable to make a commitment of this type given that status." An additional communication, sent to her requesting (1) How much money has already been received towards the restoration and (2) Is there a place inside to put the aircraft if it is restored, has yet to be answered as of this date.

According to information posted on the SASM's web site it has now been more than eighteen years (March 2, 1993) since the plane was "dropped from inventory by transfer to the Strategic Air & Space Museum." The time to move forward is now. You may rest assured that our entire membership is vitally interested in this project.

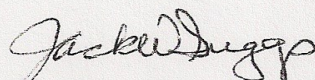
General Chain, we earnestly request your assistance in determining what the museum's plans are for the aircraft. If further information is needed, please do not hesitate to correspond with our project coordinator. We look forward to your reply and wish to thank you, in advance, for your consideration of our request.

With warmest regards,

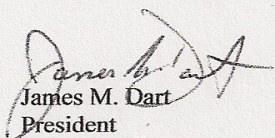


Fredrick W. Kemp
8049 Restoration Project Coordinator
2356 S. Orchard View Drive
Green Valley, AZ 85614

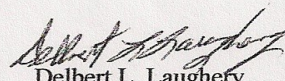
SAC ACCA Board



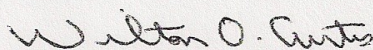
Jack W. Suggs
President-Emeritus



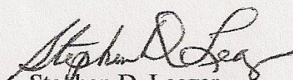
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Strategic Air Command Airborne Command Control Association SAC ACCA

Recording, Preserving and Celebrating the Legacy of PACCS

Membership Application or Annual Dues Renewal Form

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)], [55th 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) Year(s) _____ Reinstatement (\$10.00)

If paying annual dues, please indicate for what year(s) you are enclosing payment. The current paid year for your dues will be found in parentheses on the mailing label of your most recent newsletter.

New memberships require the payment of the initial fee and dues for the year (\$25.00). Dues are for the period 1 Jan through 31 Dec and 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 preference regarding the publication of your name and address on membership rosters which may be provided to the membership of SAC ACCA.

I authorize: _____ Name, U.S. Mail and Email addresses on ACCA rosters to the general membership.
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Send to:

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Steve Leazer, Treasurer
5669 Cahuilla Avenue
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277-1419

Make your check out to:

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**SAC Airborne Command Control Association
Wilton O. Curtis, Secretary
2319 Pleasant Run Drive
Richmond, VA 23238-3026**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



2 ACCS Patch - Courtesy , Dale Balmer, www.sac-acca.org