

THE



Holiday Newsletter

FIREBREATHER



NO. 12 WINTER '91



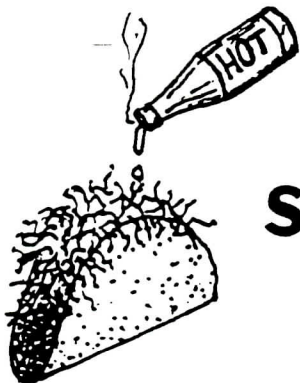
512 TFS Squadron Portrait, October 1979

L to R Seated on spine (top): Andy Brakora, Dennis Kavanagh, Dennis Means, Roger Kistler, Phil Tritschler, Tom Lampley, Ricky Repp, Bill Ritter. Standing on wing: Scott Curton, Roger Cook, Mike Lambert, John Barry, Mike Bean, Bill Montgomery. Seated on wing: Gary Morgan, Iris Huizenga, Rich Binns, Pete Jurcek, Dale Watkins, Bill Pomerence, Jim Boggan. Standing on ground: Mark Muth, "Doc" Holliday, John Schwartz, Jim Hegland, Orv Lind, Larry Brown, Dave (?), John

Piazza, Larry Magnuson, Donny Bean, Wayne Weierman, Mort Plumb, Bill Jordan, Hap Ertlschweiger, Dennis Esch, Kirk (?), Al Elliott, Ski (?), Mike Caraker, Skip Bauknight, Steve Hersch. Kneeling: Paul Malter, Stan Parks, Don Wyatt, Pete Diebig, Doug Grewing, Doc Brown, Nick Kehoe, Gramps Jackson, Ken Schanke, Dick Herman, John Zubel, Ed Kamolz, Johnny (?) Grunt GLO, Jerry Cauthen, John Oleksey, and Del Pemberton.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GARY "MO" MORGAN

TACO



SAUCE

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! Well...I hope they were happy. By the time you get this they will be over. Sorry I was unable to get this out before Christmas as planned. A number of things were late arriving and I was extremely busy the past two months too.

You will be quite pleased with the quality of material in this issue. There is more to come in future issues as well. I'd like to particularly thank Gary Morgan and Dave Busheme for the material they submitted. You will be seeing more of it over the next year in subsequent issues.

Please note the Dragon Reunion information under DA Business. We will send out a special bulletin with more specifics soon. Make your plans early to attend and RSVP to Serious ASAP to help with the planning.

I am working to improve the quality of photo reproduction in the Firebreather. I know it has been rather poor in the past (such as the picture that made Ron Owens look like Moses Stewart's brother). I'm exploring alternate methods of reproduction which are still economically feasible.

I completed my F-16 training in October and went back to American in November. My five month review board was due and after being gone for four months I had to do some serious cramming to get back up to speed in the 727. Having to commute to New York to fly for American and to Detroit to fly with my Guard unit took its toll on my personal life over the past two months. There were times when I would fly home from Detroit, swap suitcases in the parking lot and catch a flight to NY for a trip with American or vice versa. I've averaged being home about six nights per month since March. It seemed as if I was only home long enough to unpack, read my mail, then pack up again.

This year has certainly been hell for me, the toughest of my life! However, I survived it due to the terrific support I had from Sally. I couldn't have made it without her. We are among the fortunate, however. Things are about to get much better for us. My transfer to Raleigh with American finally came through. Beginning in January I'll be flying "International" routes to the Caribbean from Raleigh.

There are others deployed to Desert Shield with much less certain futures. They and their families could use your support. In a couple of weeks we could be at war and there are Dragons on the front lines who could become casualties. These are stressful times. Lets write letters to those who are apart from their family members to make this time easier. Lets not forget Phil Bud's family also. As the Spanglers are aware, it takes a long time to get used to the fact that you will never see a loved one again. We are trying to gather addresses of those deployed and will print them in the Firebreather. Please write to let them know we are thinking

about them. Together we can help boost the moral of all less fortunate than ourselves.

I hope 1991 will bring some positive changes to all of you. May love reign over the world and bring peace to all its creatures. To those of you who must risk your lives in support of this ideal and are forced to bring arms to bear against those with evil intentions in the world...KICK ASS and return home quickly and safely!



DRAGON BREATH

Taco,

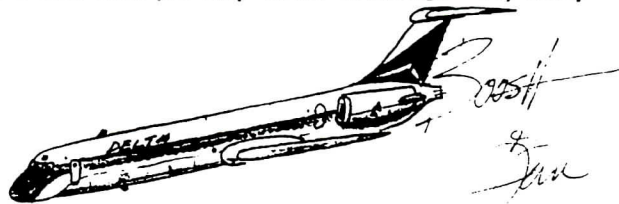
17 Oct 90

Shit, enough already! Send me some ideas as to what you want drawn and I'll try and get it done! In the mean time, I'm sending some old HOG LOG entries I saved from the "Making of a Dragon" series. I'll send the rest when you use these up.

O Jan and I are still working hard on our new home here in the Dallas-Fort Worth area... and life is a little better since the Delta pilot contract was signed. I'm currently flying the MD-88 and Jan's still working as a buyer for American. (How's the contract negotiations going at HAmerican, anyway?) We look forward to a Dragon reunion... understand sometime in February?

I was Delta-Dave on the way to Atlanta a couple of months ago, and I had just given an extremely informative speech to the passengers concerning the Mississippi river when a flight attendant handed me a note from a disappointed individual. Seems he wanted more information, more history AND he wanted me to prove my facts. The signature at the bottom was none other than Mr. Martin-Baker Bardenas Backseat Boomer, Baby Mac himself. I talked to Jim in the jet-way after the flight and he expressed his concern about my possible divorce (he had seen the Dragon roster with the name "Janus" next to my name instead of Janet". I informed him that though while it is true I could not be an airline Captain until I had lost a bundle in a condo deal, bought a pickup truck, and divorced at least once, I was and still am happily married!

Give us a call when you drop in for training. Fly safe,



P.S., The zip code in your article was incorrect, so that helped to deflect some of the mail harassment!

Greetings,

8 OCT 90

Our pleasure to renew membership in the DRAGON ASSOCIATION and subscription to THE FIREBREATHER. Enjoyed reading all of them the past couple years (just read FB-11).

Interesting enough, I had a note to mention Dick Herman's novel, WARBIRDS, on my next letter to FB. But coincidentally, Dick's letter appeared in FB-11 as well as Kelly's book review. Despite paying \$17.95 for hardback when it first came out, my review was kinder & gentler (probably because I know Dick and also know how retired guys need an ego boost whenever we can get one). However, I also think Kelly's review was fair enough. Now that Dick's address is known I can look him up when passing through Sacramento and have Dick autograph my \$17.95 version, AND MAYBE get a copy of his next book (gratis) for me to review!

Now that Wayne W. whereabouts has surfaced maybe we can arrange a rematch of the Plumb-Weierman 1978 head-to-head 100-yard dash in front of the ZAB O'Club. Dragons sober enough to remember didn't give Mort (aka The Ol' Man) a snowballs's chance in ----! But Mort won a close (and surprisingly fast race and WW paid off, probably the first and only wager he ever made. I thought it was a sure thing myself, Wayne! Later at the bar it came out that Mort, in his youth, had been some kind of college field & track champion!... so he said! Needless to say, Mort was "walled" and "shave creamed" that night!

How many viewed 26 Aug '60 MINUTES" and Mike Wallace's segment with a DRAGON major and a female pilot? The subject, women pilots excluded from flying combat fighters. The major spoke his opinion... so did the female pilot; I'll reserve my opinion for the STAG BAR (pun intended)! But more importantly the 512TFS fin flash and DRAGON patch certainly looked good on national TV.

Last Spring, Linda and I traveled to Europe. Sorry to say we were within 100 KMs or so of RMS but didn't get a chance to visit. But our tour did include S. Italy and a visit with John Davey and family at Naples. Gen Davey mentioned that Iron Butterfly was on his staff. Al could not be reached... "conferring" or whatever staff officers call it now days; we use to call it like it was... "racket ball"!

Recent Desert Shield news stories had quotes from 1TFW/CC, Col John McBroom (Boomer was DRAGON Training OIC, circa '77). Heard the 1TFW/CV is Hal Hornberg (Flt CC, '77). That might be an interesting duo and Wing/CC stand-up meeting to visit some day! As a side note, Boomer won his share of 2v2 ACM's one way or another, usually in the debriefing room. The ACM recreations Boomer drew on the blackboard (before gun camera review) could well have been Dick Herman's sources for the fictional combat scenarios that his super-jock, Lt Locke, experienced. Herb Jenneskens, and host of other Dragons, I'm sure will testify to that fact!

We remain eligible for and encourage hospitality checks. Launch from cockpit-alert or pre-planned... all the same to us!

"EASY" ED & LINDA KAMOLZ

P.S. HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

Dear Dragons,

6 OCT 90

Firebreather #11 and Taco's exhortation to write finally got me to compose a letter and pack the envelope with a priceless mother lode of Dragon memorabilia. I send this to Kelly for safekeeping and an opportunity to include material of his choice in the December Firebreather. Hopefully he can make it available for showing at the Reunion. The cornucopia includes:

1. Air Classics Quarterly Review Vol 7 Number 1, 1980 with a feature article on the "new" 512th TFS at Ramstein. Lots of pix, starting with yours truly preflighting the Vulcan, Mark Muth and Iris Huizenga supporting life, Whiskey Whiskey in the cockpit, Hap Ertlschweiger and Scott Curton flight planning, and Phil Tritschler climbing around on a Dragon Rhino (we all looked like children then). Hopefully, this article can be reprinted in an upcoming issue of the Firebreather, or Kelly can take it to a Jiffy Print and make copies available for a small fee to respondents.

2. Several negatives and prints of the famous Dragon Squadron Portrait (for those who might have lost theirs or never got one). Fifty eight Dragons around ol' 512 during the golden days. I am keeping a couple of negatives and some prints, and will try to ID as many folks as I can. It would be nice to send out a 8x10 or 5x7 print (maybe even posters) to respondents for a couple of dollars. An outline identifying each person would also be nice to print in Firebreather (I'll work it--I can remember most of you). I'm sending a couple of prints and negs to Kelly so he can make this available (along with the Paraplegic band cassettes).

3. Contact sheets of pix when the squadron first became operational. Bill Ritter, Herby Jenneskens, Randy Turner, Mike Lambert, Nick Kehoe, JC Clark, Del Pemberton, Lance Thompson, Paul Malter, Dennis Esch, John Zubel, me, Pete Diebig, and Ed Kamolz. These are B&W so maybe Kelly can blow them up and print some in an upcoming Firebreather.

4. Negatives (color) of the squadron's deployment to RAF Wildenrath, shots of our first TDY dinner at Orsini's in Aviano. I also have some slides of Gross Don walking around Copper Ali's in Adana, when we went to Incirlik. Anyone wanting some pix or slides of Dragon jets flying or parked on the ramp at ZAB, I will send these to Kelly to share. I guess we need some type of safekeeping central point, so if I get this stuff to Kelly, it might get some of the dormant Dragon procrastinators to drop him a line.

I run into lots of Dragons-- Col Proctor is now the TAWC Chief of Staff, I'll be working with Andy Dorman in my new shop, Butch Byrd was here when I got here, Furburger works down at Tyndall, etc. I have seen just about every Dragon still on active duty eating a TDY lunch in the Eglin Mini-Mall sometime over the past two years. Jim Szabo just got here and works AMRAAM. I saw several Dragons at George during my frequent TDY's there (T+10, Gross Don, John Zubel, etc.), since it is one of the last Rhino refuges. I heard from Roger Cook up in the Great Lakes area with the reserves

or the guard. It was great to hear from WW, Dick Herman, and to see names like Vern Stephens and Tom Lampley in the latest Firebreather. Well, take care everyone... hopefully we will see some neat historical mementos printed in the next issue. If you roll through Eglin, say hi!

Sincerely,

Gary C. "Mo" Morgan

Taco,

14 OCT 90

Greetings from the Middle East! Am flying the F-4G as a Wild Weasel with the 561st TFS out of George. We rolled in here about eight weeks ago sure we were about to do some combat flying. To date none of that has happened as you know. The real tragedy is that we've already made Saddam 4/5's of an ace by dropping four jets since I've been here (CENTAF I mean, my squadron is doing fine -- touch wood). Make no bones about it, we don't intend to spot him any more jets but, more importantly, we can't and won't stand for losing any more fighter pilots & gators! Nuff said on that ugly subject.

Only other former Dragon crewmembers (that I know of) on base at George are LtCol Dave Harwood (35 TFW/DOT) and Col Ron Karp (35TFW/CC). Other former Dragons (enlisted side) now at George are Msgt Glenn Jenkins...now a maintenance supervisor and Sgt Marlon Minor who works in Base Admin. Out of the Air Force but working at George as a McDonnell Douglas Training Systems Instructor is Rick "Vader" Danzey.

Other Dragons who've floated through since I've been at George include Dave "Sundance" Eberly, Bill Crimmel and "Scooter" Rogers... Oh yeah... Dave "Ripper" Ross was down from Hill when the Vipers were sampling some of our fine winter flying weather.

Well, that's about it from this end. I'll stay in touch. It's doubtful I'll make the reunion if it happens before February... Prior commitments you understand, so please pass on regards to all the old Dragon buds. Till next time, check six!

Paul "POLO" Guzowski

Hey Serious,

9 SEP 90

Long time no see. I figured as long as I was paying dues I'd send you a short note and say hi. Lisa says hi too. I'm still at Bentwaters scheduling A-10 deployments and doing their day-to-day schedules. I've only been here 3+ years and the only Dragons I've seen on this base are General Studer, who left a month after I got here to take over 7th Air Division and a WSO Rick Giffin, who was one of the last WSO's in the 512th before they turned completely to F-16's. So this isn't a Dragon hot spot.

I did see some of the guys at Ramstein last month. Bison is working on closing bases in USAFE; Splat Weis is working on plans, rewriting 4102; JMac just moved from AAFCE to USAFE

DOY, to take over as Chief of that shop; Rick Nelson is still in DOX (plans & exercises); Bob Muncy got selected for LtCol and got a MUNSS squadron at Rimini, Italy (hardship tour); Mark Simmons is in F-16's at Torrejon (and may be enroute to Saudi now), and I'm hoping to return to the states next March or no later than my DEROS in June.

I hear George Bob is at Davis Monthan As a commander of an OA-10 unit -- an OA-10 squadron? George Bob? Oh well, at least he's flying. I haven't flown in almost 7 years -- even though they still pay me.

Take care,

Sleeze

Dear Bob,

4 AUG 90

Here is \$10 for dues and \$25 for Phil Bud's memorial. Margie and I were sick when we read of his death. He was a good friend. He was my AC on my last flight in the F-4. I'll never forget how after, no one met the airplane when we taxied in. Phil showed up at the house that night with a bottle of champagne and his wonderful sense of humor to cheer me up. A good friend who will be missed by many.

Best wishes and tell any Dragons you may run into that I said hello.

Claude Richards

Dear Bob,

4 SEP 90

Here's my dues. Keep up the good work. Nancy and I enjoy each Firebreather. We're still in Dayton Ohio at Wright Patterson. I'm still in the F-15E System Program Office and according to the personnel pukes this is as close to an airplane as I will ever get. I just pinned on LTC the first of July, became a division chief and now spend my days trying to figure out what I'm supposed to be doing. If anybody needs a broken-down F-4 WSO for a flying job give me a call. If anybody wants into the acquisition business call me, no promises, but we can always give it a shot.

Keep the newsletter going.

Pete & Nancy Deibig

HO! HO! HO!

Hello all you Dragons and Dragonettes!

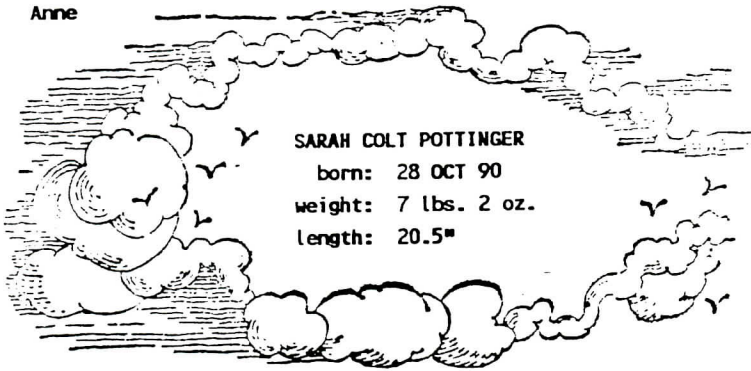
For the DRAGON LORE column this quarter I thought I'd ask Kelly to publish our family Christmas Letter. In addition to the letter, I made up a story for the kids to help make the miracle of Christmas more personal. The following is a complete fabrication. My shallow research was only to confirm correct spelling and describe the "Palma-Cristi" or castor oil tree for you. Regardless, I hope you enjoy the story and thanks for taking the time to read it. FROHLICHE WEIHNACHTEN!!

PFAMIT

Dear Kelly,

Hi! Well - we thought maybe this announcement could make the Christmas Firebreather! I guess Kevin finally pulled enough G's! HA HA!! I also wanted to just say Merry Christmas to you and all DA members! We love the Firebreather - great way to keep up on everyone!

Anne



SARAH COLT POTTINGER
born: 28 OCT 90
weight: 7 lbs. 2 oz.
length: 20.5"

CONGRATULATIONS KEVIN AND ANNE!



REUNION NEWS

by Bob Sirois

DRAGONS!

This is it! The 1991 Dragon reunion. Yes, the reunion you've all been waiting for! The 3rd Dragon reunion is scheduled for February 16-18. So make your plans now!

The basic itinerary will be for your arrival in beautiful Las Vegas on Saturday the 16th for a grand meeting at the Nellis AFB Officer's Club that evening. Sunday will be open in the morning for breakfast and personal visiting, sightseeing, other plans, or whatever you desire. During the day Sunday we hope to have several Dragon activities planned in the Las Vegas area. This will include the Dragon group photo. The big event will take place on Sunday night...

THE DRAGON FOOT RALLY!

At the conclusion of the foot rally, we will have a dinner buffet and general business, speeches, sobbing, laughing, and whatever else you can dream up.

Arrival and RTB will be at your discretion. Monday is a holiday so hopefully it will make travel convenient. Whenever you decide to arrive and depart is up to you.

Because of the unpredictable numbers we may have, we ask that you make your own arrangements for lodging through a travel agent for that weekend. Because its a holiday, we also recommend that you do it soon. In addition, please drop a quick postcard to me at:

Sirois
394 Steprock Court
Henderson, NV 89014

This will allow Jeff "Blackheart" Fee and I to make arrangements for a buffet on Sunday night in addition to our other activities. If you can't write, call. The number is: (702) 458-4316. If we're not home leave a message on the answering machine.

The Dragon reunion promises to be great this year as usual. Please make your plans soon and let us know you're coming. See you all in February.

MORE DETAILS WILL FOLLOW IN A SPECIAL MAILER TO COME SOON.

Potential Hotels:

PALACE STATION HOLIDAY INN
(702) 367-2411 1-800-465-4329 Worldwide Res.

SHOWBOAT HACIENDA
(702) 385-9164 (702) 739-8911

* THE EXCALIBUR (New, owned by Circus Circus, across the 1-800-937-7777 strip from the Tropicana)

MOTEL 6 (They keep the light on for you)
(702) 798-0728

SIROIS' or FEES' (Quality floor space to the 1st takers)
(702) 458-4316

YOUR DRAGON ASSOCIATION OFFICERS ARE:

President: Kelly Rudy Secretary: Jamie Ferbezar
VP/Euro-Dragons: Mike Beason Treasurer: Bob Sirois
Assistant Editor: Jimmy Carter

DRAGON PHOTO ALBUM

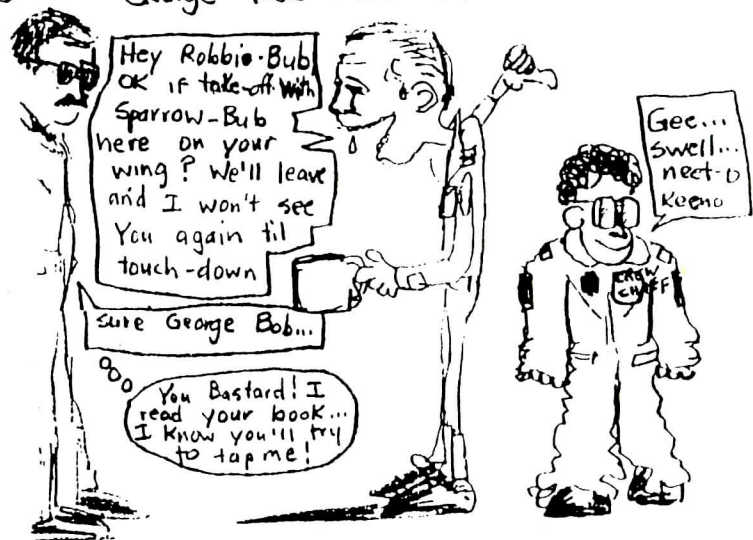
The Dragon photo album will be available for viewing at Dragon reunions. Do you have some great photos or slides of your experiences at Dragonland you would like to share? Send copies, (or send originals and we'll make copies) to:

Kay Spangler
5510 Mountain Rd.
Brighton, MI 84116

Dragon Association dues are \$10 per year. Send cash, money orders, or checks payable to:

The Dragon Association
c/o Bob Sirois
394 Steprock Ct.
Henderson, NV 89014

① MAKING OF A DRAGON.....
George Bob eats it...



② Later... in the AIR After ACMI



③ Meanwhile... at Alpha South



④ Fox III... ha ha... these
buckaroos have no look out...
see how bad they are?

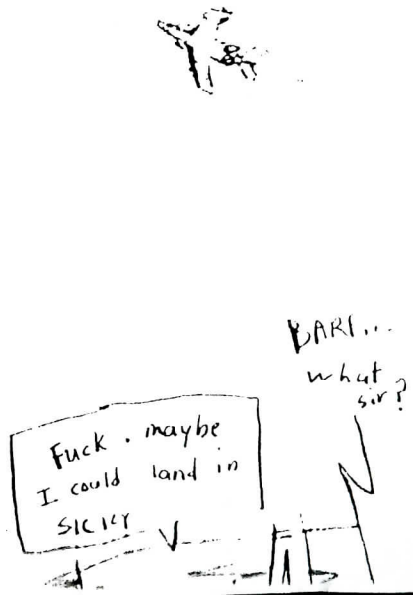


BARF...
But... sir...

⑤ Hi ya George -
Bob



⑥



Boosta

OA-10's spotter ability deemed vital in gulf

By Rick Maze
Times staff writer

DHARAN, Saudi Arabia — To help direct attack planes to Iraqi fortifications along the Kuwait border, the Air Force has sent one squadron of OA-10 Thunderbolt II forward air control aircraft to Saudi Arabia and soon will deploy another.

Similar to the tank-killing A-10s that will actually destroy Iraqi armor, the twin-engine OA-10s are assigned as forward observers to find and mark targets so that A-10s and F-16 Fighting Falcons can attack and destroy them.

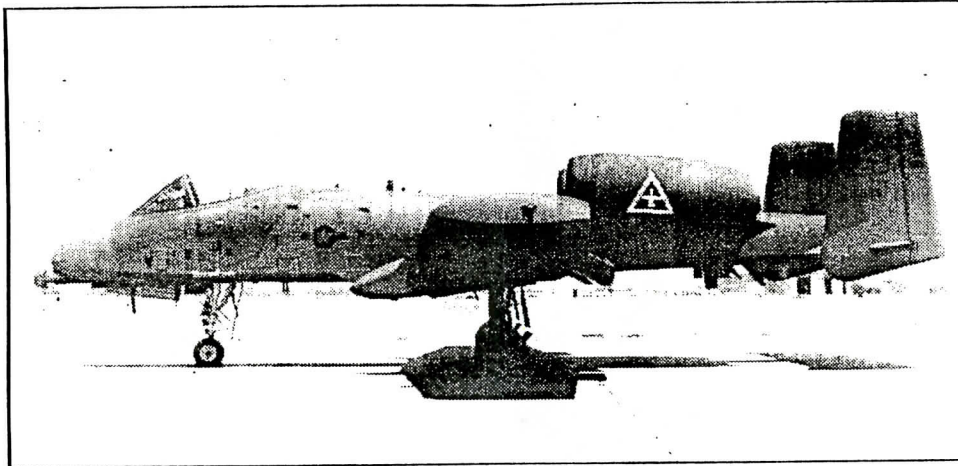
Because of the 5-to-1 tank advantage Iraq has over U.S. armor deployed here, the mission of the OA-10s is vital to a decisive and quick U.S. victory if fighting occurs, U.S. military officials said.

Lt. Col. Robert George of the 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron, based at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., said his planes will mark targets using 3-inch aerial rockets with white phosphorus ("Willie Pete") warheads, which leave behind a smoke trail.

To help the OA-10 pilots find the targets, the squadron has 10 pilots on the ground serving with Army units.

The ground spotters "have the least glamorous but most important mission," George said. "They have been here since day one, living in the foxholes on the front line. They are out there in harm's way."

All of the pilots in the squadron are assigned as liaison officers to some Army ground units. Who was sent into the field was determined by their Army unit affiliation, George said. "They will be out there as long as their Army unit remains," he



Thunderbolt: A squadron of OA-10s, similar to this tank-killing A-10, has deployed.

said.

The ground observers, known as air liaison officers or A-LOs, "know where the push is going to be. They also know where the Army is taking the most heat. They know exactly where the Army commander wants us to direct our efforts," George said.

"The guy on the ground is really running the battle. He says, 'Air Force, put the bombs right over there' and we direct them."

Slow-flying aircraft, the OA-10s would be vulnerable to both surface-to-air missiles and to Iraqi fighters.

"We plan on carrying two heat-seeking missiles with us on our missions," George said. The A-10 also is equipped with a 30mm cannon.

"We are not looking for other aircraft, but we are capable of dealing with it," George said.

Pilots were less optimistic about their chances if they face enemy aircraft; but they said they do not believe they will be used in situations where they are vulnerable.

"We are going to areas where there is little or no air threat. At least we hope so," said Capt. Mike Bartley, an OA-10 pilot.

The deployment of the OA-10s in November to Saudi Arabia is a sign of the difficult task the United States anticipates in extracting Iraqi units from fortified positions along the border of occupied Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

"Flying along the border, you can see the

positions. We already know where they are," said 1st Lt. Scott Fitzsimmons.

Target spotting with the aerial missiles will make the job of attack bombers much easier, George said.

"It is difficult for pilots to pick up targets. The enemy is planning on camouflaging himself, just like we camouflage ourselves. If you get something that is beige-on-white colored out in the desert, or have netting thrown over a vehicle, pilots coming in are going to have a difficult time spotting it while avoiding gunfire," George said.

"We are going to stand off in orbit in the target area, and once we located the target will put the smoke down on it. This will mean the fighters won't have any trouble at all picking up the targets," George said.

Although prevented so far from flying closer than 10 miles to the Kuwait border, pilots said the flat, sandy terrain has allowed them to see their potential targets.

"The border itself is very visible. They have trenches dug all along the border as a tank trap, basically," said Bartley.

"We go out there and on a good day we can see 15 miles, but on others with the hazy and blowing sand you can see only two," Fitzsimmons said.

The aerial targets can be fired on from one to five miles away, pilots said.

"We are going to be operating very close to the front edge, very close to the enemy forces," said Bartley.

George said the flat terrain is ideal for the squadron's mission. "This is not like firing targets in Germany, with its hilly terrain, or in the jungle," he said.

Times file photo

SEASON'S GREETINGS

FROM THE FERBEZAR FAMILY

December 1990

Dear Family and Friends:

As we sit to write this letter, we can't believe how quickly this year has passed and how many good things it has brought to our lives. We pray for those less fortunate than us: those who have no home this Christmas, no food to fill their bellies, no gifts under a tree. We also pray for those in the middle east, and for a resolution of the conflict there. We are most thankful that Steve is home with us this Christmas, and has not been called to do his duty like so many others now serving overseas. We pray for peace and happiness in all the world!

1990 has been a busy year for our family. As you can see from our return address label, we still reside in Panama City and plan to do so for at least another year. Steve is still working in the 475th WEG which is soon to become part of TAWC. Jamie still teaches 6, 7 and 8th grade math at St. John Catholic School and has been joined by Natalie who is attending E-4 there.

Our year was full of travels. In April, we made a trip to New Port News, VA, to visit friends the Naas family stationed at Langley AFB in Hampton. In June, we made a trip to Clearwater, FL to visit friends Candy (Scherzer) and Art Hays who now reside in Safety Harbor with their two daughters. The last two weeks in June, Jamie attended a NASA Educational Workshop for Math and Science teachers at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, AL, and was able to visit Space Camp and the Space and Rocket Center along with seeing President Bush while he addressed NASA employees during a trip to Marshall.

In July, Steve's folks visited from Kansas City, and we rented a house on Panama City Beach for a few days of fun, sun and relaxation, after which Jamie and Natalie flew home to Kansas City to visit both sides of the family. Upon return to Florida, Natalie celebrated her 4th birthday, Jamie and Steve rented a condo at the Edgewater Beach Resort on Panama City Beach for a second honeymoon, and Natalie started K-4 as well as her second year of ballet lessons. The beginning of school brought a stop to our travels, but Steve continues to get one week a month out of town by flying with the New Jersey Air National Guard.

Jamie's Dad came down for a week at Thanksgiving and Steve's folks plan a Christmas trip to Florida. It will be the first time since we've been married (13 years now) that his parents have spent the Christmas holidays with us, and we're very excited about having them!

Jamie and Steve plan a February trip to Las Vegas (for a Dragon Association Reunion we hope!), and Jamie's mother is scheduled to visit over Easter vacation in April. We plan a July trip to Cape Code, Massachusetts, where Steve's mother's family have scheduled a reunion.

It's been a great, activity-filled year for us and 1991 promises to be an exciting one too. We hope that yours is a happy, healthy one as well. God bless and may you experience all the joy and peace Christ promised us throughout this Christmas season.

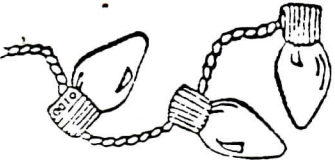
Sincerely,

The Ferbezars

The Ferbezars
Jamie, Steve and Natalie



December 20, 1990



Hi Guys!

So, you ask, "How's it with the Carter's?" Well, here's the 1990 scoop...

SUSAN Wife, mommy, substitute teacher, pre-school Sunday school teacher, home technician, purchasing agent, family barber, accountant, chauffeur, room mother and Bible student. Yep, she's still running our household. And yes, I help out more than when the Air Force was our world, but Susan is still fantastically busy. She's enrolled in a very in depth study of God's Word called Bible Study Fellowship. As a matter of fact, she's asking me questions that ought to be posed to someone with a doctorate in Divinity, so you can imagine her consternation with me when I answer, "duhhh..." Suzie is a room mother for Erich's class again this year. I got to see some of her great planning up close when I chaperoned a field trip to the local medical center. It went off like clockwork. Trouble is, first graders can't tell time! Now I know why Susan sometimes gets so frustrated, the parents can be less cooperative than the kids! Susan is also co-teaching our church's Sunday school for the four year olds. Wow, what a trip! Some Sundays they have a million pre-schoolers in one room! (Well it seems like a million! Susan says it's only about 15 or so.) Susan is also in good health. She recently completed her one year follow-up examination and no evidence of last year's sarcoid was found!

ERICH Reading, writing, arithmetic, T-ball, biking, kickball, spelling, vocabulary, setting the table, making his bed, combing hair, cleaning off the table, singing in the children's choir at Church...this "little" guy isn't so little anymore! Erich has really taken to reading. He reads voluntarily and often. I'm telling you, he's a year ahead of me! I couldn't read the word "surprise" in the first grade. He even knows what quotation, exclamation and question marks do to the rhythm, pacing and emphasis of a sentence. He reads with "feeling" and it's great fun to hear. We're really proud of his progress. He's got a great attitude. I just wish we could somehow bypass puberty...fat chance huh!? He was one of four in class to make honor roll this period, but we've always extolled him to simply "do your best"...the rest will come in time. (Wish I took my own advice as well.)

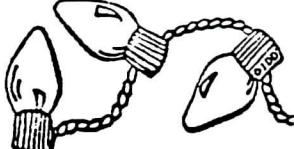
KRISTEN Three and a half already! She likes to wear her hair in a long, luxurious pony tail. She claims it feels good when she swishes her hair back and forth on her neck! This little "sweet pea" likes to catch the small lizards on the back porch and traumatize mommy with them. She picks up snails, centipedes, worms, caterpillars and pill bugs to see "how old are they" or to "baby-sit" them. Our little girl walks about outside with an eye to the ground searching for some wildlife to investigate. Kristen seems to be our right-brained child. Creative? We think so. Kristen likes play-doh and dress-up. Her imagination play is a blast to watch. She has pretend friends, Sally, Gome, Rube and Ruby who often "telephone" and compare their lives with hers. The stories these calls generate are priceless! She has mischievous imagi-creatures too, snoops, clopperfish, goobs and gummies. They have spines, sometimes, and can sting you, sometimes, and yet can always be chased away by counting to five very quickly. Kristen is also our assertive child. We will be writing you amazing accounts in the future I'm sure! In the meantime she's our baby, but growing faster than the national debt!

JIM Still an American Airlines flight engineer, #4 of 95 here at Miami base. I'm learning what Susan has known all along, housework is drudgery. I've assumed an up close, very active role raising the kids, and discovered what "baking", "pre-bleaching" and "coupon clipping" are all about. I stay home with Kristen the days Susan teaches and wonder how women have done this for so long. We did a lot of traveling on vacation with stops in Ohio, Texas and Virginia. It was an odyssey to say the least! But great fun as well! Flying "space available" on American can be tenuous at times and cut short our visit with dear Air Force friends Gordy and Janet Duey but we treasured every moment regardless. We attended a super Thanksgiving bash in Orlando and got to see Susan's side of the family for the first time in a long while. Seeing family and friends is a great way to round out the year.

Please have a wonderful Christmas celebration and a safe and healthy New Year. Your Palm Beach Gardens friends,

the Carter's

Jim, Susan, Erich and Kristen





HO! HO! HO!

Merry Christmas from the "Land of the Not Quite Right!"

We arrived here in Korea as a family of three, and now we are four. Sarah Colt was born 28 Oct. 1990. It is almost like starting over again, but it is a little easier this time. Maybe it is because we are more realistic this time around, or that we are older and mellow. We are happy to have a daughter and Patrick is a big help - he knows how to "plug" in the pacifier whenever Sarah cries!!

Kevin works for 7th Air Force in a pseudo staff job. He flies a minimal amount each month with the F-16 squadron here at Osan. Needless to say, his writing skills are superb now (so why am I writing this?!)

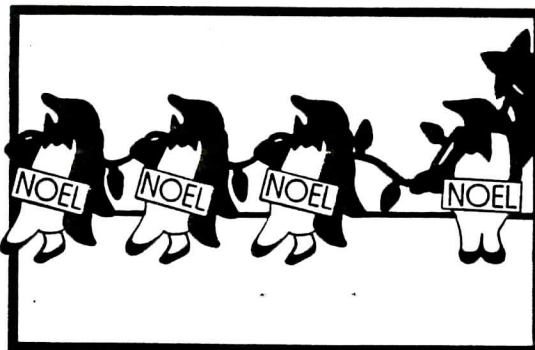
Patrick is in first grade and enjoying the sports programs here. He also is taking piano, and has almost passed me by on what I know about piano.

I am enjoying staying home with Sarah - our days are fairly uneventful - alot different than when Patrick was a baby and I worked full time.

We hope that you have a very happy holiday season!!!!

Anne Kim Patrick

Anne, Kevin, Patrick and Sarah Pottinger



MERRY CHRISTMAS



15 November 90

Dear Family and Friends,

Happy Holidays! The Whitmore clan is presently in Smyrna, TN preparing for another 3 year adventure in Germany. Yes, we are headed for Spangdahlem AB on November 27th. Of course Jim is thrilled since he will be flying the F-16 full-time again. Julia has mixed feelings about leaving our families, but is getting more excited about the move every day. It will be a little more challenging this time with two toddlers! Jim went over the first week of November and found us a house and car, so hopefully we can be somewhat settled by Christmas. It's hard to believe we left Germany almost 10 years ago!

Jamie will be three years old on December 8th. He's into Matchbox cars, Batman, Ninja Turtles, and pushing his sister. Jaclyn is seventeen months and is such a prissy little tomboy. She loves to put on mommy's makeup/jewelry and then play trucks with her brother. Both are real characters! Julia and kids spent the past five months in Millington, TN with her mother. It was nice being with family and friends, although she discovered that single parenthood is tough!

Jim has been retraining in the F-16 at Luke AFB, AZ. He had a real strenuous schedule of sun-tanning, golfing, eating Mexican food, drinking margaritas, and some flying and studying! Julia and the kids visited for two weeks in early October. We got together with lots of old friends and had a

great time.

Prior to Luke, Jim attended Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, VA. We sold our house in Grafton and moved across "the Bay" into base housing on campus. It was a fun six months! We learned a little about the other services, too much about joint planning, and met many wonderful new friends. The course is nicknamed the Armed Forces "Sports" College, although Jim did manage to study a bit between volleyball, softball, golf, and parties.

On January 26th our family was struck with a tragic blow. Jim's brother, Jerry, was killed in a car accident at Ramstein AB, Germany. He was also a major in the Air Force. His wife, Pam, is now living in Smyrna. It has been very difficult for all of us and he is deeply missed. In July, Jim's younger brother, John, became a new father with the birth of a beautiful baby girl. She has been a blessing during these trying times.

Our new address is:

Major James A. Whitmore 23 TFS
PSC Box 0004
APO, NY 09123

Please keep in touch. We love to receive your cards, pictures, and letters. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

All of our love,

Jim, Julia, Jamie & Jaclyn

Peanut's Dragon Lore



by Jimmy Carter

"Don't touch!" exclaimed the shepherd to his young son.

"Why not, father?" Joshua looked up at the tall, straight tree. It had bronze-green leaves which fanned out at the top of its erect trunk. Small, loosely clustered flowers hung from the center spine of each of the broad leaves. It cast a long, stinging shadow over the back of the inn they'd just exited.

"That is a castor-oil tree, my son. It is poisonous to man and beast! Touching the resin on its bark could sicken you, even kill you!"

"But it is beautiful, father." the youngster observed.

"Yes son." conceded the father. "But it is a morbid beauty at best."

"Why would God make such a tree?!" the boy wondered aloud.

"Come, we must return to the fold. Uncle Laben might be concerned for us. With all these strangers in town, Bethlehem may not be the safest place tonight!"

The father pulled his scarf about his neck. The boy tightened his too.

A sudden, chilling wind swirled about them. It was already the twelfth hour or six P.M. The sky was darkening. Deep, rich hues of orange and pink streaked the pale, blue winter horizon.

As the shepherd and his son reached Bethlehem's only gate, a weary couple entered the town.

"They'll not find a place of rest tonight." muttered the father.

He and his son had just bought the last flask of olive oil from the inn they'd departed. It should have been a simple enough task, but the village was teeming with hundreds of people...all of whom were here to be counted for the great census ordered by Caesar. Four different places they'd gone just to find and purchase one measly flask of olive oil.

As the couple passed them, Joshua and his father noted that the woman riding the docile little donkey was uncomfortably pregnant. The shepherd pitied the man leading the colt; no place to stay and a wife ready to give birth! Curse the Romans! Why should this young couple be made to travel now? They should be at home preparing for the joyous event awaiting them. What justice was there in making this young couple suffer so? They were exhausted and road-weary.

"You are so right my son, why did God make the castor-oil tree?" grumbled Joshua's father.

No wonder the locals had come to calling it the "Roman Rose", beautiful to look upon, fatal to touch. It didn't even render decent shade. Just like the Roman oppressors, it took nourishment from the land but rendered nothing in return.

"How long, O Lord? Wilt thou hide thyself for ever?" the father groaned. (Psalm 89:46)

It was a fervent prayer, yes, but tattered by the cruel wind of time and oppression. He and his son trudged through the gate.

Uncle Laban was atop the rise. He waved to his nephew. What had taken those two so long? Had they grown a tree and then pressed the oil out themselves? He could barely see them in the rapidly waning light. It was his fault, leaving their cooking oil at home, but this delay was more punishment than he deserved! They had not eaten since the seventh hour or one P.M. He was famished!

"Uncle Laban!" shouted his nephew's son. "You will not believe how many people are in Bethlehem this evening!"

The father and son entered the temporary sheepfold by the flickering light of Uncle Laban's recently built fire. Laban was assaulted by a wave of guilt. Of course! They had not intentionally delayed to punish him! 'Twas the census. How could he have forgotten? They set about preparing the evening meal. The wind was glacially cold now. They all had their hoods up and scarves about the neck or lower face. And yet the simple meal seemed a feast. Their hunger enhanced the food's taste and texture. The stars blazed above them.

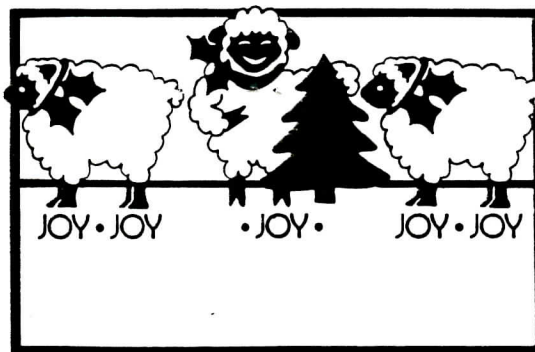
"I will take the first watch." volunteered Laban.

His previously sour mood had been washed away by latent guilt. How could he have suspected them of such a childish ploy? What had he been thinking? Perhaps his empty stomach had been to blame. Laban recalled a Psalm of David. It was the psalm which marveled at God's patience with humankind. The Uncle concluded that David had been right all along... people must seem like animals to God! (Psalms 73)

The boy awakened, suddenly and completely. He was not tired. There was no lingering soreness or fatigue...he was AWAKE! He felt bewildered. There was a strange but sweet buzzing all about him. The ground vibrated. The air pulsed. No, not a buzzing, it was a hum. The sky beyond the rise rippled and danced with rainbows of light. Now he could hear it, not a hum even, it was a joyous chorus. A million waves crashing upon the shore, the melodic sigh of the wind through a grove of oaks, it was indescribable! He saw the undulating silhouettes of his father and uncle transposed against a shimmering glory of light. He stumbled up the shallow hollow they were using as the sheepfold. As he clambered upward, the music, yes it was glorious music, seemed to pass right through him. He was part of the song! All nature was united in a rapturous chorus!

Then the boy gained the crest of the rise, next to his father and uncle. He was conscious of being on his knees, but didn't remember kneeling. They could not take their eyes from the scene before them. They were frightened, awe-struck, dazed. It seemed hard to breathe. The air was thick with celestial power. The sky was a shimmering, flashing, oscillating backdrop upon which millions of glorious, sparkling beings made their way about in an unbelievably beautiful symphony of motion and sound. It was as if the night sky had been drawn back, like a black velvet curtain, to expose what has always been there, the glory of the One True God!

The words of the glorious beings glowed in the boy's mind. The words were alive. Everything was alive. He was alive! The three were unable to contain all this energy. They felt like they were about to explode! Suddenly it was gone, vanished, silent. Joshua, his father and uncle were stooped forward, foreheads on knees struggling for breath. The boy looked up slowly. It took great effort. He felt as if he were under water. The jet-black, star laden sky vaulted overhead. No evidence of the tumultuous display remained except one brightly beaming orb of light poised directly over Bethlehem. It was a cold night, but the boy's heart was aflame!



The trio moved with singular purpose. They had been supernaturally directed to the inn where the olive oil had been purchased. They left the sheepfold unguarded, but knew in their heart of hearts that everything would be just fine. The angels had sung to the glory of Messiah's birth. They had announced place and time. The angels heralded the new beginning. God was on the planet and now sought to be in their hearts. The three reached the stable behind the inn. The castor-oil tree was before them. It stood just behind the inn adjacent to the stable. Something about it was different. The boy was first. He glanced up. The giant star glittered through the castor-oil leaves.

The youth was making a beeline for the stable. He would pass close by the tree. It happened quickly. He stumbled. The boy stooped in an effort to right himself and struck the trunk of the castor-oil tree full force. Head, neck and shoulder impacted the deadly resinous bark whose hard, pointed surface ripped and punctured his skin. He fell, dazed and bleeding to the cold ground at the base of the mortal tree.

Others, divinely called to the sight, turned at the sound of an anguished cry. It was the shepherd.

"Joshua, oh my little Joshua oh, what have you done!?"

The crowd parted. Inside the stable, the couple Joshua and his father had seen entering Bethlehem that night knelt over their newborn son. The babe was wrapped warmly and lying in the hay trough. Joseph, the baby's father, was startled when he heard sobbing and the name Joshua. For you see, Joshua was his son's name too. (We are much more familiar with the Greek version, Jesus.) Joseph glanced at his wife, Mary, then made his way to the grief-stricken shepherd.

It was a pathetic sight. The shepherd's arms completely encircled his son's limp body. Shoulders shaking, the father rocked back and forth clutching the child to his breast. Joseph placed his strong arms beneath the boy's drooping body and helped carry the lad into the stable. Those about the stable murmured. The boy had stumbled head long into the cursed castor-oil tree. His open, bloody wounds were surely contaminated with the tree's terrible poison.

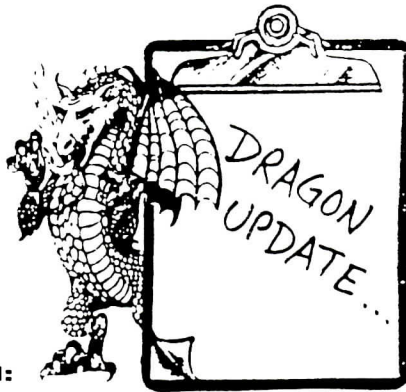
Why hadn't the innkeeper chopped that tree down? There had been complaints you know! It was a bitter reminder of their bondage! Get rid of it! Its fruit was poisonous! Who needed it!? The wounded boy was laid at the foot of the manger. Mary removed the tangled, bloody scarf from the youth's face. A collective gasp erupted from those nearest the boy.

The shepherd's son lay there serenely, unmarked! No bruised, pierced skin, no dried blood...nothing. No mark upon him. Someone called from beyond the stable. A small knot of people had formed around the palm.

The castor-oil tree was bent. From mid trunk to leaf top it now scribed a gentle arc. The hated tree, once so erect, a symbol of imperial disdain, was now leaning in contrite humility towards the the infant King. Everyone agreed. The boy's impact could not possibly have transformed this regal standing tree into such a humble posture. And look, there at its base! The tree bore a reddish-purple stain! Was it blood? Or had it been there all along, unseen?

Regardless, since that night the Christmas palm has always grown in a gentle arc with a stain at its base. It is no longer poisonous. Its oil can be consumed as a laxative to purge and cleanse the body. Some have tried to explain this sudden change and "scientifically" define the "evolution" of the Christmas palm. Others, well, others understand that all wisdom is of God and that knowing and obeying Him is the Truth and the Life that all people seek.

Joshua, a shepherd's son knew. He knelt at the foot of a wooden manger praising God for the miracle of Messiah's coming. Joshua would kneel again some thirty years hence at the foot of a wooden cross when this same Jesus gave himself as Savior of the world. Again there would be bloodied wood and linen. But as before, anguish would become joy. It wouldn't be the crying Joshua would recall, it would be the music! Jesus' victory song. A million waves crashing upon the shore, the melodic sigh of the wind through a grove of oaks...the burning, living words blazing in his heart, FEAR NOT! BEHOLD I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY WHICH IS FOR ALL PEOPLE, FOR TODAY BORN TO YOU IN THE CITY OF DAVID IS THE SAVIOR, CHRIST THE LORD. and the Heavenly Host praised God and sang: GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST AND ON EARTH PEACE AMONG THOSE WITH WHOM HE IS PLEASED! Amen!(Luke 2:10-14) Joshua, the shepherd's son knew. So can we. Let's not just celebrate the miracle of Christmas, let's live it. Jesus is the Life!



GARY "MO" MORGAN:

I am a Major EWO staff officer at Eglin these days. I got here in Jun 88 and worked in the Weasel shop. Last July I went into Pod division to work ALQ-131 R/P and in November I go into the New Technology/Exploitation shop. Thanks to a talk a Capt John McBroom (now 1TFW/CC!) had with me when I was a 2Lt, I got involved with EW and intell, and have been working in that area ever since. I went through EWO school in Fall '84 and was Deputy DOW chief at Spang on my last tour (Weasels). Hopefully I can stay here and continue to work in the EW area at TAWC. We are working our butts off to get the best to the boys in the desert.

I just married Cathy, a bank VP here in Ft Walton, on 28 July. John Bordes (crew chief of 393) was my best man. He just got a nursing degree and an Army commission. My daughter Sarah is 9 and lives most of the year with Nancy down in Delray Beach, FL. During my spare time I design board wargames and have been published several times. The first was FLIGHT LEADER by Avalon Hill, designed when I was a Dragon (summer of '79) and printed in 1987 (sold 30,000 copies!). My second game was TAC AIR (also by AH), which won the Charles S. Roberts award in 1989 for best Post-WW2 Board Wargame. My game and article on the battle of Borodino in 1812 were just published in the July 90 (#136) Strategy & Tactics magazine. I just finished a solitaire "Airstrikes Over Hanoi" game called "IRONHAND" which is now in playtest and development, and am currently working on a Middle East (TAC AIR system) game called "JIHAD!". Ask for these Avalon Hill games at your nearest toy, hobby, book, or game store. I've also helped Larry Bond with his recent book RED PHOENIX, and have written several other magazine articles in the wargame magazines.

ED & LINDA KAMOLZ:

Linda and I are still living in Escondido, CA and I'm still a San Diego based First Officer (B-737) for USAir. Appears upgrading to Captain remains a year or so away depending on economy, etc. At USAir, I have run into Mike Anderson ('77 IP & scheduling whiz), flying MD-80's out of Pittsburgh. They reside in San Antonio and Squat flies F-16's for Gail Walston's twin brother, the Kelly ANG TFS/CC.

PAUL "POLO" GUZOWSKI:

After a year at George, Christine and I bought a house since it looks like we'll be there a while. Chris got out of

the Air Force when we left Ramstein and continued her nursing in the civilian sector. She's now the Director of Education at Victor Valley Hospital in Victorville, CA. I'm glad she's working full time while I'm away... keeps her busy.

After flying a desk in the Pentagon for three years is it ever great to be flying again! Back in Double Ugly... the Rhino! The Weasel mission is demanding but a lot of fun as well. Though we're slated to go away, it's ironic how many folks want us on their "teams" now.



USAir Update

by "Easy" Ed Kamolz,

USAir recently (Oct 90) furloughed 211 pilots out of 6500. The airline postponed deliveries on new aircraft and is retiring older ones. Based on economy, fuel prices, competition, and financial objectives, hiring may be slow to nil the next few years.

Of interest to some might be how airlines are on the edge of military technology. Flew some 737's equipped with TCAS (a version of S-Band interrogation used in this case to avoid aircraft rather than intercept them). TCAS displays boggy(s) position and relative altitude on our wx radars. Automatic voice warnings and climb/descend advisories to avoid collisions are given inside certain parameters. I guess if the system prevents one airliner midair, it'll have been worth it.

American Airlines Update

by Kelly Rudy

Though American is telling the media currently that it is planning to cut back on flights and layoff some employees do not take this as an indication that the airline is hurting. Yes, the oil crunch is costing the company money and profits are down but this is just a short term problem and will not effect the growth plan of the company to a great extent.

American is still hiring 72 pilots per month and is expected to hire 1000 more in 1991. American can not buy aircraft, routes, and other assets fast enough to meet its demands nor can it train enough pilots to handle a more rapid expansion if it could. American just completed deals to purchase Chicago to London routes from TWA and Seattle to Japan routes from Continental at nearly a half a billion

dollars. In order to fly these routes it needs more aircraft more pilots, flight attendants, and of course all the necessary ground support personnel.

So why is the company saying it is falling on hard times and talking of lay-offs? Propaganda directed at the Allied Pilots Union which is currently representing its pilots in contract negotiations. The APA has been in negotiations for over a year now and management is launching an all out propaganda war trying to divide its employees and break the resolve of the pilots union. They are telling us that the fuel prices are hurting them so bad they can't afford to pay us more and continue growth. They are telling the nonpilot employees that the pilots are going to run the company into the ground like Eastern's pilots did and cost them their jobs. This tactic is intended to turn these employees against the pilots and pressure them into giving in to company demands.

The APA is not buying the company rhetoric, however, as the company has stated in the past that it intends to continue growth through a recession and come out off it with control of the market. American's planning is on a long term scale and the current recession and high oil prices are merely a short term bump in the road. This is obvious by its recent actions. There are now over 8700 pilots flying for American and growth plans call for a total of nearly 16000 by the end of the decade!

American Airlines is the largest airline in the free world and the most profitable. However, the pilots are the lowest paid of the country's major union represented airlines. The pilots gave up concessions in their last two contracts to help fund the growth of the company and come out of deregulation on top. They are now ready to recoup their position in the industry with a contract which reflects the companies profitability amongst the other airlines.

The economy may look bleak and American may claim to have fallen on hard times but believe me, do not let this influence any decision to seek employment there. You have a higher chance of being hired by American Airlines and progressing to Captain right now than in any other airline. Once contract talks are settled we will all be getting along fine and staying on top as the preeminent airline.



To submit articles to the Firebreather, order "The Paraplegic Band" cassette tapes or request information about the Dragon Association write to:

Kelly Rudy
1605 S. Wade Ave.
Garner, NC 27529



RUMOR CONTROL

- ** Mark Lindstrum is now flying F-117 "Goblins" at Nellis.
- ** Willy Studer is now the 12th Air Force Vice Commander.
- ** John Zubel is the base Commander at Morone AS, Spain. A different source, however, says he is the Deputy Base Commander at Myrtle Beach. He either gets around a lot or has somebody fooled.
- ** Al "FLUSH" Elliot, Ken Czajkowski, and David "BUSH" Hansen have all moved and not left forwarding addresses.
- ** Vern Stephens bought 90 acres of farmland in Michigan and plans to retire and raise horses in two years.
- ** Stan Parks has moved back to Dayton, Ohio in preparation for his imminent retirement. He is now trying to get hired by an airline, hopefully Delta.
- ** Col. John Hawley is the Assistant Chief of Staff for Offensive Operations and the U.S. Senior National Rep. in HQ AAFCE at Ramstein.
- ** Barbara Zeller's husband "Fuzzy" is remote to Beni Suef AFB, Egypt. Meanwhile she is living in the Miami area.
- ** Mike Foster is in the C-17 Program Office at Wright-Pat AFB.
- ** Bill Ritter is also floating around WPAFB.
- ** Tom Lampley is headed for the Pentagon.
- ** Jim Boggan is at the Pentagon working as the exec for a 2-star in the security assistance group. Rumor has it he's PCAing to HQ USAF/PRI in the near future.
- ** John Van Anden is out and flying for USAIR and living in Pittsburgh PA.
- ** Hal Hornberg is the Commander of the 4TFW at Seymour Johnson currently Deployed to Desert Shield.

512th TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRON

The rays of the early morning sun were spreading their warmth across the Palatinate highlands countryside as two F-4E Phantoms, engines running, were receiving a final maintenance pre-flight inspection at Ramstein Air Base, West Germany.

The sky, normally cloudy and hazy, was clear and the low lying fog was now hiding in shaded areas as the sun rose higher in the sky.

As the maintenance check was completed, "Cleared for take-off" came over the radio. Acknowledging, the Phantoms rolled onto the runway and lined up. Brakes applied, throttles were eased forward, and as the engine rpm climbed, brakes were released and the F-4s began their take-off roll. Afterburners engaged, glowing reddish-yellow tails extended from the engines as the Phantoms thundered down the runway. Seconds later they were airborne en route to another mission in the European sky over West Germany.

The aircraft and aircrews, part of the 512th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) stationed at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, are flying another mission. Al-

This USAF squadron provides low-level ground support to NATO forces

By Steven Wilhelmi and David Howe

though routine, it is a vital one, maintaining both pilot proficiency and insuring air superiority in Western Europe.

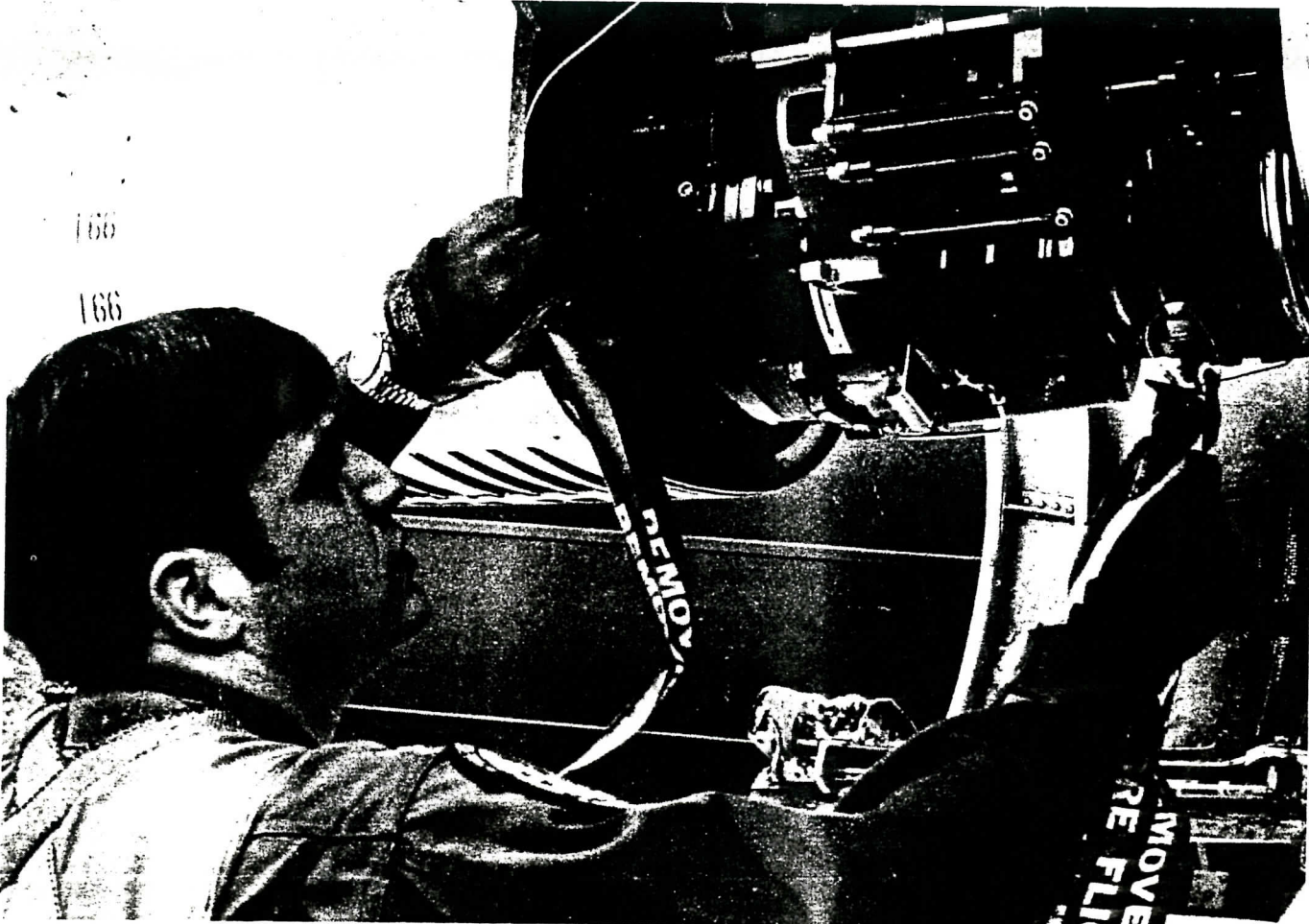
Since its reactivation in November 1976, after a 17-year inactivation period, the squadron has expanded and become one of the best units in the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE).

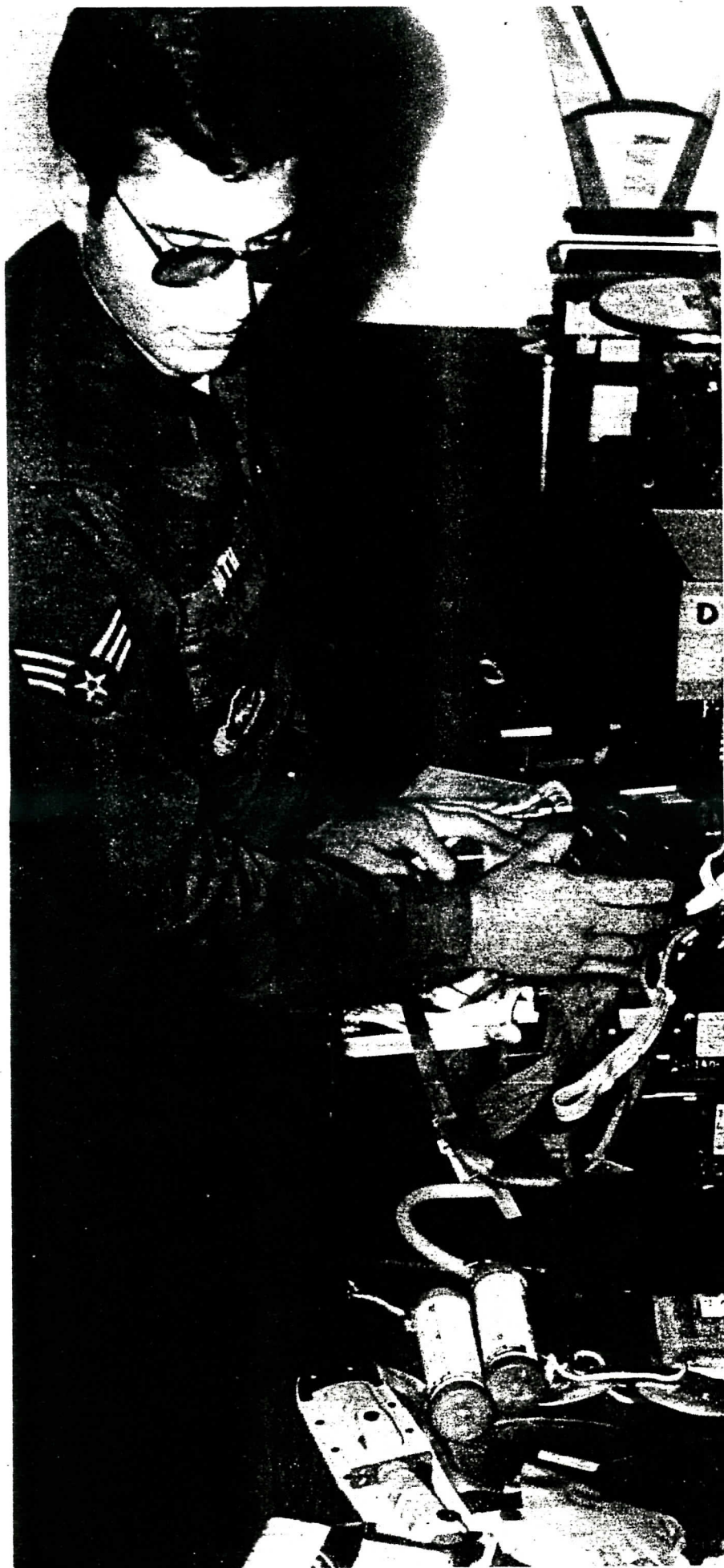
Looking back, the squadron was first activated at Key Field, Mississippi in

1943. Known as the 512th Fighter Bomber Squadron, it was simplified to the 512th Fighter Squadron the following year.

During World War II, the squadron

First Lieutenant Gary Morgan performs a pre-flight inspection on his Phantom's 20mm Vulcan cannon noting its "cold" or inactivated condition.





primarily flew P-39s, P-40s and P-47s. Before inactivation in 1946, the 512th had operated from Ashford, the United Kingdom; Tour-en-Bassin, Cretteville, St. Leonard, Mourmelon-le-Grand and Metz, France; Asch, Belgium; and Handorf and Nordholz, Germany.

The squadron was reactivated in 1952 and flew F-84 Thunderjets. Located at RAF Manston, the United Kingdom, it was again known as the 512th Fighter Bomber Squadron.

Flying F-86 Sabres, it was redesignated the 512th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in 1954 and was subsequently stationed at Soesterberg, the Netherlands; RAF Bentwaters, United Kingdom; and finally before inactivation in 1959 at Sembach Air Base, Germany.

It was not until November 15, 1976 that the 512th was reactivated at Ramstein. Nearing the headquarters building, several signs become visible. One in particular reads, "Studer's Dragons." "Studer" was Lieutenant Colonel William A. Studer, 512th TFW commander and "Dragons" the squadron's nickname since the initial activation. Observing the dual fire spewing J-79-GE-17 turbojet engines of the squadron's Phantoms, the nickname seems all the more appropriate today.

As if to disprove the validity of fairy tales, the Dragons and "Black Knights" of the 526th TFW combine forces to form the 86th Tactical Fighter Wing, united in purpose in this case, rather than mortal enemies.

When the 512th TFW was reactivated at Ramstein in 1976, its resources consisted of a commander, an operations officer, four aircrews and an abandoned building. Flying operations commenced the following day, as well as the influx of more crew members.

According to the wing history, of the 28 new aircrews, only eight had prior experience in air-to-ground missions. Training the aircrews was conducted simultaneously with "self-help" renovations of the squadron's buildings.

By March 1977, the 512th had reached full strength and, in April, participated in its first weapons training deployment to Aviano Air Base, Italy.

During the deployment, the Dragons took part in the USAFE "Sortie Surge" exercise and achieved the highest sortie rate of all evaluated units. As with later weapons training deployments, the aircrews practiced dive toss and low angle-high drag bombing and strafing with the Phantom's 20mm "Vulcan" internally mounted gatling gun.

Returning from Aviano, the Dragons had successfully certified 17 aircraft

Sergeant Mark Muth of the 512th TFS Personal Equipment Shop inspects a Phantom pilot's survival kit for proper operation of all components.



CAUTION
DO NOT
REPAIR
OR
ALTER
IN ANY
MANNER
WITHOUT
THE
APPROVAL
OF THE
MANUFACTURER

Conducting a pre-flight inspection on the cockpit of his F-4E Phantom is First Lieutenant Wayne Wierman, who determines that taxiing for take-off will proceed without a problem.

commanders and 22 weapons systems officers, acquiring an official mission ready status a full month ahead of schedule.

"Squadron members developed many unique navigational and mission planning aids during this period," said Colonel Studer, "resulting in vastly improved capabilities for mission accomplishment."

A navigational aid known as a CAS Packet was jointly developed by Major Gail Walston and Captain Lance Thompson for use in close air support missions.

"The CAS Packets are a complete set of 1-250,000 scale maps covering all areas of Germany in which we would be expected to fly," said Major Walston. "Our aircrews always carry them along, allowing for a target change at any point in time during a mission."

"We can receive new target coordinates from forward air controllers, who use the Universal Transverse Mercator quadrant system," explained Captain Thompson. "Our CAS Packet maps are divided in such a way that these coordinates can be used for diversion to a new target."

Another navigational aid, known as "Fan Maps" was developed by Captain Orville Lind, who explained that "they form a standard system which provides us with several different pre-planned, low-level routes to target areas.

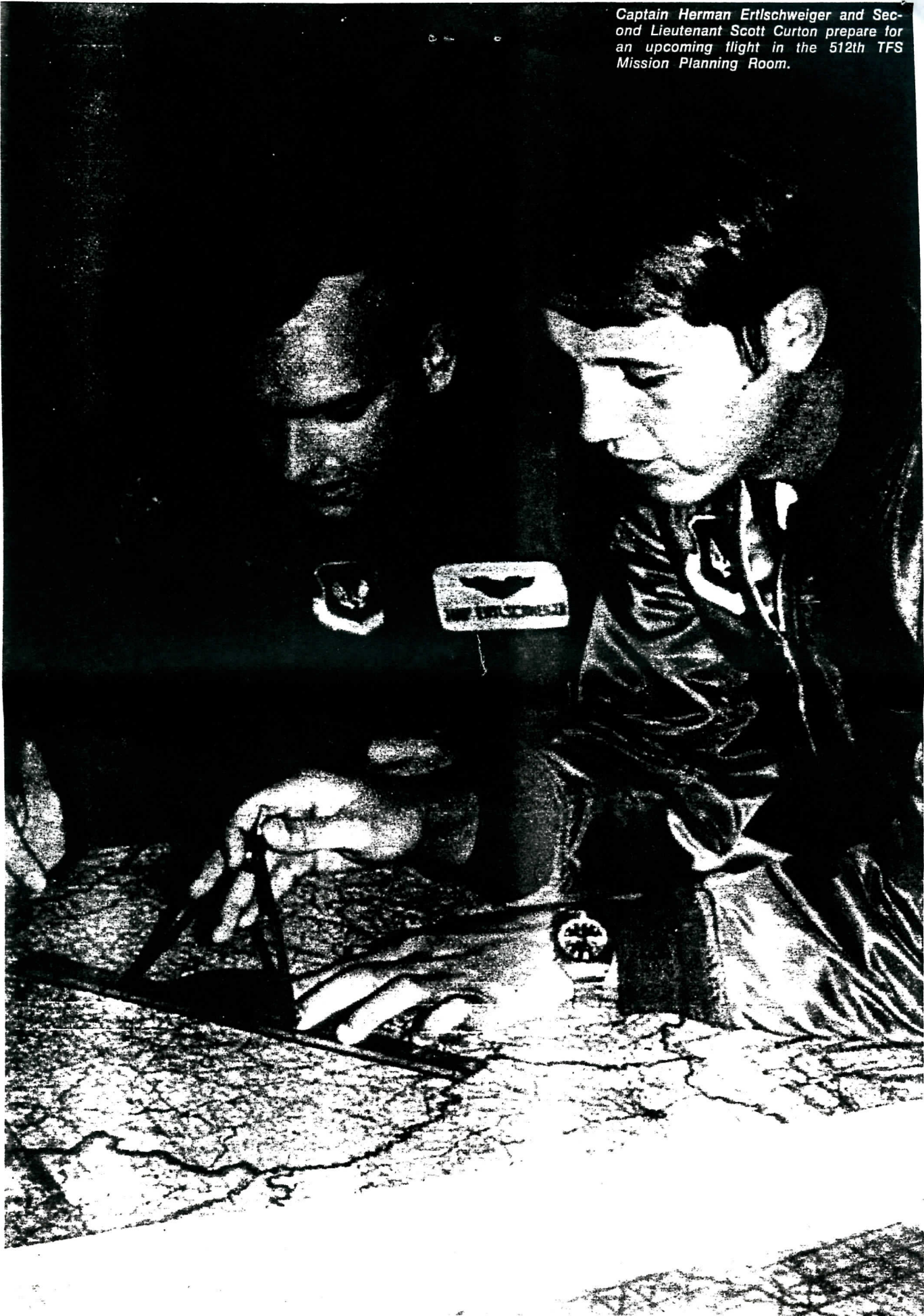
"Actually, there are two different sets of maps: one for a wartime situation and another which avoids restricted areas for peacetime."

Some of the aids developed by members of the 512th are quite simple. For example, First Lieutenant Michael Caraker eliminated the requirement for carrying along an offset template. For use with 1-250,000 scale maps, he simply marked the edge of a pencil, one side in nautical miles and the opposite side in thousands of feet.

Another navigational aid, a kind of offset computer, was developed by Captain Philip Tritschler for use with the weapons release computer system. "Using the offset computer," explained Captain Tritschler, "a pilot needs only the IP (Initial Point), heading and distance to target. This eliminates the necessity of transmitting target coordinates over the radio and plotting the target on our maps."

To aid in mission planning, Captains John Barry and James Bean compiled and developed several standard attack tactics. "After the tactics were taught

Captain Herman Ertlschweiger and Second Lieutenant Scott Curton prepare for an upcoming flight in the 512th TFS Mission Planning Room.



and practiced by our aircrews, much briefing time was eliminated," said Captain Barry.

"They also allow a change of tactics during a mission," added Captain Bean, "with a minimum of radio communications."

"Ideas like these have facilitated maximum accomplishments in the minimum amount of time," said Colonel Studer, "resulting in our ability to launch a mission in just five minutes."

Having implemented and practiced their improved procedures, the Dragons next participated in "Cold Fire," one of NATO's "Autumn Forge" series of exercises. "Cold Fire" involved the squadron flying close air support missions for friendly forces exercising in Germany. Army and Air Force forward air controllers identified targets for simulated air-to-surface strikes.

During the same time as "Cold Fire," a recurring exercise known as "Creek Shield" began, involving live ordnance drops at the Grafenwoehr Military Training Area in Germany. The 512th most recently participated in "Creek Shield" in August 1978.

In October 1977, shortly after "Cold Fire" and the Dragons' initial "Creek

Shield" participation, the squadron embarked on a second weapons training deployment, this time to Incirlik, Turkey.

This deployment marked the beginning of a mass check-out of aircrews in the Pave Spike Laser Target Designating System and the Maverick Electro-Optical Missile Guidance System, as well as basic weapons qualifications in all required events. Standardized squadron attack tactics for the employment of both conventional and special weapons were tested and low-level "communications out" sorties were practiced.

By the end of the deployment, the Dragons had developed standardized special weapons tactics and the ability to deliver unit assigned weapons without radio coordination.

The value of this training became clear when the squadron deployed for its third weapons training session in January 1978. Twelve Phantoms and their Dragon aircrews were dispatched to Zaragoza Air Base, Spain, from which missions were flown to the Spanish Air Force's Bardenas Reales range.

During the deployment, the squadron was tasked to launch a 12-ship

mass attack against the range's simulated airfield over 100 miles away. Six flights of two aircraft flew three different ingress routes and attacked the targets with "time-on-target" spacing of only 30 seconds between attacks. The entire mission was conducted in radio silence with the only transmission being "gear down" as the mission terminated.

During the attack, an observer aircraft circled overhead, noting all bomb impacts, including that of a GBU 10 A/B Laser Guided Bomb delivered from the maximum tactical delivery range of several miles away.

The Dragons demonstrated an attack capability unequalled by any other squadron previously deployed to Zaragoza and achieved the highest Laser Guided Bomb hit range in USAF. This is even more impressive when you consider the tactical delivery used as opposed to the "close-in-orbits" of previous squadrons.

Reflecting on this accomplishment,

Even a Phantom has rear view mirrors and Captain Philip Tritschler adjusts his during a preflight inspection.



After dismantling for inspection, a pilot's reassembled helmet is checked for proper operation of the audio system by Airman First Class Iris Huizenga of the 512th TFS Personal Equipment Shop.

Colonel Studer remarked, "There is no doubt in my mind that the Dragons are the most proficient squadron in USAFE in low angle bombing."

Dragon aircrew members who remained at Ramstein were not idly awaiting their cohort's return from Zaragoza. Along with four A-10s from Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, the remaining Dragons participated in the European test of a modified Imaging Infrared (IIR) guidance system for the AGM-65D Maverick air-to-surface missile.

The IIR seeker head allows aircrews, even in marginal weather conditions, to visually acquire a target emitting a heat signature.

Following the testing at the Baumholder Range near Ramstein, Dragon aircrews appeared before a House/Senate subcommittee and testified as to the effectiveness of the IIR seeker head.

Dissimilar Air Combat Training (DACT) in USAFE is accomplished periodically with the aid of USAF F-5E Tiger IIs from RAF Alconbury, United Kingdom. The F-5s, which in some ways resemble the WARSAW Pact's MiG-21, simulate the MiG's maneuvers and tactics for the most realistic training possible. In addition, the Dragons also conducted DACT with and against the F-15 Eagle in July 1978.

Most recently, the aircraft and aircrews from the 512th TFW and 526th TFS represented USAFE and won the William Tell '78 world-wide weapons meet held in Florida in October.

Crews from the two units competed against teams from the Canadian Forces and USAF's Aerospace Defense Command, Tactical Air Command, Pacific Air Forces, Air Forces Iceland and the Air National Guard. The meet tested aerial marksmanship and gave the aircrews the opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency in Air Defense operations.

It seems that, even in peacetime, the Dragons have a full-time job and this constant training and evaluation has surely been of prime importance. The newly reactivated 512th TFW of less than two years ago has evolved into a highly proficient and combat-ready unit, with capabilities for accomplishing a wide range of missions with an even wider range of weapons.

As the unit's motto portrays, "Vigilare Pro Pace," Latin for "On Guard for Peace," the 512th stands ready to meet any challenge.



WHERE ABOUTS



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