

ASSOCIATION

This will be the last issue of our newsletter for 1997 and, after a few administrative notes, will be devoted primarily to information about the next reunion from CINC/REUNION 1998, Dick Doolittle and to a continuation of the excellent histories of SAC Post Attack Command Control System organizations provided by ACCA HISTORIAN, Greg Ogletree.

MEMBERSHIP STATUS

This newsletter will be mailed only to paid-up members and to those who have paid some dues and / or fees, but who are not actually current. It will not be sent to any who have not responded, in any way, to our "recruiting efforts". We do still need person-to-person recruiting, of course.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please check your address label. If it shows a number "97" or higher, that indicates the year for which you have paid dues. If there is no number by your name, then you are not currently paid. Your annual dues is \$15. 1997 dues must be received by 30 April 1998 or we will be forced to drop your name from the rolls. **WE DO NOT WANT TO DROP YOU!** Please send dues payments to the following:

Frederic W. Kemp
Treasurer, SAC/ACCA
19 Lutz Drive
Bunker Hill, IN 46914-9763

THE PREZ SEZ

Shortly you will receive a membership roster of those who are current through 1997. Only those folks will receive that mailing. If an old friend is missing, give him / her a call and remind them that the drop dead time to get on board for the October reunion and AF-Navy football tickets is fast approaching. That date is 1 March 1998.

THE PREZ ALSO SEZ THAT HE
WILL BE AWOL

ACCA President, Jack Suggs, will be traveling from about 29 Dec 97 until near the end of Jan 98. Please do not send any mail to his address during that time. Use Fred Kemp's address above for all correspondence.

CORRECTION TO NOTICE OF
TV PROGRAM

Based on information received by phone from the program originators, your editor published notice in the previous newsletter of a TV show of probable interest to be aired on 9 Sep 97. If you tried to tune it in, then you know that it did not happen.. The show was touted to be about SAC PACCS and other airborne command post operations. Our Historian, Greg Ogletree, advises that he has seen the program on an earlier broadcast and that it does not live up to those advance billings—but that it does have some good flying footage and historical interest about strategic air power. So for whatever it is worth, the program, **Doomsday Mission**, should air on the DISCOVERY CHANNEL, 22 December 1997 at 1800 hours, Eastern Standard Time.

RATES FOR EMBASSY SUITES

The rates shown in the previous newsletter did not clarify that these rates include a daily breakfast and social hour. See the enclosed reunion information for the latest details.

USAF WILL CLOSE THE LOOKING
GLASS MISSION IN OCTOBER 1998

Following is the text of a letter received by ACCA President, Jack Suggs, from the 55th Wing at Offutt AFB:

"As you may be aware, the 7 ACCS will close its doors next October, ending the EC-135s career

and the Air Force's involvement in the ABNCP mission. We would like to have as many people [as possible, who were] associated with the "Glass" mission, attend the closing ceremonies to retire this venerable aircraft. Additionally, our closure would dovetail nicely with the (SAC/ACCA) reunion. Although we are in the initial planning stages, we anticipate the closing ceremonies will be an outstanding tribute to one of the Cold War's most elite airframes.

"I will keep you informed of developments and would like to hear from you. I am sure you have inputs which will be beneficial to our closure committee. You can contact me at (402) 294-0544 or at the address shown. I look forward to hearing from you."

Wayne C. Blanchette, Capt, USAF
Executive Officer, 7 ACCS/CCE,
201 Looking Glass Ave, Ste 133,
Offutt AFB, NE 68113
dated 11 Sep 1997

SAC/ACCA 1998 REUNION

Dick Doolittle,
Chairman, 1998 Reunion

We are receiving an excellent response to our interest survey. It is especially gratifying to hear from old friends calling from around the country and indicating their intent to attend the reunion. Our plans are coming together well and with some money saving options for you.

Obviously our members may make any travel arrangements they wish. SAC/ACCA is pleased to announce that it has been able to secure a special discount agreement with United Airlines unavailable to the general public. An additional 5% discount off the lowest applicable fare will be offered **ONLY** when you or your travel agent call United's toll free number 1-800-521-4041 and refer to Meeting ID number 520YJ. A 10% discount off the unrestricted mid week coach fares is available

when purchased 7 days in advance. The same discounts apply on Shuttle by United and United Express. Dedicated reservationists are on duty 7 days a week, 7:00 A.M. to 12 midnight EST. Book early to take advantage of promotional fares that give you the greatest discount. Mileage Plus members receive full credit for all miles flown to this reunion. Avis and Alamo rental car companies offer, to the attendees of our reunion, discounts of 10% off the applicable rates when reservations are made in conjunction with United Airlines air reservations.

We have also been working with the management and staff at the Embassy Suites for additional room accommodations. We have contracted for 35 mini-suites at the new Microtel (immediately across the street from the Embassy Suites) at a price of \$79 per night plus tax (about \$85). A Continental breakfast is provided. Jackie Duff, our hostess at Embassy Suites, has granted permission for reunion guests staying at Microtel to join the social each evening at the Embassy Suites. We now have a range of prices for our attendees. Call Dee Smith, 1-888-771-7171 at Microtel or Jackie Duff at Embassy Suites (719) 599-9100 or 1-800-EMBASSY or Fax (719) 599-4644. Embassy Suites are \$100 single or \$110 double and include a complimentary, cooked to order breakfast and the social hour. The Embassy Suites will be our headquarters. Rates also include a complimentary coffee, USA Today delivered daily, Microwave, refrigerator and wet bar in each suite. We have tried very hard to provide a range of prices and amenities during one of the busiest weeks in Colorado Springs. We have the following suites blocked for our members: 10/7/98 - 40 suites; 10/8/98-75 suites; 10/9 and 10/10/98-100 suites. What we don't book we will have to turn back. We will be provided reservation cards which will be made available

to you. Reservations are to be made directly to the Embassy Suites or Microtel. All reservation cards must be returned NLT September 6, 1998 or we lose the rooms. (We strongly recommend early reservation so you have your choice—accommodations during Navy week go fast).

Our banquet is scheduled at the Embassy Suites for the evening of October 10, 1998 starting at 1800. We will have time to return from the game, clean-up, have a social and begin the festivities. Details on menus available will be provided in future news.

NORAD tours must be arranged exactly six months prior to the requested tour month. On the first working day of April, we must get our list of names/social security numbers to NORAD on their form. As presently published in their guidelines, they provide tours on Monday and Friday. We may be limited to one group of 30. Unless we are able to work some special tours, Friday is our only option. In fairness to all, I will date your requests and that's the sequence. I have eight now. We will try very hard to get additional tours but this is beyond our control.

As you may already know, Air Force is ranked 19th in the country and, presently has a 7-0 record after just beating Navy. They have looked pretty good this year. The good news is that key players are juniors and will be back next year. We will have an enjoyable game. We need \$25 per person for game tickets and transportation. We must get our block of seats early. Send your checks to our Treasurer NLT 15 February 1998. Based on previous group placements, I anticipate we should be on the west side, about the 35 - 40 yard line, up near the press box. We'll try for the best seats available but, again, the service academy games are usually well attended. We can expect one of the best "shows" for fly bys and academy activities. Please send your checks directly to our

Treasurer. (Admin Note: Use Fred Kemp's address given earlier in this newsletter.) I will get a list from him. We have requested an EC135 fly by. The airborne is being deactivated at Offutt AFB in October 1998.

Here's the current status of our Interest Survey:

Pikes Peak - 84; Garden of the Gods - 36; Golf Tournament - 30; Royal Gorge - 66; Cripple Creek - 62; Flying W Ranch - 97; AF/Navy Football Game - 135; NORAD - 126; Peterson AFB - 70; Social Banquet - 146; AF Academy - 96; Memorial Service - 92. We have a total person count of 170 now.

In our next Newsletter, I should have a better idea on the Peterson AFB and NORAD TOUR spaces. We will also request firm commitments on the other tours and with prices. Our tentative schedule is:

Wednesday, 7 October 1998
Check in and Social

Thursday, 8 October 1998
Tours as requested and Golf Tournament.

Friday, 9 October 1998
NORAD and other tours as requested.

Friday evening we have our dinner and western show at the Flying W Ranch.

Saturday, 10 October 1998
AF/Navy Game

Saturday evening we have our banquet at the Embassy Suites.

Sunday 11 October 1998
Memorial Service
Probably arrange tours as desired.

It is our intent to use the services of Stuart Kupfer "City Concierge". Stuart has an extensive background with previous employment at the Broadmoor Hotel among other noteworthy experiences. He has provided some potential prices for areas of interest and they should be very close.

Pikes Peak Cog Railway and transportation - about \$30 each. Remember the altitude for those of you who may need to consider this. It's about the easiest way to go up. The view is awesome on a clear day.

Garden of the Gods - (van/bus) Group Tour \$25 - 30 (includes a variety of other sites).

Royal Gorge - (van/bus) Group Tour \$45 - 60. Highest suspension bridge in the U.S. Also has a overhead tram and a cog rail car to the bottom of the gorge.

Cripple Creek (bus)
Complimentary if meet minimum count of 35. Includes pickup at the hotel and coupon books. This is a gambling town.

Flying W Ranch. about \$30/person. Includes transportation to/from. Dinner includes Appetizers, Garden salad, 13 oz. Kansas City strip steak cooked over an open wood fire; baked potato, Flying W Red Baked beans, Flying W Biscuits and honey butter. We are scheduled for arrival at 7:00 P.M. Cash bar is available upon arrival. We can tour the ranch buildings and dinner is at 8:00 P.M. The Western show follows dinner and is about an hour long. We are booked in the "Winter Barn".

Tours to NORAD, Peterson AFB and the AF Academy will cost the transportation fee which is approximately \$10 per person.

Our golf tournament will be headed up by Jan Suggs. Many thanks to Jan for accepting this task. We are working to get access to one of the beautiful courses at the Air Force Academy. More on this in a future Newsletter but let Jan know your intentions. I have provided her a copy of the survey interests.

We hope you will consider your priorities and desires for tours early. We hope that early booking will not only assure attendees the selection of their choice but will enable us to arrange tours and have your tickets available when you arrive.

Richard N. Doolittle
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**HISTORY OF THE 3RD
AIRBORNE COMMAND
AND CONTROL SQUADRON
Major Greg Ogletree
SAC/ACCA Historian**

The shortest-lived of all SAC's "Airborne Command and Control Squadrons" (ACCS) was also the only odd-numbered unit in the Post Attack Command and Control System (PACCS) to carry an "ACCS" designation. The 3 ACCS, with a lineage-and-honors history dating back to a balloon company organized in 1918 at Fort Omaha, Nebraska, for World War I service, was constituted on 12 March 1970 and activated 1 April 1970 at Grissom AFB (renamed from Bunker Hill AFB in May 1968), Indiana. Assigned to the 305th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) under the 40th Air Division, the 3rd was to have a short but distinguished history, playing a pivotal role in the success of the PACCS.

The first Commander of the new squadron was Lt Col Jack W. Suggs. He was assisted by Lt Col Joseph H. Sheppard, the Operations Officer, and Lt Col Robert Dibble, the Chief of the Battle Staff. In recent musings, now-retired Colonel Suggs reflected: *"The experience of starting a new flying unit in the Air Force from scratch with very few people that I knew was a great challenge. We started on 1 April 1970 with a new building for the battle staff that had to be made secure to house the classified information supporting the SIOF [Single Integrated Operational Plan]. That was a major task that had to be completed ASAP. The flying operations aircrews were drafted from the existing members of the 305th and the 70th. We had no input as to whom we got. None of the flight crews [was] receiver qualified and only two pilots in the unit were, a standboard captain and myself [and we were the only] qualified IPs. That kept me busy covering both jobs. We were flying night and day to get crews combat ready."*

The mission of the 3 ACCS was to provide a direct UHF radio link between the National Command Authority (NCA: the President and Secretary of Defense) and the SAC Airborne Command Post (ABNCP), and to serve as a back-up for the ABNCP should that become necessary. This was done using three platforms orbited in three different areas. The UHF "link" between the NCA's National Emergency Airborne Command Post on the east coast and the ABNCP flying "somewhere over the central U.S." was established using two EC-135L aircraft designated Relay 1 and Relay 2. These were bare-bones EC-135s that carried no battle staff and no weapon system (i.e., no Airborne Launch Control System for launching Minuteman missiles), only extra communications equipment and operators. The ABNCP back-up was an EC-135C designated the

Eastern Auxiliary Command Post ("East Aux"). The C-model was fully equipped. The EAUX used the call sign STEPMOTHER, just as the SAC ABNCP used LOOKING GLASS.

Colonel Suggs continues: "The 3rd ACCS had an enviable position in that the wing HQ people didn't really understand the control lines limitations. With the battle staff being in control of the wing during our airborne activities (that is, the wing reported to STEPMOTHER when airborne) and also being part of the wing's assets during normal day-to-day support. That created some difficulty for the lesser wing staff. To further place our stamp of PACCS upon the local wing folks, the new squadron leaders proved to be very strong personalities. The Chief of the Battle Staff, Lt Col Dibble--a dynamic individual, was aided by similar dynamic individuals on the Battle Staff. Lt Col Jack Featherstone was Plans Chief, Maj Neil Dale, Ops Controller and Maj Al Yaroch headed up the very strong Communications Section. The name of the [head of the] Logistics shop escapes me now. It was a wonderful experience to be associated with men and women of this caliber."

Nearly 7 months elapsed before the squadron flew its first LOOKING GLASS mission, a scheduled ABNCP flight on 9 November 1970. It wouldn't be their last. The following month, on 10 December, a severe blizzard struck the midwest and neither the 2 ACCS at Offutt AFB, Nebraska, nor the 4 ACCS at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, could launch a bird to relieve the airborne GLASS at the end of its mission. The 3 ACCS came through in a pinch, picking up Brig Gen Hill, commander of 47 AD, to act as the Airborne Emergency Action Officer and flew its first unscheduled LOOKING GLASS sortie.

Another highlight of the squadron's first year occurred when Crew S-06 was selected to represent the wing in the 1970 SAC Combat Crew Competition. The crew members were: Maj Martinez (AC), Capt Don Linn (CP), Capt John Varcho (N), and TSgt R. Fant (BO).

On the social side of goings-on, the 3rd threw its first big party, called "Showboat," on 16 October, raising \$1,114.51 for the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. This was to be the first of five big parties of this type that the 3 ACCS hosted as fund-raising efforts for various worthy causes.

The squadron's first Trailing Wire Antenna (TWA) mission was flown over Lake Superior on 22 October 1971. Lt Col Jim Spence described a TWA sortie with unpunctuated understatement: "This was always an exciting flight." These missions involved reeling out several (up to 5) miles of antenna wire used to support the 487L Survivable Low Frequency Communications System which operates in the VLF range (3 to 30 kc). If there were ever a nuclear attack against the United States, this might be the only communications system that would still function. The problem was that the antenna was, more often than not, reluctant to "return home to mama." In fact, despite everyone's best efforts and trying several techniques not contained in any SAC checklist, it occasionally just outright refused to be reeled in. So, what happened when the wire resisted all recall efforts? Col Suggs writes on the subject: "Fred Kemp's claim to fame is that he [was] the champion in the "cut the cable" [category] for the number of feet that [he] splashed into Lake Superior. In fact, I was a personal witness to part of his exploits. It sure reduces the drag when that long

wire lets go!" (This problem plagued other ACCSs too, never being resolved--even into the 1990s. It was one reason TWA missions were always flown over, or near, very large bodies of water.)

Lt Col Suggs relinquished command of the squadron to Lt Col Edward Todd in August 1972. Two months later, on 13 October, the unit enjoyed its first Dining-In, at which Brig Gen Hilding L. Jacobson, SAC's Director of Command Control was the honored guest speaker. During the festivities, Colonel George E. Souci, commander of the 305 ARW, presented Lt Col Todd with the Commander's Trophy in intramural sports. It was probably an easy win for the squadron because fully 75 percent of 3 ACCS personnel took part in one or more sports!

Subsequent 3 ACCS commanders were Lt Col Carl Shaner, Lt Col Ronald Vargo, and Lt Col James Spence, a former chief of the battle staff (DOC). (Dates of tenure for these individuals could not be determined exactly from records available at the time of this writing.) Lt Col Spence made history when he took the unit guidon because that moment marked the first time that a navigator commanded a USAF flying squadron.* And, as the saying goes, "The first shall be last." Lt Col Spence would be the 3rd's final commander.

The 3 ACCS was inactivated on 31 December 1975. The unit's equipment and mission were transferred to the 70th Air Refueling Squadron, also based at Grissom and assigned to the 305 ARW. In addition to the two service streamers and two campaign streamers it inherited from its predecessor units, the 3rd also earned a total of four Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards (AFOUAs) during its 5-1/2 years of PACCS duty. These awards were for the following periods: 1 Jul 72--30

Jun 73; 1 Jul 73--30 Jun 74; 1 Jul 74--30 Jun 75; and 1 Jul--31 Dec 75. Note the "continuous coverage" from 1 July 1972 until the unit was inactivated--four back-to-back awards!

The "odd squad" left an enviable record for the 2 ACCS and 4 ACCS to consider. Indeed, although one of those squadrons later matched the record of four back-to-back AFOUAs, it was never surpassed by either one. Suggs reflects again: "The 3rd had a very enviable record in meeting all assigned tasks. We beat the hell out of both the 2nd and 4th when measured in any area. The 3rd was the sole ACCS unit assigned to Second Air Force. The 2nd and 4th [were] assigned to Fifteenth Air Force. That generated a lot of rivalry. We had great professional pride. The 305th wing motto was 'Can Do' and we did!"

That they did. Hats off to the 3rd Airborne Command & Control Squadron. Thanks for a job well done!

*THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAC, 1946-1981 (p.194) notes that, on 16 Feb 75, B/Gen Eugene D. Scott became the first navigator in the history of the USAF to command an operational flying unit when he

assumed command of the 47th Air Division at Fairchild AFB, WA. It's important to note here that the general commanded an air division, not a squadron--so he was NOT the first navigator to command a flying squadron, per se. In fact, technically, although the book says "flying unit," in fact, an air division is an "establishment," not a "unit." A unit is an organization at the squadron level or lower. An establishment is an organization at the group level or higher.

ENDNOTE: An interesting but little-known fact about the 3 ACCS is that it had "an afterlife," being reactivated from 1 September 1982 to 1 November 1986 (yes, an even shorter life ... but not under SAC) and assigned to Air Force Space Command's Aerospace Defense Center to provide the Commander-in-Chief, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) with a survivable command and control element; i.e., an airborne battle staff for NORAD. During this period, the unit flew E-3A Sentry (AWACS) aircraft based at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma. Curiously, the only emblem ever OFFICIALLY approved for the 3 ACCS was

adopted during this era...and of course it bore no resemblance whatsoever to the former, unofficial emblem bearing the SAC shield! (Incidentally, the Air Force Space Command just recently activated the 3rd Command and Control Squadron [3 CACS] at Offutt AFB, with a mission very similar to what the latter-day 3 ACCS had except on the ground rather than in the air, but the author has been unable to determine if it inherited the lineage and honors of the 3 ACCS.)

SOURCES

"USAF Lineage and Honors History: 3d Airborne Command and Control Squadron," Headquarters USAF Historical Research Center, 7 October 1985.

The Development of SAC, 1946-1981 (A Chronological History), by J.C. Hopkins: Office of the Historian, Headquarters Strategic Air Command, 1 July 1982 (p. 194).

Correspondence (undated) received 27 Oct 97 from Lt Col Jim Spence (USAF, Ret).

Correspondence (e-mail), Col Jack Suggs (USAF, Ret), various; Oct - Nov 1997



SAC AIRBORNE
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