

COMMANDER'S RECALL

Background: In light of the ongoing process that is AFTAC, a desire to record the impressions of this "from the top" and the notion we were nearing the end of a millenium, we asked previous AFTAC commanders (for whom we had an address) to give us a synopsis of their time with the command. In the process, L/Gen (Ret) Jim Clapper suggested a questionnaire, devised it & we sent that out as an option. So far we have the following responses (or promises to respond): Retired Gen's Silliman, Gordon, Clapper, and Bingham and Col Meisenheimer, and Gen Shaffer and Col Wigington have also agreed to participate. We thank these gentlemen for agreeing and hope that others will see this level of participation and also "reCall" and "jump on-board."

We feature replies (one-an issue) in the chronological order of their time of command - reCalls in previous issues, Gen (Ret) Silliman, Gen (Ret) Gordon, Col (Ret) Meisenheimer and Gen (Ret) Clapper - next issue will feature Gen (Ret) Bingham...at this time we feature...



RICHARD J. O'LEAR

MGEN, USAF (RET)

COMMANDER, MAY '85 - SEP '86

SUBMITTED ON 6/1/00

During my 30-year career, my time as Commander of AFTAC ranks at the top of my list of favorite jobs. Why? That's easy—the job was important and fun, the challenge was big enough to keep one's interest but small enough to seem manageable, and the people were terrific, dedicated professionals. During this short trip down memory lane, I'll try to group my comments into four broad categories: the issues, the technology, the events, and the people.

In May 1985, my best friend, Jim Clapper, turned over command of AFTAC to me. It was a great time to be at AFTAC. The budget for national security was actually growing; there was still a clearly identifiable, monolithic threat posed by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact; and there was more than the usual turmoil in our community over bureaucratic processes. This last point meant that much of my time at AFTAC was spent working organizational and budgetary issues. One of the major tasks was to publicize AFTAC to the "big" Air Force and to get AFTAC more into the mainstream of the AF. It sounds surprising, but very few people in the AF really knew much about the USAEDS and why it was such a "national asset."

Since its creation, AFTAC has been a unique organization that provided a critically important capability for the United States. As the seniors in Washington DC struggled to rationalize AF

organizations and processes, more and more people wondered what this thing called AFTAC was and why it was handled so differently from the rest of the AF. The whole process of how requirements were identified and funds were allocated was undergoing tremendous scrutiny and overhaul during this time. It was always a treat to "discuss" with legends like Tom Ciambone, Gerry Leies, Frank Pilotte, and Walt Singlevich how we got our requirements and how we sought funding. My job was to help show them, who had forgotten more about nuclear treaty monitoring than I could ever hope to know, how to get what we needed from a system that was becoming increasingly centralized and bureaucratized.

Then there were the "operators;" e.g., Tom Niquette and Bobby Fairless, who were always ready to launch a PONY EXPRESS. In their area, there was always some concern about WC-135s, WC-130s, U-2s, or B52s that required their skills and diligence to resolve.

On the technology side, working at AFTAC was like drinking from a firehose! Some of the best teachers in the world tried to get me smart of various aspects of the physical sciences that formed the lifeblood of AFTAC. With painstaking detail and patience, they taught me about the Airborne technique (A); the Seismic technique (B); the Surface-Based Particulate Sampling technique (C); the Acoustic technique (I); the Electromagnetic Pulse technique (J); the Ionospheric technique (K); the Hydroacoustic technique (O); and so many other techniques that I often felt like a three-year old learning the alphabet.

The thing that never ceased to amaze me is that the talented people in AFTAC were able to find so many ways of using physical phenomenology to help monitor critical global nuclear events. The most fascinating part of the "technique drill" was seeing the 99XXXs actually employing them—whether onboard a WC-135, at TOD, at Det 207 in Alaska, Det 301 in Turkey, Det 415 in Thailand, Det 421 in Australia, Det 452 in Korea, or Det 459/489 in Wyoming. The techniques were superb, but the people were even better!

There were many significant events that characterized my tour with AFTAC, but two stand out as memorable. The Challenger accident on 28 January 1986 is certainly one of those events where almost everyone alive then can tell you where they were when it occurred. My own memories about the Challenger accident centered on how compassionate and helpful the people at AFTAC were, and how many ways they assisted the base commander cope with the many administrative and logistics problems that befell Patrick following the accident.

Another date that will long be remembered is 26 April 1986. AFTAC's role during the Chernobyl disaster was truly unique. From the first indications of the accident to the long-term monitoring of the debris pattern, AFTAC played a major role in advising key decisionmakers in many governments and commercial

Traveling to the field locations was easily my favorite activity. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing how our folks and their families lived (not always comfortably), the conditions under which they were doing their jobs (sometimes pretty harsh), and the attitudes and competence they demonstrated day-after-day (always outstanding).

The mission task always got done despite some of the unusual challenges (such as elephants tearing down seismic wires, or a brush fire burning the communications wires). It was always a treat to visit TOD and see the quality of people in the labs and those doing the maintenance. To this day, I find it hard to believe how many talented enlisted folks we had doing the jobs of Phds.

The non-mission activities were also memorable (such as the "boat races" or camel rides in Alice Springs; the visit to the orphanage in Korea; the haircut in the post office at Pinedale, Wyoming; or visiting the self-taught school in Sonesca, Spain).

Overall, I felt very privileged to have been associated with AFTAC. My time there provided me with some wonderful memories. The job was important, the techniques we used were state of the art, there were some pretty significant events that punctuated my tour, and the people (the officers, the enlisted men and women, and the civilians) were first-class by every measure of merit. In fact, I'd like to do it again! Best of luck on the many new challenges facing you.

Thanks, Gen O'Lear, for your great "remembrances. I, too, remember many of the events you mention here. It sure brings back some fond memories.

I Remember...

AFTAC History by those who were there

PREPARED FROM YOUR INPUTS We solicit your **unclassified** remembrances of highlights in your AFTAC career (events, people, etc.). Forward these memories to us at 'chrisjohn@juno.com' or ATTN Remembrances column to the Alumni Address (see left column, page 2) - we will publish them as soon as we can. Thanks for your interest in helping us.

SUBMITTED BY HARRY BEDSWORTH, 99/11/15

In Oct 61 I was stationed at Dover AFB, and while TDY at Pope AFB (adjoins Ft Campbell KY), I received a call from the personnel office at Dover directing me to take a commercial flight back to Dover ASAP. I was told that I was to go to a "Special Outfit" in Alexandria, VA, for an interview. I went and was interviewed by Col Gilbert **Cooke**. After the interview I found my way to Bolling AFB (AF Personnel was on Bolling AFB at that time), found the right office and told them I DID NOT WANT to be assigned to the DC area. A few minutes later a Sgt. came over and told me that President **Eisenhower** had recently banned dependent overseas travel and furthermore I was up for worldwide assignment the following month (an afterthought:

probably not true). After thinking this info over for about 10 seconds I told him "better put me down for the assignment." Rush job, I reported to AFTAC in November, my predecessor had one of those 30 minute reassignments.

I really enjoy the POST-MONITOR. Especially articles with names of those I served with and/or articles concerning Dets I visited while assigned to the 1156 TOS. As I recall, I inspected all of them at least three times for administrative inspections. Some GREAT, and as can be expected, some not the best.

I remember the first time I inspected a particular Det - my report on that Det was probably the shortest of many. So good I suggested to the squadron commander that the Det commander, Captain **McAllister**, be considered for the AF Commendation Medal. "Write it up and I will sign it," he said. So, if you are still around, Mac, that is how you got your medal.

Probably no one is aware of how the Dets in Australia started getting APO mail, so here it is. The ONLY way, except pouch, to get mail and mailable packages to Australia was INTERNATIONAL AIRMAIL. This included everything, urgent parts for the systems to routine mail, packages to and from home, etc., very, very expensive. I discussed the idea with my boss and Col **Kuntz** about how to handle the sensitive aspects. I made an appointment with the chief postal system at Hickam AFB and explained the need for an APO. In short he advised that the best we could hope for is a 'Mail Only APO' and it would be hard to do and it would have to be requested and fully justified and sent to higher authority for consideration/approval. Back to Wheeler, I briefed the boss. My idea, so I had to work up costs, morale issues (these were immense) and check with Pan Am the major US carrier to Sydney.

Took quite awhile. Finally I had a proposal ready to send to the postal LTC at Hickam and gave it to my boss. As time passes, I had an opportunity to discuss the proposal with Col. Kuntz. He said "it looks good but I don't agree with the dollar savings." "What do you think the savings should be," I asked. He told me, I took the package to my office, had that page retyped with his estimate, took it to Col. K, and he signed it. I took it to Hickam the following day. It took a lot of time to get the details worked out and I was out of it from then on - except going to Sydney with the LTC (postal) from Hickam. We had to make sure storage space was available at the Sydney airport and other details (he really wanted a good reason to go to Australia). Several months later Australian Dets had a MAOAPO. Not too much after that the Air Force started a weekly flight out of Travis to Australia.

Another story: I wanted to return to HQ on Telegraph Road from Hawaii. Personnel said they didn't need me, SO how did I get an assignment back to HQ and become the HISTORIAN??

A Barely Substantiated (BS) Tale!



PREPARED FROM YOUR INPUTS. We solicit **unclassified humorous** stories about AFTAC events and people - recognizing these anecdotes may be Barely Substantiated (BS). Forward your stories to us at "chrisjohn@juno.com" or ATTN: BS column to the Alumni Address (see left column, page 2) - we will publish as soon as we can.

Turkish Tales

TWO FROM RON COOK

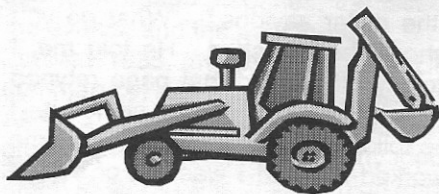
A Mystery 'Bug'...for real

While I was stationed in Ankara, Turkey, from Aug 1996 - Feb 1998 an interesting situation occurred with our Mark II recorder. We lost one of the traces on the 4-channel 35mm film recorder.

Upon checkout, everything appeared normal. The light beam was recording properly. We made an entry in the station log to that effect. The next day, we again entered the dark room, changed the film, and developed the previous 24 hours of recording. Once again the light trace was lost. With more frequent operational checks, the lid on the recorder was opened gently enough that it did not disturb the culprit - a spider had been seeking warmth in the beam while quite effectively obliterating the trace. Imagine, sneaking up on a piece of equipment.

A Mystery Cable

"Pops" - our maintenance man kept both of the detachment's bulldozers working. Dave Campbell was the first to take an interest in playing with them - cleaning up around the Det. I soon followed. We



did our best to improve the landscaping.

One day the station chief - NCOIC, asked me to take a swipe down the drainage ditch, since we were to be inspected the next day. As I neared the end of the ditch, several people including the station chief came running out, shouting at me. I stopped the dozer immediately to learn I had just severed a power cable to the vaults. Apparently the charts showing the line overhead were not correct, and I thank God it was the chief who had asked me. Ron, thanks for these great stories...wish I had been

MONITORing Active- Duty Doing's' prepared by the editors from your inputs sent in from around the AFTAC World

Command Section



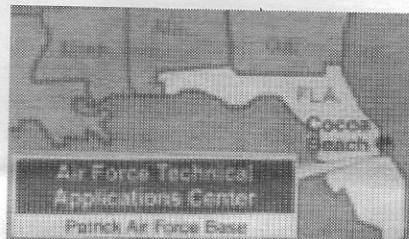
Col. Harold J.
Beatty

AFTAC Commander, 98/7, previously at Shaw AFB where he was the Chief of Intelligence for the US Central Command Air Forces and commander of the 609th Air Intelligence Group, received commission upon graduation from Officers Training School (distinguished graduate) in 1980. He is a native of Bonny Blue, VA. His wife Diane is from Quebec, Canada. They have two children Matthew and Melanie.



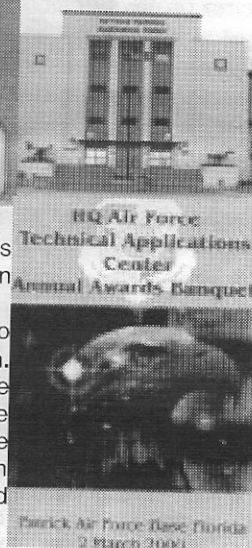
CMSgt Kenneth
Myers

AFTAC Superintendent, 98/11, a 20-year AFTACer, he enlisted 3/79, trained as a scientific measurements technician and is a Distinguished Graduate from all three AF NCO Leadership schools. He has been the AF Command Senior NCO of the Year twice, '91 and '93. He served at Dets 301, 415, 421, and in the HQs with DO, CC, TT, TA, LS. Chief Myers is from Doylestown, PA. He has two children, Douglas and Melissa, and is engaged to Ms. Heather Miller from Melbourne, Florida



AFTAC 1999 ANNUAL AWARDS

The 1999 AFTAC Annual Awards were presented on 2 March 2000 in many categories, including the Alumni Member of the Year award to our newsletter editor, John **Horsch**. Even though the award winners are too numerous to name here, we would like to congratulate the outstanding military and civilian personnel who serve AFTAC around the world.



Sensor Olympics

SUBMITTED BY CHIEF MYERS, AFTAC SUPERINTENDENT

One of the best parts of my job is watching AFTAC's best getting the recognition they truly deserve for the outstanding work they do. In late October (yes I know I'm a bit late on this article) I was in San Antonio for the SENSOR OLYMPICS Awards Banquet. First question you have is what is SENSOR OLYMPICS?

SENSOR OLYMPICS is an annual enlisted skills competition for Air Intelligence Agency and AIA-supported units (*this means AFTAC*) to identify,