

Saluting Crawford

I read your feature, "Caught in the Crossfire," in the June *Air Force Magazine* [p. 26]. I was very impressed with the article and the documented heroism of those involved. Congratulations on a well-written account of heroism above and beyond the call of duty. As a veteran who was decorated for heroism myself, I salute all those involved in this act of extreme heroism. My only question is: What does it take to get a Medal of Honor?

Capt. James R. Lewis,
USAFR (Ret.)
Panama City, Fla.

The June [issue] has a wonderful article on Capt. Barry Crawford receiving the Air Force Cross. A comparison of his deeds with those of Medal of Honor recipient Lt. Michael Murphy, SEAL, US Navy, is telling. Does not this award call for closer review for an upgrade to the Medal of Honor? What does a current member of the USAF have to do to receive the Medal of Honor? It has gotten a bit ridiculous!

James W. Kenney
San Antonio

I found the article to be both inspirational and instructive.

First, it is gratifying that America still produces young people, like Capt. Barry Crawford Jr., who are willing to go in harm's way in extremely hostile territory in service to our nation. Captain Crawford's actions under fire were in the great tradition of our military, and I join with all who thank him for his leadership and courage when those in his charge needed him the most.

Second, I regret that the leadership above Captain Crawford placed him and his troops in an untenable situation, based on inadequate intelligence

regarding the expected size of the opposition force. Apparently, Captain Crawford's assault force including "nearly 100 US and Afghan personnel" were placed in a situation where "more than a hundred enemy fighters" got the upper hand despite the Americans' control of the air. "Thirty-three aircraft and more than 40 air strikes" were needed to enable the friendlies to exfiltrate the area.

So, to summarize, the ground forces were nearly evenly matched, and the good guys controlled the air in mostly daylight conditions with decent weather. And when the dust settled our guys had "neutralized a numerically superior force" and avoided "massive casualties."

Okay. This puts the last 10 years in perspective, doesn't it? American leadership puts 130,000 troops on the ground in a country of 25 million people and we celebrate avoiding "massive casualties." I suggest that like the Persians, Greeks, Mongols, Brits, and Russians, America should just declare victory and leave.

Lt. Col. Douglas W. Schott,
USAF (Ret.)
Dayton, Tenn.

Famous AND Infamous

As one of Brian Shul's original burn survivor buddies and later his friend, I thought it was great to see Brian's name listed as a "Famous Flier" of the SR-71 Blackbird in the "Airpower Classics" section of your May issue of *Air Force Magazine* [p. 152]. However, I am compelled to respond to the "godfather" of the SR-71 program, Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Halloran's unsolicited and insidious comments about Brian not qualifying as a famous flier because he doesn't meet the qualities of a "famous flier" by "Blackbird standards" [*Letters: "Famous or Infamous?" July, p. 7*].

Furthermore, I believe your magazine's letters editor erroneously titled the godfather's letter "Famous or Infamous?" I humbly submit that Maj. Brian Shul, USAF (Ret.), is both famous AND infamous! Let's not mince words as Halloran did. Shul was and is an American born and bred fighter jock. Cocky? Yes. Wistful? Yes. Happy-go-lucky? You bet. Prone to shoot for the stars? Ditto. What other famous American fliers come to mind when asking these questions?

Most.

Perhaps the last assignment he "volunteered" for just wasn't his cup of JP-7? So what if he was able to outrun two Libyan fired SA-2 missiles in one dual afterburner bound? And sure, Shul and backseater Walt Watson made a slow speed (152 knots) flyover ending with a full two afterburner pullout at a height of 50 feet at a nondescript RAF airfield after a mission to the Iron Curtain in the 1980s. These events alone in Major Shul's Blackbird career would make him famous and even infamous in my book! But I will stick my neck out even further (I hope the Blackbird Mafioso doesn't read this):

Do you have a comment about a current article in the magazine? Write to "Letters," *Air Force Magazine*, 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209-1198. (E-mail: letters@afa.org.) Letters should be concise and timely. We cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We reserve the right to condense letters. Letters without name and city/base and state are not acceptable. Photographs cannot be used or returned.—THE EDITORS

Major Shul was and still is also a legend and a hero!

There was a time in 1975 when I lay in a Brooke Army Medical Center's burn ward only wanting to quietly drift away from life and the pain my every breath brought. But then, there was Brian Shul at my bedside, encouraging me to live, to be a survivor as he was. He wasn't only there for me but for countless others who have found a will to survive, through his life's story. He did not have to be concerned for any of us.

He had his own healing and struggle to regain his flight status to deal with. But Brian still had a word of encouragement for all of us daily and a genuine love for all who allowed him into their veil of pain. Brian is *my* hero and more than meets my standards to be listed as a "Famous Flier" of anything!

SSgt. David R. Cox Sr.,
USAF (Ret.)
Southaven, Miss.

Godfather (Maj. Gen.) Patrick J. Halloran's letter was mean-spirited concerning Brian Shul. I do not know Shul, but it would not have hurt to address him as "Major" as the author did for Lt. Gen. William Campbell (God's gift to aviation). I cannot fathom Halloran's motivation for dissing Shul.

Lt. Col. Denny Domin,
USAF (Ret.)
Seabrook Island, S.C.

Two Generations

I read with interest the article "Linebacker I" by Rebecca Grant that was published in the June 2012 issue of *Air Force Magazine* [p. 71]. I would like to point out that the man in the photograph on p. 73, listed as Gen. Lucius Clay Jr., commander of Pacific Air Forces during Linebacker I, is actually Gen. Lucius Clay Sr. When we created a Civil Air Patrol squadron here in Roswell, General Clay Jr. was gracious enough to permit us to name the squadron after his father.

Barry S. Herrin
Roswell, Ga.

Rebecca Grant's "Linebacker I" is an excellent example of the overwhelming strength of the US air arsenal with its hundreds of combat aircraft that USAF, the Navy, and the Marine Corps unleashed as they broke communist forces during the 1972 Easter Offensive. As an EWO, I flew with my Wurthsmith Air Force Base crew on the first time ever B-52 strike on the Haiphong Harbor area. Other B-52s hit targets farther north, including Hanoi, an unbelievable first time accomplishment by a B-52 crew. Air Force generals at U Tapao Air Base (not shown on your Thailand air operations map) strongly advised that the US continue the huge

air campaign of tactical and strategic air strikes until the communists came to their knees and signed the peace agreement. Unfortunately, it was not heeded, as the North Vietnamese came back to the negotiations table and the largest air campaign of the war stopped. The rest is history and the US air arsenal was again called on to end the war just months later during Linebacker II, this time with great loss to our SAC forces (13 B-52s shot down), as the enemy had upgraded their threat systems and changed their tactics. Never again!

Lt. Col. Sid Howard,
USAF (Ret.)
Midwest City, Okla.

"Linebacker I" described the Constant Guard deployment in response to the Easter Offensive, but mischaracterized the Bullet Shot operation as a similar response. Actually, it was proactive—preparing for the invasion.

The Arc Light facility at Andersen AFB, Guam, had been inactive for some time when Bullet Shot kicked off at Carswell AFB, Tex., on Feb. 8, 1972. The cover story was that we were going to Guam as a show of force for President Nixon's visit to China. When he went home without us, we figured there was something else brewing.

B-52s from the 7th Bomb Wing at Carswell and two other SAC bases deployed to Andersen on Feb. 9 and within days had re-established Arc Light runs to Vietnam. The three-ship cells were designated by colors, which was simple during initial operations, when we ran three cells a day. It got more complex as virtually every B-52D in the fleet and a significant number of G models joined us by June and the numbers of daily cells increased. We were running out of colors.

I can't describe how the buildup progressed. However, we were already on station for the Easter Offensive. Bullet Shot II supported Linebacker I, which I believe resulted in 150 B-52s on Andersen alone—only the 24/7 operations allowed parking spots. Housing was at a premium. Being one of the first to arrive, I had a barracks room on base. Aircrews lived in the hotels, while the enlisted newcomers lived in the Tin City down the road and, as more came in, in Tent City.

Wonder how many crews out there can still play the Bugle Note? Bugle Note was a map package put in for two reasons: a long, long flight to the target and a suspicion that SAC ADVON contract cleaners at Tan Son Nhut were passing on target information to their friends. Under Bugle Note, as cells approached the Vietnamese coast, crews would be radioed their turn points, aiming points,

and targets. This allowed for the close air support operations mentioned in the article.

The SAC historian can give you the date of the first B-52 raid across the border into Vietnam. I only remember being locked in the Arc Light facility until the bombers had exited enemy airspace. SAC had not, to that point, lost a bomber to hostile fire and was taking no chances.

The Linebacker I article was very informative. Sitting on our island paradise, we were generally unaware of what the rest of our Air Force was doing. Good work.

MSgt. John Pecarina,
USAF (Ret.)
Midlothian, Tex.

Nothing But Respect

This letter is in response to the letter from MSgt. Joe M. Gardner, USAF (Ret.), who wondered why Lee Archer was not listed in *Air Force Magazine* as an ace. [The editors] were correct in [their] response to him that the Air Force Historical Research Agency, where I work, maintains all the documentation confirming the aerial victory credits of members of the Air Service, the Army Air Forces, and the United States Air Force. Our documents prove that Lee Archer shot down a total of four enemy aircraft, not the five required to be an ace.

I have personally researched the aerial victory credits of all the Tuskegee Airmen and wrote an article about it, "112 Victories." During World War II, Lee Archer claimed to have shot down one enemy aircraft on July 18, 1944, and three more on Oct. 12, 1944. For each of those claims, he was awarded a credit by Fifteenth Air Force orders. Lee Archer's total number of aerial victory credits is four. There is no documentary evidence that Archer either claimed or was awarded any additional aerial victory credits. Lee Archer is not an ace and never was an ace.

There were no Tuskegee Airmen who were aces. However, three Tuskegee Airmen shot down four enemy aircraft. Besides Lee Archer, they were Joseph Elsberry and Edward Toppins.

The Tuskegee Airmen deserve to be remembered as American heroes who fought well as the first black pilots in the American military. The fact that none were aces does not diminish their accomplishments in any way. They shot down 112 enemy aircraft. More importantly, they protected American bombers they escorted, losing bombers to enemy aircraft on only seven of their 179 bomber escort missions during World War II.

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