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SNC

HISTORY
OF THE
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

(Unclassified Title)

July 1968 through June 1969

1. Aircraft accidents FY 1969
2. Glory Trip
3. Missile - Testing
4. Missile - Launching

Assigned to the

STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Home Station

March Air Force Base, Riverside, California

VOLUME I - NARRATIVE

(U) This document was prepared by the Office of the Historian, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force. This history was prepared in compliance with SAC Regulation 210-1, 14 July 1968. This document is classified SECRET/RESTRICTED DATA/NOFORN under the provisions of AFR 205-1. The classification conforms to the provisions of the appended documents which bear on the combat capability of this organization and which form the basis for this study.

APPROVED:

Paul K Carlton

PAUL K. CARLTON, Lt Gen, USAF
Commander

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CHAPTER III

STATUS OF THE COMMAND

Introduction

(U) Despite changes in the Air Force history program, the format of this chapter is quite similar to the two previous installments. Only the placement within the narrative has changed.

(U) Since this installment no longer has a personnel chapter or a facilities chapter, these two subjects are melded into this chapter, mostly from the viewpoint of a human relations project called The Peoples Program. The topic of communications is also treated from the command viewpoint rather than standing as a separate subject.

(U) Within these parameters the reader will learn from this installment concerning the resources the command was assigned and how they were used, controlled and managed by command leadership. Satellite basing became an important new concept to counteract the threat from Soviet submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs).

(U) Organizational matters focused on continuing changes within the heavy bombardment force, new reconnaissance programs and base closure actions.

Mission Statement

(U) The mission of Fifteenth Air Force remained essentially unchanged from fiscal year (FY) 1968 through FY 1969. As one of the Strategic Air Command's (SAC) three numbered air forces (NAF) in the Zone of Interior (ZI),

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it was to man, equip, and train assigned units for the purpose of conducting strategic warfare on a limited or global scale using conventional or nuclear weapons. With the exception of the continental United States (CONUS) boundaries where areas of responsibility were no longer delineated, Fifteenth had operational control and support responsibility for all SAC operations west of 100 degrees west longitude from pole to pole (with the exclusion of Mexico) and east of the International Date Line in the western Pacific.¹

COMMAND RESOURCES

Bases and Wings

(U) This command, with the exception of the first half of FY 1967, gradually decreased in size from its post-World War II high point of FY 1962 to the point reached in FY 1968. No change in size occurred either by decrease or increase during FY 1969. The command's personnel, as of 30 June 1969, were stationed at 13 active bases, three of which were under the jurisdiction of other major commands and one (Offutt) assigned directly under Headquarters SAC. One inactive base at Glasgow, Montana, also would remain in the Air Force inventory for the next five years.²

(U) Assigned to these nine active host and four tenant installations were eight heavy bombardment wings (BW), four reconnaissance wings and five missile wings. A caretaker squadron was stationed at Glasgow Air Force Base (AFB). Intermediary command between this headquarters and its field units was exercised by five aerospace/air divisions, a decrease

COMMAND ORGANIZATION CHART

SAC

15AF

4900 SPT SQ
MARCH

33 COMM SQ
MARCH

15 RT SQ
MARCH

523 AF BOMB
MARCH 695 AF BOMB
ELLSWORTH

	BEALE		CASTLE	DAVIS-MONTHAN	EIELSON (AAC)	ELLSWORTH	FAIRCHILD	F E WARREN		GLASGOW		MALMSTROM	MARCH	MATHER (ATC)	MINOT	OFFUTT		TRAVIS (MAC)	
DIVISION	14 STRAT AERO-SPACE		47 AM DIV	12 STRAT AERO-SPACE		821 STRAT AERO-SPACE									810 STRAT AERO-SPACE				
PARENT DIVISION					12 STRAT AERO-SPACE (D-MONTHAN)		14 STRAT AERO-SPACE (BEALE)	821 STRAT AERO-SPACE (ELLSWORTH)		810 STRAT AERO-SPACE (MINOT)		810 STRAT AERO-SPACE (MINOT)	47 AM DIV (CASTLE)	47 AM DIV (CASTLE)		12 STRAT AERO-SPACE (D-MONTHAN)		14 STRAT AERO-SPACE (BEALE)	
WING	450 STRAT AERO-SPACE 8 STRAT RCH		83 BOMB	300 STRAT MSL 100 STRAT RCH	8 STRAT	20 BOMB 44 STRAT MSL	82 STRAT AERO-SPACE	90 STRAT MSL				341 STRAT MSL	22 BOMB	320 BOMB	5 BOMB 91 STRAT MSL	55 SRW			
BOMB SQ	744		320 (TNG) 320 (TNG)			77	325						2 400	441	23				
RCH SQ	1 89			340 350	24											30 343			
STRAT MSL SQ				570 TITAN II 571 TITAN II		60 MINUTEMAN 67 MINUTEMAN 68 MINUTEMAN		310 MINUTEMAN 320 MINUTEMAN 321 MINUTEMAN 400 MINUTEMAN				10 MINUTEMAN 12 MINUTEMAN 490 MINUTEMAN 504 MINUTEMAN			740 MINUTEMAN 741 MINUTEMAN 742 MINUTEMAN				
AREFS	803		93 (TNG) 924 (TNG)			20	92 43						900 22	904	900			910	
CSG	456		93	803		821	82	800		(4257 AB SQ) CABETAKER		341	22		802				
MUN MAINT	81		22			1	26						30	40	60				
MED GP	850		852	803		821	810	800				854	807		802				
MAJOR TENANT UNITS				MIL ACFT STG A INST CTR (LOG) 4453 CCTW (TAC) WSTN ARC DET 17 (MTC) 800EN ANA DET 50 (LOG)		2701 EOB SQ DET 1 (LOG) AFIT DET 6 800EN ANA DET 20 (LOG)	WSTN GEEIA WG DET 30 (LOG) 3630 COMBAT CREW TNG (ATC) 82 COMBAT SEC POLICE WG (TAC)	1301 GEOD SQ DET 9 (MTC) AFIT DET 9					28 AIR DIV (ADC) 71 FIS (ADC) 801RAD SQ (ADC) CMTL GEEIA DET 26 (LOG) 800EN ANA (LOG) AFIT DET 5 8301 GEOD SQ DET 2 (MTC) 4042 SPT SAGE SQ (ADC)	22 AIR FORCE (R) 452 MAW (R) 303 ADS (R) 2701 EOB SQ DET 2 (LOG) 1352 PHOTO GP DET 7 (MTC) 9 WEA SQ (MTC)		5 FIS (ADC) AFIT DET 7 706 BARAN SQ SPACE MSL SYS (SYS) DET 32			

FORM 104-1
1 AUG 60
SUPERSEDES 15AF 02-1 2 JAN 60
GPO: 1960 O-73

NOTE: ALL 15AF OWNED BASES HAVE: WEA DET, OSA UNITS, CSV COMM SQ, RES MED FLT.

FTD UNITS:

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of one. (Details on changes in the command structure are provided later in the narrative).

(U) For the first time in 25 years of existence, Fifteenth had less than half of its tactical units in the bombardment category. With the inactivation of the 91st BW on 25 June 1968, the lineup included nine non-bomb wings against just eight bomb wings, a trend not likely to be reversed in the near future.⁴

Squadrons and Weapon Systems

At the close of FY 1969, aircraft units included nine heavy bombardment squadrons equipped with 177 B-52s (C through H models) and 11 heavy air refueling squadrons with 179 KC-135A/Q aircraft.⁵ The latter figure held steady since there were no unit changes. The bomber figure also held fairly steady when all factors were considered. A program to add aircraft to certain other wings rather than retiring them to the storage facility at Davis-Monthan AFB accounted for more than an expected total unit equipment (UE) figure of 15 or 16 per squadron. This was a temporary measure due to the impact of the Southeast Asia (SEA) War on B-52 training and the necessary maintenance of a nuclear reaction strike force.

In addition to these tactical aircraft, there were 79 special mission aircraft assigned to Fifteenth. Of these 20 performed functions for the Post-Attack Command and Control System (PACCS) communications: 9 EC-135Cs for airborne and auxiliary command post functions and 11 EC-135A/G/L radio relay planes. Additionally, there were assigned 13

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RC-135C/D and 3 KC-135R electronic intelligence (ELINT) aircraft, 9⁶
C/DC-130A/Es for reconnaissance support, 13 U-2s, and 21 SR-71s.

(U) There were no PACCS squadrons as such, but four KC-135 squadrons at Offutt, March, Ellsworth and Minot AFBs had the maintenance capability to support them. Seven squadrons controlled the reconnaissance⁷ inventory.

✓) The intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) inventory also held steady throughout the reporting period. Despite a force modernization program there was no lengthy impact on command totals due to the timing of transfer to and return from contractor control. Consequently, the figures for Fifteenth showed 704 MINUTEMAN-B/F missiles assigned to 14 squadrons, while 19 TITAN-IIs (including one spare) continued to be located at Davis-Monthan's two squadrons. All MINUTEMAN-As had been phased out of the inventory. Air-to-ground missiles (AGMs), assigned to four bomb squadrons, declined from 73 to 64.

Crew Inventory

✓) Crew strength figures declined somewhat for the bomber/tanker team but held steady for reconnaissance and missiles. Combat-ready aircrew totals as of 30 June 1969 included 467 for B-52s, KC-135s and various reconnaissance aircraft. Totals for ICBMs included 577 for the two MINUTEMAN configurations and for TITAN-IIs. The overall total was 1,044⁸ crews. Those noncombat-ready were 13 for aircraft and 25 for ICBMs, an increase over the previous period, which affected unit combat readiness.

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Combat Readiness Index

(S) A C-1 (fully combat-ready) rating for aircraft units was difficult to attain, due mostly to crew shortages. This was not to say that the affected units could not have performed their assigned missions, but a paper rating noted the discrepancies. All bomb squadrons were less than C-1, several tanker squadrons were under that goal and five of the seven reconnaissance squadrons also were in that category for most of the
9
time.

Ground Alert Posture

(S) At the end of FY 1969, Fifteenth's aircraft units had 64 of 86 required on a 43 percent ground alert posture as follows: B-52s, 25; KC-135s, 33; EC-135s, 6. Reconnaissance aircraft had no ground alert commitment. The initial aircraft reaction strike force was augmented by 702 ICBMs (684 MINUTEMAN and 18 TITAN-II) out of 713 required. The aircraft deviations of 22 as expected were mostly due to temporary SEA commitments, while the ICBM lack was caused by normal daily maintenance
10
needs, both scheduled and unscheduled.

Command Personnel Strength

(U) Since early 1962 the number of assigned personnel has continued to decline, due either to phasing out bases or a reduction in manning imposed by the Department of Defense (DOD). On the last day of FY 1969, there were 50,476 officers, airmen and civilians assigned. This was in keeping with total authorizations but represented a drop of almost 6,000
11
from 12 months previously. A small part of this was due to reassignments

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from Glasgow. The remainder was due to crew force reductions, an "early out" release program for airmen, and a hiring "freeze" for civilians.

Headquarters Organization and Personnel

(U) This headquarters had changed to the deputy chief of staff (DCS) concept on 3 October 1966. This change was reflected in a new SACR 23-13, issued a year later, and in a new 15AFM 23-1.¹² In conjunction with this concept, the directorate of manpower and organization published an Exact Manning Table (EMT) about every five months. This booklet combined the features of a Unit Detail Listing (UDL), a personnel roster,¹³ and the headquarters organizational structure.

(U) A few changes occurred in organization during the year. On 8 October 1968, Detachment 7 of the 1365th Photo Squadron was inactivated and personnel resources were reassigned to Norton AFB or to squadron headquarters at Offutt AFB. This move was part of the DOD policy of consolidating units to effect savings and was related to the move of the Headquarters Aerospace Audio-Visual Service from Orlando AFB to Norton. Combat photo documentation would henceforth be controlled by the squadron at Headquarters SAC working with the directorate of information (DXI).¹⁴

(U) This headquarters' DXI lost a second function a month later when the protocol division was transferred to the control of the chief of staff. The particulars of this change and realignment of responsibilities¹⁵ are given in the appended exhibit.

(U) In November also the directorate of administrative services (DAS) was reorganized to conform to the new Air Force concept. Under

this concept DAS became the directorate of administration; the mail and records division became the administrative communications division; and the records management branch became the documentation division. Similar reorganizations occurred in subordinate units. ¹⁶ Later, on 20 March 1969, the administrative communications division was realigned to these three branches: the correspondence management/distribution branch, the message management/distribution branch, ¹⁷ and the document security branch.

(U) On 2 April 1969, all wing armament and electronics squadrons were redesignated avionics squadrons. ¹⁸ In keeping with this shift, the armament and electronics division for the DCS/Materiel was changed to the avionics division along with a slight change in its functional write-up. ¹⁹

(U) In the fall of 1968, General Catton expressed deep concern over the inadequate number of missile staff officer positions authorized within the headquarters to monitor five missile wings. In an effort to bolster this sagging situation, several attempts were made by the commander who requested the Commander in Chief, SAC (CINCSAC) to give assistance in an effort to obtain additional manpower authorizations, but to no avail. ²⁰ The self-help approach was used in an effort to provide the necessary assistance needed in the DCS/Operations function. Accordingly, five additional officer positions were identified and realigned to the missile division from within headquarters' resources. These manpower changes to increase missile expertise were to become effective 1 July ²¹ 1969.

(U) No action was taken during FY 1969 on Fifteenth's proposal of

CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY, 1 AUG 1968
L TO R: GEN HOLLOWAY, CINCSAC; LT GEN MARTIN; LT GEN CATTON



6 June 1968 for reorganizing the NAF structure in SAC. In essence it called for elimination of a middle NAF and division of SAC between an Eastern and a Western Air Force at a savings of up to \$20,000,000.²²

(U) During the reporting period there was a decrease in the number of assigned headquarters' personnel. This was due to a periodic manning cut - this time, four percent of authorizations. Part of this reduction came either by eliminating manpower spaces blocked by the 93 percent officer filling rule or by the 75 percent civilian filling rule.²³ Consequently, very few people were actually eliminated.²⁴ This "cut" showed in the end-position figures thusly. On 30 June 1968, 816 personnel were assigned, and this total declined to 791 a year later. This latter figure continued to stay well within the manning limitations, since 811 were authorized.²⁵

LEADERSHIP

(U) Several changes occurred in this headquarters' command section and staff. On 1 August 1968, Lieutenant General William K. Martin retired and was succeeded by the command's eleventh commander, Lieutenant General Jack J. Catton.²⁶ General Martin had served three full years.

(U) General Catton was an old hand in SAC even though he had been away from the command for five years. During 1946-1963 he served in various capacities, and for a third of that time had been in Fifteenth Air Force. From 1950-1956 he was successively director of operations for the 22nd BW and 12th Air Division (AD), both at March, deputy commander and then commander of the 92nd BW at Fairchild, and then commander

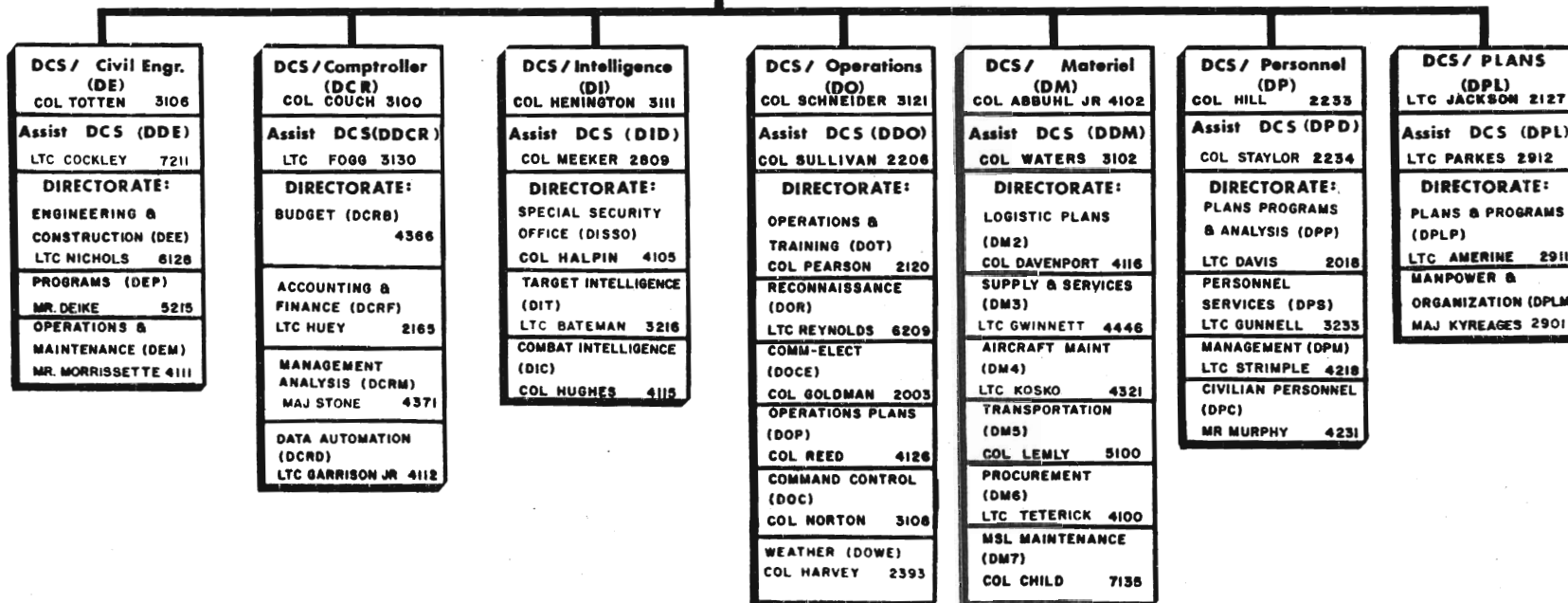
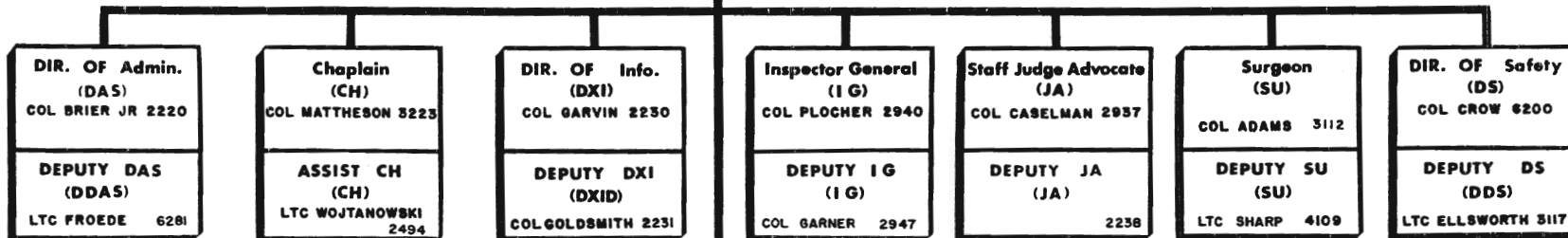


HQS 15AF ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



1 JUNE 1969

COMMANDER LT GEN CAYTON
VICE COMMANDER MAJ GEN NICHOLS JR
CHIEF OF STAFF COL WILKINSON
ASSIST CHIEF OF STAFF LTC GRIBLING



to be completely unacceptable." He desired that the positions be filled with "the highest caliber executive leaders within each unit." 100

To assist in their training after selection, he started a First Sergeants Professional Development School. The first class convened at March AFB on 24 March, and a second one had graduated by the end of the period.

This school was the only course of its type conducted by any Air Force command. 101

(U) With the reader oriented on what the command had in resources, its leadership, its communications for control of the forces and how the command and its programs were managed, the narrative now turns to organizational matters.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

Air Division Structure

(U) Periodically aerospace/air divisions were realigned as these intermediate command echelons were inactivated. The last previous change had occurred at the beginning of FY 1967. 102 On 2 July 1968, the 18th Strategic Aerospace Division (SAD) inactivated at Fairchild AFB. 103 The three units assigned to it had to be reassigned in a logical fashion. Fairchild's 92nd Strategic Aerospace Wing (SAW) was reassigned to the 14th SAD at Beale, and the 341st Strategic Missile Wing (SMW) at Malmstrom was transferred to the 810th SAD at Minot. In order to align units with similar reconnaissance missions in the same division, the 6th Strategic Wing (SW) at Eielson was placed under the 12th SAD at Davis-Monthan. 104 These changes were effective the date of the 18th SAD's inactivation.

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Changes in the Heavy Force

(U) The increased activity associated with the inactivation of heavy aircraft units and transfer of aircraft which began in the latter half of FY 1968, continued unabated throughout FY 1969. Some of the programming and reassignment of aircraft was related to SEA support, especially at Castle, and has already been narrated in chapter I.

Actions Completed or Underway

(U) Programming actions affected five units during the course of the year. Much of this realignment marked internal changes within the command, but there was also some relationship to changes in SAC's other two NAFs. For background on these changes the reader is referred to the previous history.

The 47th Air Division. (U) The most activity occurred within the 47th Air Division (AD) units. At the 93rd BW (Castle) one squadron of B-52Fs was transferred from Carswell AFB, and another complement eventually totalling 23 were transferred - mostly from Mather - as B-52F non-operational active (NOA) aircraft. Meanwhile, the 320th BW (Mather) was receiving B-52Gs from Travis. Both of these transactions were completed by 25 July 1968. The successful training of the Mather crews in a different aircraft by Travis personnel was the subject of a commander's congratulatory message.

(S) The division's third unit at March AFB was also undergoing conversion. It sent its B-52Ds to the SEA "pipeline" in an accelerated turnover and received a squadron of B-52Es from Castle. This was followed

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guidance precluded solving the problem by normal supply procedures. A 90-day test called PACER BLADE was prepared by Fifteenth, using unique procedures still objected to by both Headquarters SAC and the Air Staff. It was finally half-heartedly approved for a trial.

(U) The test began 24 October 1968, and to the surprise of higher headquarters, the plan worked. In April 1969, the chief of staff directed the continuance of the test until at least September 1969 for "factual evaluation of the new requisitioning technique." The latter was designed to revolutionize supply support from depots; it was not so much new computer work but a reorganization of normal computerized supply procedures. Details of this breakthrough are given in the appended exhibits. 157

SUMMARY

Command resources remained at a fairly stable level since no bases were closed during FY 1969. The command continued to have assigned 17 wings on 13 bases as on 30 June 1968. This total took into account that the 916th ARFS at Travis was treated as a wing. The 18th SAD inactivated at Fairchild, leaving five divisions for intermediate supervision of the 17 wings. Tactical units were located on nine host and four tenant installations.

The end position as of 30 June 1969 showed a minority of these units to be the bombardment category - eight. The other nine included five missile and four reconnaissance wings. These units possessed 326 heavy tactical aircraft, 20 PACCS planes, over 70 reconnaissance and reconnaissance support aircraft, 728 missiles and 1,005 combat-ready

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crews for these diverse weapon systems. Bombers declined in number due to phaseout of some B-52F NOA aircraft. Missiles assigned increased, since a force modernization program was completed at Malmstrom.

(U) Personnel assigned in the command totalled 50,476 - down almost 6,000 from the previous end position.

(U) Unit C-ratings also declined as crew shortages forced all tactical aircraft squadrons to C-2 or lower.

(U) The command section had two reassignments. Lieutenant General Jack J. Catton became commander and Colonel Richard G. Wilkinson chief of staff early in the period. The headquarters underwent another personnel reduction in September. Assignments showed 791 against 811 authorized. To improve missile expertise in the headquarters, five manning spaces were realigned to that specialty.

(S) The 487L facility at Hawes was turned over to SAC ownership on 17 July. It became truly operational in October. However, the PACCS aircraft portion of the SLFCS program had slipped. The battle staff exercise in conjunction with the annual SAC IG inspection of the headquarters and using command control communications was rated "satisfactory."

(U) The new leadership of the command was responsible for a rejuvenation of management techniques. Likewise, the People's Program was vigorously promoted for the benefit of all.

(U) Due to the new Soviet SLEB threat, satellite basing of the tactical fleet became necessary. The first one was provided at Mountain Home AFB for the 320th BW, while programming was in progress for at least

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seven others.

(S) B-52 changes were completed at Castle, Mather, March and Travis. Other programming for the heavy force was affected by slippage and changes in the FB-111 program.

(S) The active SR-71 inventory was reduced by four. A new model - the U-2R was exchanged for all but one of the U-2C/F/Gs.

(U) At Glasgow a decision was finally made to lease the facilities to AVCO Corporation for an Army munitions contract. This meant that most of the base housekeeping unit could be withdrawn, but it was also necessary to have a contract management office for the next five years.

(U) Of several organizational tests and proposals, Project PACER BLADE held the most promise. The new supply requisitioning technique might be adopted throughout the Air Force.

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FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER III

- 1
SACR 23-1, "Mission - Second, Eighth, Fifteenth Air Forces," 29 Sep 67, as updated in SACM 23-3, "Directory and Mission Directives of SAC Organizations," 9 Oct 68.
- 2
See Chart IV, "Installations, FY 1969," in Appendix A.
- 3
See Chart III, "Status of 15AF Units, FY 1969," in Appendix A.
- 4
Hist 15AF, Jan-Jun 68, pp 3 and 23.
- 5
See Chart II, "Aircraft/Missile Inventory, FY 1969," in Appendix A. The total includes the CINCSAC aircraft at Offutt.
- 6
See Chart II as cited.
- 7
See Chart III as cited.
- 8
See Chart I, "Statement of Conditions, FY 1969," in Appendix A.
- 9
General summary based on weekly summaries, particularly that for 30 Jun 69, by DOCF, to Gen Catton at his Standup Briefing; historian in attendance.
- 10
Rpt, 1-SAC-VI, 30 Jun 69.
- 11
See Chart VII, "Personnel Authorized/Assigned, FY 1969," in Appendix A.
- 12
15AFM 23-1, "Organization and Functions Hq 15AF," 15 Aug 67, as updated 15 May 68 & SACR 23-12, "Organization of Major Subordinate Command Headquarters of Strategic Air Command," 18 Oct 67, as updated 20 Jan 69.

SUMMARY

(U) Fiscal year 1969 proved to be an unique time in the history of Fifteenth Air Force. The period encompassed the incumbency of (then) Lieutenant General Jack J. Catton, who was promoted and reassigned shortly thereafter, after providing leadership for an invigorating twelve months.

(U) The eleventh commander in 25 years proved to be a man of action who did not neglect the personal element. He inherited a command which admittedly had some soft spots and strove mightly to improve mission effectiveness. The mission was accomplished in the face of handicaps represented by less people, fewer well-trained personnel, and reduced funding to perform a multitude of tasks.

(U) Within the limits of human capability a plethora of responsibilities were met, using the psychological approach of their being challenges rather than impossible demands. True enough, not every endeavor had a perfect outcome, but a judicious balancing of all factors involved showed the command had a resiliency coming from the wellsprings tapped by an inspiring leader who accentuated the positive.

(U) This installment, therefore, can truly be said to be a General Catton history. Both the narrative and the profuse documentation have been necessarily oriented toward such a concept.