



# VELOCITY

SPEED WITH DIRECTION

THE PROFESSIONAL CAREER  
OF GEN JEROME F. O'MALLEY



ALOYSIUS G. CASEY AND PATRICK A. CASEY



**Velocity**  
**Speed with Direction**  
**The Professional Career of**  
**Gen Jerome F. O'Malley**

ALOYSIUS G. CASEY AND PATRICK A. CASEY

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Illustrations interspersed throughout.

## ***About the Authors***



**The Caseys pose in front of a headdress display: *left*, Aloysius G. Casey; *right*, Patrick A. Casey; *center*, Patrick's son, Dylan.**

Patrick A. Casey is married to Nancy Casey, and they are the parents of five children: Chelsea R. Casey (17), Rosie K. Casey (16), Dylan H. E. Casey (15), Tara R. Casey (13), and Eileen K. Casey (9).

Patrick obtained a bachelor of arts degree and a master of arts degree in American history from the University of Scranton in 1984, a juris doctorate degree from the Creighton University School of Law in 1987, and a master of laws degree in trial advocacy from the Temple University School of Law in 2001. He is board certified as a criminal trial advocate and practices white-collar criminal defense with the firm of Myers, Brier, and Kelly in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Retired general Aloysius Casey brings a special capability to the study of the life of Gen Jerome F. O'Malley because they were high school classmates and lifelong friends. They experi-

enced the rigor of Catholic education in Saint Rose High School; they attended United States (US) service academies and opted to serve in the newly designated Air Force that was formed out of the Army Air Corps of World War II.

General Casey graduated from the US Naval Academy in June 1954 and served as a missile officer in the first tactical nuclear missile system fielded by the Air Force. Shortly after joining the Air Force, he married Mary Patricia (Casey) Casey, and, despite moving to 18 different homes in 34 years, they successfully managed to rear three sons: Matthew, Joseph, and Patrick. Their sons are married and have presented them with nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Casey served as a navigator in the first US jet bomber, the six-engine B-47. He also attended the Air Force Institute of Technology and received a master of science degree in astronautics. Subsequent assignments included the Minuteman missile program followed by a combat tour in the AC-119 gunship in Vietnam, where he experienced firsthand the same combat theatre just a year before the events of the air war in 1971–72 that are recounted in this book.

Casey served as a colonel in the B-1 bomber program and the development of the A-10 tactical fighter. As a general officer, he was program director for the MX (Peacekeeper) missile—the largest, most accurate intercontinental ballistic missile in the US inventory. He served his final Air Force tour as commander of the Space Division that was responsible for spacecraft development and launch vehicles to place satellites on orbit.

Since retiring from the Air Force in 1988, General Casey and his wife have enjoyed their home in Redlands, California. They make frequent trips to Pennsylvania to savor the growth of their grandchildren in becoming responsible citizens. He does some consulting work and enjoys long-distance running and cycling. Mrs. Casey is a community volunteer and works with Redlands' Meals-on-Wheels program for the elderly.

## **Acknowledgments**

We thank Peggy, Sharon, Jimmy, and John O'Malley for trusting us with the legacy of their remarkable parents. We would not have engaged in this project without their approval. We hope they conclude that we have earned their trust and honored that trust with our efforts.

We thank Jane (O'Malley) Quinn and Ellen (O'Malley) Kanavy for their friendship and support over these many years. Your O'Malley smiles help to keep Jerry alive in our memories.

—Patrick and Aloysius Casey

I deeply appreciate the perseverance of my wife, the former Nancy Rose Conaboy, and the mother of Chelsea, Rosie, Dylan, Tara, and Eileen. Thank you for your grace, prettiness, and friendship. Please accept my deep regret that this project took a bit longer than we had expected.

—Patrick Casey

Thank you, Mary Patricia Casey, my darling wife, for giving me your loving support for 52 years, particularly while we collected and wrote this book.

—Lt Gen Aloysius G. Casey  
USAF, Retired

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## **Introduction**

This book developed from the close friendship between Patrick and his dad, Aloysius Casey. Although their residences are on opposite coasts of the country, they collaborated through years of research by e-mailing and telephoning each other several times a week; however, Aloysius Casey wrote the bulk of the text.

Aloysius and Patrick directly confronted the only serious cloud hanging over Gen Jerome F. “Jerry” O’Malley’s career, the Lavelle raids. Knowing Jerry’s reputation for truthfulness, the authors believed his involvement in these raids presented a serious character question.

During a meticulous review of the conduct of every member of the command structure in Vietnam, as well as a careful examination of congressional testimony, Patrick developed the view that senior Pentagon officials acted in a manner eerily similar to the behavior of officials he had faced in public corruption cases in his practice of law.

This view fueled the authors’ desire to seek the truth. The biography was delayed for two years while the Nixon White House audio recordings could be identified, obtained, and transcribed. It was delayed further so that Top Secret messages sent by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Vietnam could be acquired through the Freedom of Information Act.

The publication of this book puts to rest 35 years of false history. It also decisively concludes the erroneous dishonor suffered by Gen John Daniel Lavelle, the Seventh Air Force commander. General Lavelle, Colonel O’Malley, and personnel of the Seventh Air Force acted pursuant to presidential orders secretly issued on 3 February 1972 in the Oval Office. It is clear that they loyally and bravely served, protected, and defended the Constitution of the United States.

General Lavelle’s constitution in weathering the firestorm resulting from those strikes reveals him as a unique figure in American military history. Even when he was being framed by Pentagon and White House officials, he did not succumb to blaming those who served him in combat. His unflinching and selfless perseverance in his assumption of exclusive responsibility resulted in giving the United States Air Force some of its

## INTRODUCTION

finest commanders during the Cold War—Generals Alton D. Slay, Charles A. Gabriel, and Jerome F. O'Malley.

Wrongfully demoted and publicly ridiculed because of the obvious conspiratorial conduct of several senior Pentagon officials, General Lavelle's reputation for truthfulness now towers above the reputation of his accusers. Equally interesting is General O'Malley's ability not to sour on an Air Force career.

## Chapter 1

### **The Fatal Crash**

Gen Jerome F. O'Malley Mrs. Diane O'Malley Capt Harry L. Haugh Lt Col Lester F. Newton TSgt Robert A. Eberfus
20 April 1985 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport

From the pilot's seat of the executive jet, Jerome F. "Jerry" O'Malley looked down on the confluence of the Lackawanna and Susquehanna Rivers as the jet neared the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Lackawanna Valley, running north through Scranton to Carbondale, was special to him, and his mind replayed warm images of family, home, and friends forever tied to that area. He was scheduled to speak at the Lackawanna Hilton the next evening at a dinner honoring Cong. Joseph M. McDade, whom Jerry had known as "Joey" ever since they competed in epic basketball in 1948-49.<sup>1</sup> Jerry thought about the Hilton, the former classical Scranton train station with the great marble and high ceilings of that era. It was now converted to a hotel.

From the right seat, Capt Harry L. Haugh glanced at the general while he completed the pre-landing checklist. The weather was forecast to be good, with scattered clouds and visibility at seven miles.<sup>2</sup> Captain Haugh guessed the weather was at least that good, with visibility from 12 to 15 miles. He queried the item speed brakes, but Jerry indicated there was no need.<sup>3</sup> They both envisioned a smooth landing on the dry runway and a quick turnoff to the terminal.

Lined up well and only slightly high over the approach end of active runway 04 (moving in a northeasterly direction) on 20 April 1985, at 5:48 PM (Eastern Standard Time), the plane

touched down, a little long but in very good shape.<sup>4</sup> Ed Lynch was working local and ground control from the tower. Observing a normal touchdown over the radio, he gave the crew instructions to turn off at the Foxtrot taxiway.<sup>5</sup> As he pressed the phone button to advise flight service of the arrival of a military aircraft, he was startled to see the aircraft disappear off the far end of the runway, and moments later, he noted “a large cloud of thick, black smoke.” He picked up the crash phone with his left hand and simultaneously pressed the siren and Klaxon buttons with his right hand.<sup>6</sup> Within 30 seconds, the first crash vehicle was on the roll, and emergency alarms were squawking all over the airdrome.

In the terminal, a convivial welcoming crowd led by Jerry’s sisters, Jane (O’Malley Quinn) and Ellen (O’Malley Kanavy), was looking forward to receiving their local hero and his beautiful blond wife, Diane, back to “the region.”<sup>7</sup> Suddenly, the picture-perfect landing was followed by an eerie silence and then the violent Klaxon warning signal. Despite the confusion and a wish to deny the apparent horror, it was soon clear that there had been a fiery crash off the end of the runway, and there would be no survivors! How could one of the Air Force’s best pilots—one who had flown 116 combat missions in tactical fighter and reconnaissance aircraft and the SR-71 at three times the speed of sound—come to a tragic death with his wife and three other Air Force personnel in an executive jet on a routine landing (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup>

This story will return to that violent crash and try to analyze that question, but first the reader is invited to learn who Jerry O’Malley was and what made him a singular leader among men.



**Figure 1. CT-39A (62-4496) fatal crash at the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport on 20 April 1985.** (Reprinted with permission of the Air Force Safety Center, HQ/AFSC/JAR, 23 May 2007.)

### Notes

1. *Scranton Times*, 21 April 1985.
2. Gen Richard J. Trzaskoma, "The Formal Report of Investigation, CT-39 SN 62-4496," Aircraft Accident Investigation, tab A, para. II, B 3, weather, Air Force Safety Center, Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 28 May 1985.
3. *Ibid.*, tab A, para. II, A.
4. *Ibid.*, tab C, Air Force Form 711B.
5. *Ibid.*, tab V, V-2-4.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Scranton Times*, 21 April 1985, sec. A.
8. *Biography of Gen Jerome F. O'Malley* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, January 1985); and <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/jomalley.htm> (accessed 5 April 2007).

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## Chapter 2

### **The Hard Coal Region**

Birth of Jerome F. O'Malley	Carbondale, Pennsylvania, 1932
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After the War of 1812, John, Maurice, and William Wurts, Quaker brothers from Philadelphia, noticed the protrusion of black carbon deposits, or anthracite (hard natural coal), along the Lackawanna River in Carbondale.<sup>1</sup> Looking for a means to get the black diamonds to the New York City market, they approached Benjamin Wright, chief engineer of the Erie Canal, about creating a canal route to the Hudson River. This meeting marked the beginning of the Delaware River and the Hudson Canal. The meeting also formed the basis for the growth of Carbondale and its transformation into the nucleus of a complex transportation system.

The first part of the route had to maneuver around Moosic Mountain to access the Lackawaxen River valley to reach a moderate canal route to the Delaware River. Their solution was to build the first railroad in the United States. Since there were no self-propelled engines in the United States, only stationary steam engines were available. Therefore, a gravity railway system was built in the 1820s from Carbondale to Honesdale. The coal cars traveled over a 16-mile route as they were pulled up the hills by stationary steam engines and descended by means of gravity. Clever ways to conserve energy were used, with one car descending while another ascended to minimize the power needed. At Honesdale, the coal was transshipped to barges on the Delaware River and the Hudson Canal, where the coal began a 108-mile journey across the Delaware Valley to the Hudson River. This canal was the first million-dollar infrastructure investment in the still-new United States. The canal system allowed the coal to get to the Hudson River and on to the New York metropolitan area. It operated from 1830 to 1899, when the canal was overcome by the railroads due to their year-round, all-weather availability.<sup>2</sup>

Carbondale became known as the Pioneer City in northeast Pennsylvania because of this early economic activity. Soon thereafter, several towns, including Archbald, Olyphant, Dickson City, Throop, and Dunmore, lined the banks of the Lackawanna River to the south, as new mines were opened following the discovery of a rich vein of anthracite coal. Scranton became the hub of the hard coal region, as brothers George W. and Seldon T. Scranton developed a burgeoning steelmaking industry to provide rails for the rapidly developing railroad industry.

Despite the backbreaking labor of the mines and the hard conditions in the steel industry, a great influx of immigrants ventured into the region from Ireland, Italy, and the countries of central and eastern Europe. These people had few resources but were happy to secure a job; the culture they established centered on their families and their churches and exhibited a strong ethnic flavor.

James Francis “Jimmy” O’Malley was born in Carbondale in 1895, making him eligible to serve in World War I.<sup>3</sup> He dutifully served in the Army Medical Corps in the “war to end all wars” and suffered exposure to mustard gas, which severely affected his lungs. After the war O’Malley remained optimistic. He was active in local plays and minstrel shows where his natural vibrancy showed through to the audiences. An old playbill featured an “awfter Easter Dawnce” staged by Jimmy O’Malley at Burkes Hall in Carbondale on 16 April 1920. Men and their women were invited to a “good time” provided by the Syncopated Six band for \$2.20 a couple.<sup>4</sup> A later playbill announced a Bankrupt Brawl at a special price of \$1.69.

On 10 June 1925, Jimmy O’Malley married Mabel McNulty at Saint Rose Church in Carbondale. As reported in the local newspaper, they “motored to Niagara Falls on their honeymoon before moving into their home on Seventh Avenue. O’Malley is employed at Kelly Pharmacy.”<sup>5</sup>

Jimmy continued to be active in local entertainment, as illustrated by another surviving advertisement from 28 October 1927. His Park View Club hosted a Halloween costume party at Newton Lake that provided dancing from 9:00 PM to 2:00 AM. Only couples were invited, as the flyer said, “Stags are as welcome as the Landlord on the first of the month!”<sup>6</sup> Mabel had bright eyes and an easy smile. Similar to other Catholic women

of her time, she wanted her children to be successful and desired that they adhere to church teachings. Frustration almost led to despair as she suffered five unsuccessful pregnancies, with one going full term. The infant, Jimmy, lived only one day.<sup>7</sup> Her prayers were answered when a healthy baby boy was born on 25 February 1932, and they decided to name him Jerome Francis O'Malley (fig. 2).<sup>8</sup> Figure 3 shows Mabel O'Malley with Jerry and daughter Jane.



**Figure 2. Mabel O'Malley and baby Jerry at their apartment in Carbondale.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)



**Figure 3. Mabel O'Malley and Jerry [about 4 years old] with baby Jane in Carbondale.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

Jerry was only two years old when his sister Jane was born in 1934, and he was six in 1938 when another sister, Ellen, was born.<sup>9</sup> Sadly, that same year, in June 1938, Jimmy O'Malley died from complications of the lung damage he had suffered in World War I.

Mabel was determined to provide a comfortable and stable home for her three children. Her sister-in-law, Kathryn O'Malley, moved in with them to share the cost of living. With her small veteran's pension, Mabel was then able to stay at home and focus on Jerry and his two sisters.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, Jerry O'Malley was reared in Carbondale, a city that had a glorious legacy from the earliest days of our nation but was hit hard by the depression of the 1930s, which helped its slow decline. This decline was hardly noticeable as the depression began, but near the end of the 1930s, the price and convenience of oil over coal spelled the doom of the principal industry of the hard coal region. For years the locals considered it disloyal to switch to oil for home heat, but when the railroads abandoned the coal-fired steam locomotives for the great diesel engines before the start of World War II, the fate of the deep-shaft, coal-mining industry was clear. Without the enormous loads of coal to carry out of the region, railroads were also declining in importance, although their demise was forestalled during the economic surge of World War II.<sup>11</sup>

The support of family, friends, church, and schools was important to providing the environment in which Jerry O'Malley developed his potential as a leader. Even today the hard coal region fosters an attitude that places a premium on education, and local families have high expectations for the success of their children. However, the economic conditions continued to worsen after War World II; it became apparent by the time Jerry was ready to graduate from high school that the opportunity for a professional career would doubtlessly mean leaving the area.

#### Notes

1. [Http://www.Bridge-line.org](http://www.Bridge-line.org) (accessed 13 June 2001); and *Bridge Line Historical Society Bulletin* 5, no. 9 (September 1995).

2. *Ibid.*

3. Jane O'Malley Quinn and Ellen O'Malley, interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 14 November 1993.
4. Playbill from Burkes Hall, 16 April 1920.
5. *Scranton Times*, 11 June 1925.
6. Park View Club flyer, 28 October 1927.
7. Lt Col Sandra A. Gregory, "A Man's Flight through Life: A Leadership Profile of General Jerome F. O'Malley" (Fort McNair, Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1994), 3.
8. *Official Biography of Gen Jerome F. O'Malley*.
9. Gregory, "A Man's Flight through Life," 3.
10. Ibid.
11. Primary source experience provided by Aloysius G. Casey.

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## Chapter 3

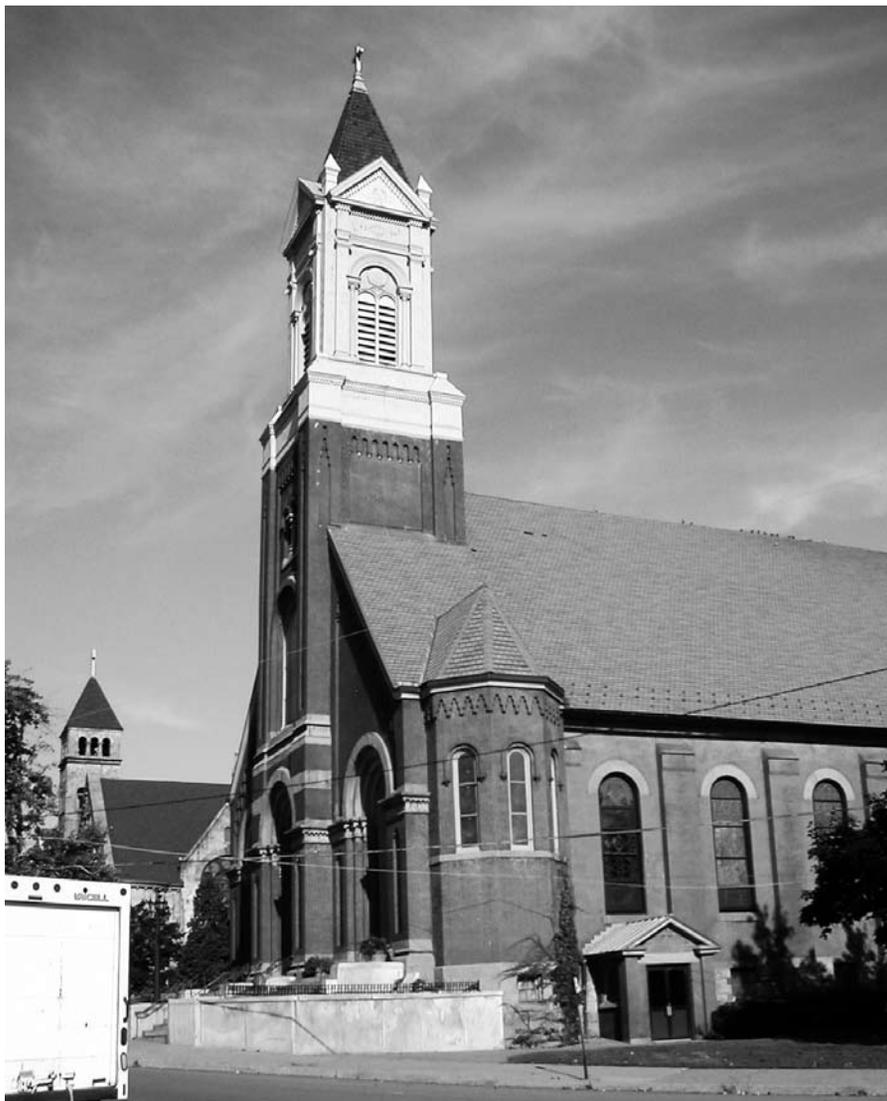
### **Saint Rose School**

IHM Nun Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Scranton Soapbox Derby

Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, constructed in 1906, remains one of the most impressive buildings in Carbondale (fig. 4). The exterior is made of old red brick, but inside it features a large, open space unimpeded by supporting columns.<sup>1</sup> A series of soaring arches supports a high ceiling that is warmly decorated with classical religious art. On the walls, the Stations of the Cross graphically display the story of the crucifixion of Christ and are sharp enough to capture the attention of students shepherded there by nuns.

Jerry attended Saint Rose Catholic School and was taught by sisters, servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM), headquartered at Marywood College in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The Saint Rose IHM nuns wore a distinctive habit, a long, flowing garment of dark blue with a close-fitting facial piece and a large bib of gleaming white material. They lived in a great wooden structure that had been the motherhouse for the entire order but is now simply a great old convent building with large rooms and high ceilings. The old building had a magical effect on students called to enter the spacious parlors. One sensed that authority and rectitude stemmed forth from this place with its hushed atmosphere and strong odor of candles and fresh furniture polish.<sup>2</sup> It was not a place to act silly or create noise. If your own guardian angel were not on duty to keep you in check, many other kindred spirits floated around in that space to insure that all was properly done to provide a home for holy women pledged to serve the Lord. Moreover, if the spirit failed, the nuns quickly stepped in!

Adjacent to the convent stood school structures that housed classrooms for all grades. With a class size normally of about



**Figure 4. Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Carbondale.** (Reprinted with permission from Aloysius G. Casey.)

40, the Saint Rose Academy complex accommodated from 400 to 500 students. A low stone wall surrounded the area as it stood at the top of Salem Avenue, a street of inlaid brick surface with a steep slope.

The sisters escorted their classes five blocks down the steep Salem Avenue hill to Saint Rose Church on special occasions, including Lent, to attend the Stations of the Cross and to see and feel the story of how Christ was crucified.<sup>3</sup> Jerry was an altar boy who assisted the priest as he moved from station to station describing the scene and offering prayers: "Jesus falls for the second time while carrying the cross . . . they forced Simon the Cyrenian to carry the cross. . . . They crucified him and divided his garments." This powerful imagery made a lasting impression on the students of Saint Rose.

School buses were unavailable in those days, and few families had automobiles. Therefore, students usually walked to school, to church, and to stores in town to shop. Jerry lived on Pike Street, which was about 1.3 miles south of the town center; so, he had that walk, plus the steep climb up five blocks of Salem Avenue, to get to school.

Saint Rose students came to know the parish priests well. This was the era when many young men dedicated their lives to the priesthood, a much-admired vocation. Dedication included taking the required vow of celibacy. The priests lived in the rectory, a large house next to the church, which was presided over by the monsignor and included a group of five to seven priests in the large parish of Saint Rose.

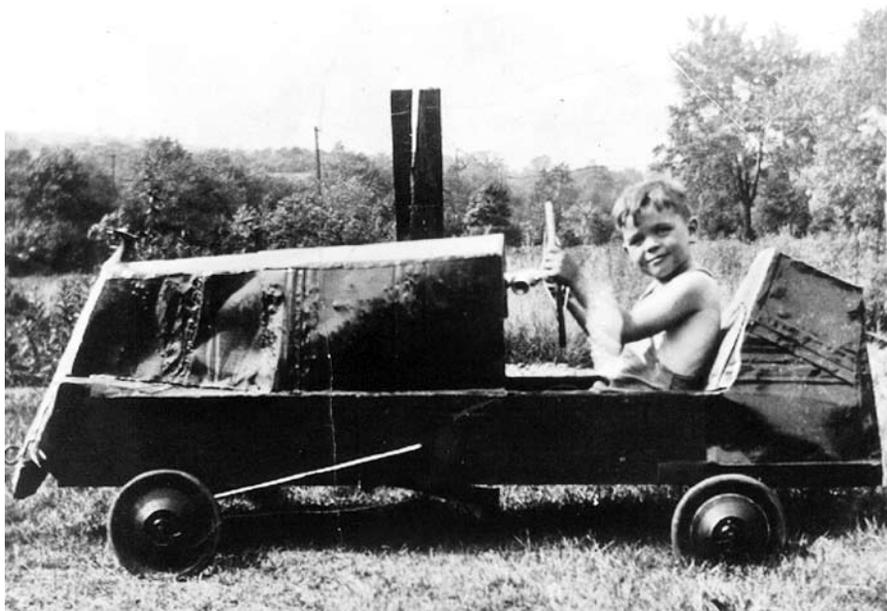
Despite the protected nature of this society, these young priests were subjected to exceptional demands: high integrity, exemplary public behavior, commitment to good works, and all the mental anguish of giving up sexual fulfillment associated with healthy young men.<sup>4</sup> In at least one case at Saint Rose, a capable priest developed a dependence on alcohol. He manifested a loss of memory and concentration every time he visited Jerry's class. A student would ask him What saint's relics are embedded in the altar in our church? He would then launch into a long discussion of how important this tie to the ancient church was to all and close by promising to have the information on his next visit. One of the class stories was that even though this ritual began in the seventh grade, at the time of graduation in 1949, no one knew which saints were so honored! The seventh grade year was memorable for Jerry's class; in particular, because they loved the beautiful nun, Sister Lois, whose clear

instruction and gentle discipline were fondly remembered more than 50 years later by the surviving classmates.

Jerry always led school activities. He organized a basketball team in the seventh grade (1944) consisting of himself, John McCormick, Bob Golden, Joe Coxe, Jim Loftus, and Paul O'Malley (no relation).<sup>5</sup> He scheduled games with the YMCA teams in Carbondale and with a Sacred Heart parish team in Jermyn, Pennsylvania. These institutions were key to the entire effort, since they had courts on which to play the games, while Saint Rose had no gym. This early start was important to developing the skills of Jerry O'Malley and Paul O'Malley, who later led Saint Rose in scoring on their championship teams.

Before World War II, when Jerry was nine years old, he liked to hang around with his cousins, the McCann brothers (Joe, James, and Charles), while they tinkered with soapbox derby racers. In the summer of 1945 Jerry spent much time working on his own soapbox derby racer (fig. 5). His three older cousins had returned from the war after serving in the US Navy.<sup>6</sup> Greatly interested in the soapbox derby, they led Jerry in designing and constructing a car. The rules required that the racer participate in all phases of the car's construction. Jerry was more than happy to do this work; he was fascinated by the techniques the McCanns had developed to select the fastest wheel set. Everyone was obliged to use the standard soapbox derby wheel set, but they devised a method to select a four-wheel set with the lowest friction. The cousins purchased several wheel sets and designed a fixture to run all the wheels to a fixed speed using an electric motor. Then they timed each one to a stop. The wheels that ran the longest were ones with the lowest friction bearings. The four wheels selected were carefully stored and protected from moisture and contamination until the summer of 1946 when the race took place on the Luzerne Street hill in Scranton.<sup>7</sup> The race will be described later.

Also, in the summer of 1945, Jerry spent a week at Camp Saint Andrew, which was operated by the Diocese of Scranton and located near Tunkhannock. He enjoyed the activities supervised by the student priests; in particular, he excelled in basketball and displayed a general athleticism that he backed up with his good set shot.<sup>8</sup> At Saint Andrew he met several boys he would know later in high school and other boys who came to



**Figure 5. Jerry's first race car was a little slow and not very sleek.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

the camp from the big cities of New York and Philadelphia, for a summer break. This was his first exposure to the stories of these citywise boys and of their many conquests, particularly with girls. They told these stories in detail and doubtless in significant exaggeration in the long barracks buildings after the lights had been turned out.

In September 1945, Jerry entered high school (ninth grade) in the class taught by Sister Inez.<sup>9</sup> She was of slight frame, quite old, but with great energy, and was totally dedicated to teaching. She emphasized the proper use of the English language, especially a complete and thorough understanding of sentence structure. She also considered it her sacred duty to teach these young folks to organize their lives for success as shown in the following examples.

She lectured consistently on how students should not over-eat. Her guidance was to leave the table slightly hungry for the best control of weight and metabolism. This practice may have

worked well for a nun but was tough for 14-year-old students who had much to learn about moderation and were prone to eat as much as they could!

Sister Inez was also concerned that her students should not get involved with the opposite sex until they were properly prepared for life. Her often-reviewed formula was for each student to hold off on serious dating until he or she had completed college and secured a job! She was worried about Rodney Brown who was “going steady” with Bernadette “Bunny” Craig, a girl in the junior class. Rodney had fallen deeply in love with Bunny. He was a responsible young man who worked in a grocery store after school to help his family, and it was not without some sacrifice that he gave up work time to listen to the after-school lectures by Sister Inez. In the end, he and Bunny did marry before college, and he went on to earn a PhD in physics. He and Bernadette enjoyed a long successful marriage and reared a large family while he served out an outstanding career in research for International Business Machines (IBM).

It is incredible that this class could recite the guidance from Sister Inez 50 years later at its reunions and indicates that her admonitions were not totally lost on the students. Jerry O'Malley was one who did not marry until after college, but he certainly did his share of dating.

In the Catholic teaching mode, the nuns called students by their full names, just as they were recorded by the saints from whom they were derived. Thus, Jerome O'Malley attended Saint Rose with classmates Aloysius Casey, Joseph Kelly, and Gerard Conva in lieu of their more familiar names of Jerry, Al, Joe, and Jet.

Jerry worked on his basketball skills in the small court of the Carbondale YMCA and as a junior-varsity player at Saint Rose in his first year. At 5 feet 9½ inches, he was short in basketball terms and thus became a guard. Jerry could shoot from long distances, and he could alternatively drive to the basket. He also became a quick-thinking playmaker who managed to use the talents of his taller teammates to advantage.

When the summer of 1946 arrived, Jerry and the McCanns were ready to take on the soapbox derby. They polished the edges of the car and made long training runs on the road to Newton Lake, which was west of Carbondale and had a hill of

more than three miles.<sup>10</sup> The McCanns would transport Jerry and his car to the top of the hill, and, having posted some of Jerry's friends along the route, they would release the racer. This road was about as steep as the official course but far more difficult due to its curves and overall length. The soapbox cars were forced to have a low center of gravity and a wide turning radius to preclude rollovers. Thus, it was hard to keep the car in the lane when the speed built up; however, Jerry learned to navigate this course with the least energy used in braking and generally built confidence in his ability to control the car.

The race was held at the Luzerne Street hill in Scranton. Although straight in the portion used for the soapbox run, it was quite steep. Jerry easily won the first and second three-car heats. As a result the emotional stress increased among all his supporters as the final heat was staged with the last three surviving winners. He eked out a victory and thus began an exciting period of recognition for himself and his car. The *Scranton Tribune* reported 15,000 spectators for the race and proceeded to note that "Smiling Jerry O'Malley, 14-year-old Carbondale lad, got the most speed into his flashy little racer, which rode him to the local championship. He will represent Scranton in the All-American Soap Box Derby at Akron, Ohio, August 18th."<sup>11</sup> The principal race sponsors were area Chevrolet dealers and the morning paper, the *Scranton Tribune*; they made the most of this bright young aspirant who would represent the area in the national runoff in Akron. Figure 6 shows Jerry in a 1946 race, and figure 7 depicts him receiving his victory trophy. Chevrolet and the *Scranton Tribune* cosponsored his participation in the race shown in figure 8.

The postwar euphoria sparked a new optimism in the Scranton area, and Jerry symbolized a brighter future for the area. He was asked to appear all around the area; he was honored at special banquets by the Lions Club, the Saint Rose Parent Teachers Association, and the American Legion post that his father, Jimmy O'Malley, had helped to organize.<sup>12</sup> Then on Saturday night, 10 August 1946, Carbondale celebrated "Jerry O'Malley Night" at Russell Park as the town's professional baseball team took on Nazareth, Pennsylvania.<sup>13</sup> At 14 years of age, he addressed an audience of about 5,000 fans and gave a simple, clear talk without a hint of nervousness.



**Figure 6. They're off. O'Malley is in the right lane at the top of the hill for the start of the winning heat.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

Although Jerry did not win the prize at Akron, being eliminated in the first round, he did enjoy the association with the other regional winners. Figure 9 shows the contestants.

Jerry was elected class president in his sophomore year at Saint Rose.<sup>14</sup> He had developed a close friendship with four of his classmates, all of whom had a similar circumstance in that they came from families led by the mother. As previously noted, Jerry's father died in 1938; Al Casey had lost his father to heart failure in 1934; John Serafini's dad was killed in action in the Pacific in World War II; Joe Kelley's father, a surgeon, was shot in his office by the father of a patient who had been given a needed leg amputation; and Jerry Conva's dad died of cancer at an early age.<sup>15</sup> Despite the obvious stresses of an absent father, each of the five mothers coped with rearing their sons and their siblings. These five boys were close friends and often double-



**Figure 7. Presentation of the trophy for O'Malley's victory in the Scranton soapbox race in 1946.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

dated on the weekends. When anyone had a car or a little cash, they all shared the bounty. Jerry was doubtless the natural leader; yet, he was never carried away by his fame from the soapbox win or his emerging stardom as a basketball player.



**Figure 8. Jerry gets a hand from his Chevrolet and Tribune sponsors in transporting his sleek racer.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

He took a genuine interest in everyone with whom he associated, and he had a remarkable ability to listen and learn from others. His conversational approach never seemed tainted by the desire to create a favorable impression of himself. If a good impression came across, it did so on merits and without self-promotion.<sup>16</sup>

One measure of the respect he enjoyed among his classmates was demonstrated in his sophomore algebra class. The class was taught by Sister "Mother" Harriet, who, unfortunately, broke her ankle in the fall of 1946. Mother Harriet was a large, heavy woman who was virtually immobile with her injury. The staff at Saint Rose was thin, and there was simply no substitute available. The next class period began with no sister in place, and soon there was the usual conversation growing ever



**Figure 9. Soapbox race contestants. Left to right: Rodney Ruch, Jerry O'Malley, Warren Froehner, and Jerry Aulick Jr.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

louder. Jerry moved to the front and took over by asking selected classmates to put the algebra problems for the day on the board. Jerry soon learned that not only could Rodney Brown work the problems, he could also explain them to the class. Jerry used Rodney's strength to carry on the class. After about 30 minutes, Sister Charles checked on the class and was delighted to see the students had covered the lesson for the day fairly well. Unlike most classes that would have deteriorated into a disorganized scene without the presence of a stern proctor, the algebra class survived because Jerry managed it for several weeks until Mother Harriet returned to work.<sup>17</sup> The advantages of this leadership were not lost on the sisters who often called upon Jerry again; they used what he had done as a concept for other classes.

**Notes**

1. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. John McCormick, interview by Aloysius G. Casey, January 2001.
6. Jerome F. O'Malley family tree, Margaret O'Malley Neal Papers, 7.
7. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. *Scranton Tribune*, 5 August 1946.
12. Ibid., 6 August 1946.
13. Ibid., 8 August 1946.
14. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.

## Chapter 4

### **Saint Rose Basketball**

Sept 1946–June 1949 Student	Saint Rose High School Basketball
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Saint Rose played in the Catholic High School Basketball League with 10 other teams from the diocese of Scranton. Basketball did not display the semipro type of play with the hotdogging that is currently evident in many high schools. It was a team sport featuring boys of normal height and often with modest talents and great athletic experience. The game did generate great excitement among students, parents, and fans in the local area. For many years, Saint Rose struggled to generate a winning season but began to show some strength in the 1946–47 season with the plainspoken coach, John “Ike” Cadden, and a classy guard, Tommy McHale. Sophomore Jerry O’Malley had worked hard to make the varsity, and before the end of the season, he made the starting five.

Saint Rose went undefeated in the first half of the 1947–48 season. Now a junior, O’Malley was rapidly developing into the best player on the team through his accurate set shot, sharp passes, and powerful drives to the basket. Cadden soon realized that with O’Malley setting up the plays, he could afford to move McHale inside to forward and thereby take advantage of his excellent corner-shooting ability. Paul O’Malley, Skip Farrelly, Al Nolan, and Jim Loftus also contributed to the team’s strong showing.<sup>1</sup> In the season’s second half, Saint Rose lost to Saint Patrick of Olyphant, but the team quickly rebounded with wins over Saint Patrick of Scranton, Saint Ann, Saint Michael, and Holy Rosary. Jerry O’Malley led the scoring in most of these games, but in the contest with Holy Rosary, he injured his left foot after crashing into the crowd on a high-speed drive.<sup>2</sup> Father John C. Gilloegly, moderator of the Saint Rose team, announced the next day that Jerry O’Malley was admitted to Saint Joseph’s Hospital with a chipped bone in his foot and would be out for

the remainder of the season.<sup>3</sup> Without O'Malley, Saint Rose lost to the Saint Mary's team in a second-half playoff game that set the stage for a final contest for the season's league title.

On the Irish holiday of 17 March 1948, the championship game was played at the Crane National Guard Armory in Carbondale between Saint Rose and Saint Mary's of Scranton.<sup>4</sup> Saint Mary's was favored even though it was a home game for Saint Rose. Saint Mary's Paul Nolan was the league's leading scorer with a deadly one-handed shot from either side. He was backed by a solid team that constantly had improved in the second half of the season. Saint Rose was playing without two of its starters. O'Malley suited up but was sporting a walking cast, and Skip Farrelly was in the hospital with appendicitis. Coach Cadden kept the game close by assigning a tenacious substitute, Joe "Homer" Kelly, to play a tough man-to-man defense against Paul Nolan. McHale and Al Nolan were leading scorers for Saint Rose, but with a little more than two minutes to play and down 28 to 31, Cadden called for O'Malley to play. (This game preceded the subsequent league rule against playing with any type of splint.)

Jerry was fouled immediately to preclude him from taking his favorite set shot. He converted the foul, and a few seconds later, he brought the crowd to a tumultuous uproar as he sank a long, one-handed shot to tie the game and to send it into overtime.<sup>5</sup> In overtime, Al Nolan scored a goal for Saint Rose, and Tommy McHale iced the game with a foul conversion and a spectacular display of ball handling. Thus, Saint Rose won its first pennant in the 18-year history of the league on the strength of some courageous defense by Homer Kelly, a determined team, and Jerry O'Malley's determination. McCawley's Ice Cream Shop, located two blocks from the Crane Armory, was the regular teenage hangout in Carbondale, and the atmosphere was absolute bedlam after the Saint Rose win. The shop was stuffed to capacity with fans singing "I'm looking over a four-leaf clover . . ." with great force and volume when they came to the "roses that bloom. . . ." The Saint Rose team, and particularly, Jerry O'Malley, received great adulation from the fans.

O'Malley was named to the 1948 Catholic League All-Star team along with Paul Nolan, Saint Mary's; Bobby Dean, Saint

Pat's Olyphant; Joe Hessling, Honesdale; and Paddy Ryan, Saint Pat's of Scranton.<sup>6</sup>

For years afterward, as the local papers reported the accomplishments of Jerry O'Malley all the way to four-star general in the Air Force, they would often note his soapbox championship and his unique role in the Saint Rose basketball championship season. In the region, Jerry O'Malley was becoming the real-life version of the fictional Frank Merriwell legend.

Although basketball was a large part of Jerry's life, it was not everything. Having seen *The Bells of Saint Mary's* (1945) with Bing Crosby and Ingrid Bergman, Jerry came to admire the Father O'Malley character who helped people with advice in a flexible, friendly manner. He particularly liked the scene where Father O'Malley assisted a young woman in trouble and then told her simply to "dial 'O' for O'Malley" whenever troubles mounted. When one asked Jerry over the next few years about his long-term goals, Jerry often indicated he was interested in the priesthood. As time passed in high school, it became apparent that the celibate life was not his destiny, but as this story unfolds, the reader will see that he developed a lifelong habit of taking the time and spending considerable energy to help others as his own power and influence grew.

Jerry speculated that one day he would marry Jean Murphy, an attractive classmate who was also a Saint Rose cheerleader.<sup>7</sup> He had known Jean since childhood, and they occasionally dated, but the romance cooled when Jerry began to appreciate many other young ladies. Jerry's mom, Mabel O'Malley, attempted to stay current with his latest love interest, but at times Jerry moved so fast even Mabel's strong network was outdated. Jerry also dated cheerleaders Alice Gebert, Peggy Moran, and many others until finally settling down to go steady for a significant time with Mary Lou Langan. She was in the class behind Jerry at Saint Rose. She had a brother, Jimmy, who also played basketball and was in Jerry's class. Jimmy was nicknamed "Demon" for the intensity he put into sports activities. Interestingly, despite that awful nickname, Jimmy was the one who really had a vocation for the priesthood, and he served many years as Father Langan in the Scranton diocese until his recent death.

Jerry Malia, a cousin of Al Casey, often visited Carbondale, and he was readily accepted into the fraternity of friends of O'Malley. He happened to be on such a visit when O'Malley was celebrating his 16th birthday with a party at home. Many years later, Malia described the event in the following words:

Jerry's 16th birthday party was a "defining event." Throughout history there are "watersheds" and there are "sea changes." These are the moments when things are never the same afterwards. Jerry's 16th birthday party was a unique event of this magnitude and fifty years later it is still vivid. A single element defined the ceremony. It was not the cake. It was not the candles; it was something new and different. We were introduced to something commonly known as rum. It was already served in little glasses set at the table. It looked like water. Quite harmless, of course. The first sip or two was innocuous and a "different" flavor than the Coca-Cola we normally consumed. However, this new beverage began to taste better and better and eventually was quite a hit! Jerry and the group were absolutely elated and repeated toasts to the honoree. It was truly a "happy birthday," that is, until it was time to go home when the rum took its turn, and the group became sick, sick, sick. The joyous celebration of manhood suddenly degenerated into a gastric catastrophe—but nevertheless a memorable occasion. Once again, DEMON RUM had earned its sobriquet.<sup>8</sup>

It was not clear if Jerry's mother knew about the beverage as she stayed out of sight. This was Jerry's and his friends' first introduction to alcohol, and it took some time before any of them were prepared to try it again.

When the spring of 1948 came around, Jerry and his friends sought summer jobs to help with their families' finances.<sup>9</sup> Jerry had worked the previous summer for Stevens Dairy, and he learned to lug around and scrub out the large metal milk cans used to bring milk to the dairy. This summer, Mabel O'Malley worked on her political connections and declared success when Jerry was hired to work for a road-repair crew in the area. It was hard, manual labor but good pay and reasonable hours. Joe Kelly was able to work with the same crew but was hired as a signalman and merely had to rotate the sign from "Stop" to "Slow" as the traffic was routed around the work site. He often noted that despite O'Malley's high-class standing, he had been assigned the more intellectual job!

At the end of the summer of 1948, Jerry and his friends—Al Casey, Jet Conva, Joe Kelly, and John Serafini—decided to cap

off their last summer together with a Labor Day weekend camp-out at Newton Lake.<sup>10</sup> Casey's cousin, Jerry Malia, was visiting from New Jersey and was included. The lake was about eight miles from Carbondale and was a popular place among teenagers. It was particularly attractive for this young crowd, as they could play pickup basketball near the cabins where several Carbondale-area teenage girls stayed for the summer. The routine was to swim the lake in the morning (almost a mile long), play ball, flirt with the girls by day, and hang around the public side with one of the girls at night. Jet Conva arranged a date the first night, but he never lived down the story that just after scoring big with a passionate kiss at midnight, he fell backwards off her family's porch! He escaped serious injury, but the fall totally destroyed the romantic moment.

The boys decided to celebrate the long weekend with a corn roast to which the girls could be invited for the final summer evening. It was not lost on the young heroes that since the fields around the area were full of corn in full bloom, they believed the local farmers would not miss a few bags of corn from what looked like a bountiful harvest. Late night on the eve of the party, they set out with three burlap bags to acquire the corn. In the next-door tent were three older teenagers who had heard about the party and decided they could greatly intensify matters with a little beer. Unknown to our heroes, these three boys broke into the basement of a tavern a few miles away and stole three cases of beer. As the party got under way, the (quite warm) long-neck Pabst Blue Ribbon beer was produced, and our friends did not ask any questions about its origin but indeed joined in drinking the beer. The party was a great success. The next day, despite some clear hints from their neighbors about the origin of the beer while our heroes were in the process of breaking camp, little thought was given to the morality of what had happened.

On Tuesday morning, all five showed up (Jerry Malia had returned to New Jersey) in the mandatory coat and tie at Saint Rose High to begin their senior year. The homeroom teacher, Sister Cornata, was well into her lecture of what was expected of the class when the Pennsylvania State Police arrived with two patrol cars to take five of her 19 boys to the Lackawanna County jail. Casey and Conva were in one car, along with John

Serafini. John, having a good sense for numbers (John was later a senior controller for Sears), asked politely what was the value of the missing corn. The trooper replied, "The thieves were not all that intelligent because they had taken the 'Hog Corn' and the best estimate was that the value was about \$1.87." John immediately offered that "we could raise that among us in the car and you could stop and let us out right here in Jermyn." They were quickly advised that was not the way things worked, and they let the boys think about the consequences for the rest of the 40-minute ride.

As it turned out, the police were mostly interested in the theft of the beer. After much questioning, they decided these five had no part in that, but they set up each boy for a stern counseling session.

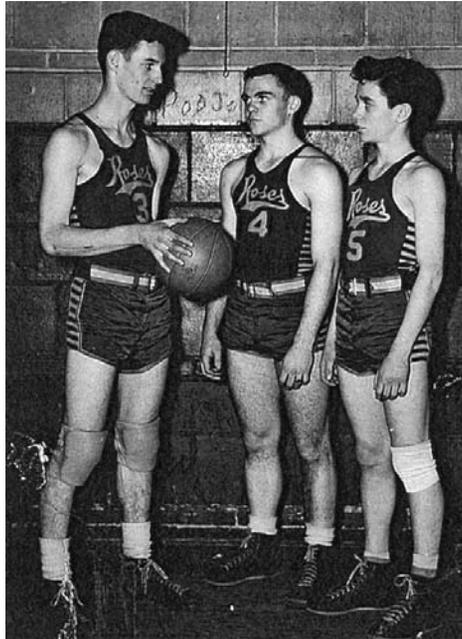
Mabel O'Malley was of solid frame, not very tall, with dark hair and bright eyes.<sup>11</sup> She was curious to a fault and formed an extensive network to keep up with all that transpired in Carbon-dale. She constantly kept track of the politicians in the area and kept them informed of what she thought they should do to retain the support of voters like her. She epitomized the slogan of former house speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neil Jr., who said, "All politics is local!"

She was alerted early that morning, and shortly after noon, her contact with the district attorney, Carlon O'Malley (no relation), had borne fruit. All five boys were released. The escapade was forever after known as "the Great Corn Roast Caper," but at the time, it was a hard lesson in failing to live up to the expectations of each boy's mother and the sisters of Saint Rose.

The nuns earnestly focused on the education of the class as they knew they had only a few more months to prepare them for their post-graduation life.<sup>12</sup> Sister Marie Edmund taught both mathematics and Latin. She was an excellent teacher who required all to memorize the opening stanza of *The Aeneid* by Virgil. It was somewhat prophetic as it began: "Arma virumque cano. . . ." This translates to "I sing of arms and the man. . . ." and was especially appropriate, since three of her charges were to become general officers in the military, and virtually all the males were to serve during the Korean War.

Soon the basketball season began, and Saint Rose was the team to beat since they had triumphed the previous year. Coach

Cadden had stepped down and was replaced by the popular Joe Walsh. Three starters—Tom McHale, Al Nolan, and Skip Farrelly—had graduated, but a strong group remained. Paul O'Malley had matured into a strong rebounder and a steady scorer; Frank "Radar" Duffy came on to help Jerry O'Malley with the attack; and Jim Loftus, Bill Monahan, Jim Langan, and Bob Gilroy rounded out the team. Duffy was an interesting addition. He had never played the game, but in the summer of 1948, he dedicated himself to playing countless hours on outside courts and perfecting his push shot.<sup>13</sup> The team actually had three O'Malleys on the court at times as Coach Walsh called Paul's brother Fran up from the junior varsity squad to serve as a highly mobile substitute forward. The following picture shows the three Saint Rose O'Malleys, Paul, Jerry, and Fran, in uniform (fig. 10). Fran later led Saint Rose to a Catholic school state championship and went on to play at Villanova with all-American Tom Gola.



**Figure 10.** The three O'Malleys of Saint Rose, *left to right: center, Paul; captain and guard, Jerry; and forward, Fran.* (Reprinted with permission from Paul O'Malley.)

Jerry O'Malley was the captain and led Saint Rose through the first half of the season with eight wins and two losses. Saint Pat's of Scranton had an identical record, and the teams met in a play-off game in late January 1949. Jerry and Paul O'Malley led the scoring for Saint Rose, while Paul Ruddy, Mike Mazzarella, and Patty Ryan stood out for Saint Pat's. The hectic final seconds were described in the *Scranton Tribune* the next day:

The official clock showed exactly 2.5 seconds remaining with the Patties ahead 43-42 and a foul shot coming up. But they elected instead to take the ball out of bounds to kill the remaining time. The pass was deflected slightly, and with amazing timing Jerry O'Malley leaped through the air to grab the coveted spheroid. In an unbelievably short space of time he had covered the distance from mid-court to the basket and dropped the ball in for the winning field goal.<sup>14</sup>

The two scorekeepers (one student from each school) argued about whether the shot was in time to count, but the referee, Ed Coleman, ruled the shot good and Saint Rose the winner by a score of 44 to 43. Just when that ruling seemed to settle the frantic fans, an audit of the scorebook showed only 43 points for Saint Rose. In fact, Bill Monaghan of Saint Rose had made a foul shot, his only point of the evening, but somehow it was not recorded in the official book. Once again, Coleman ruled the game was won by Saint Rose. He probably recalled the missing foul shot, and he certainly was cognizant of the running score during the game. Saint Patrick's announced an official protest at noon the following day. Rev. Thomas A. Carlin, president of the league, stated, "Saint Patrick's based its protest on (1) that according to its timer Jerry O'Malley's winning basket was made after time had elapsed, and (2) that, even counting O'Malley's goal, the score was still tied at 43-43 . . . three neutral observers not connected with the league were to be chosen to consider the protest."<sup>15</sup>

Two days later, O'Malley was called to report to the South Scranton Junior High School court, where the game had taken place, to demonstrate that he could repeat the feat and help resolve the first point.<sup>16</sup> With all the officials gathered and armed with multiple timepieces, Jerry was to pick off the pass at the same place and repeat the play. He was able to do it within the 2.5 seconds two out of three tries and thus satisfied the observers on that issue.

The board of observers debated the issue of the game score.<sup>17</sup> Both Scranton newspapers had kept score sheets that showed the additional point for Saint Rose, and, of course, the referee felt he had kept accurate track of the running score right to the end buzzer.<sup>18</sup> That the official scorebook lacked the single point, however, was finally decided to be critical, and in late February they handed down a ruling to replay the game. Unfortunately for Saint Rose the game was scheduled for Monday, 28 February. Earlier in February, Jerry had received a letter from the adjutant general of West Point providing him the opportunity to compete for an appointment to the US Military Academy at West Point as the son of a veteran deceased due to service-connected wounds. One of the provisions of the appointment was “Present yourself on 28 February 1949 between noon and 5 PM for examination . . . Governors Island, New York . . . Failure to report . . . will vacate this appointment.”<sup>19</sup>

There were doubtless interesting calls between the rectory in Carbondale and the diocese league office in Scranton regarding this dilemma, but no official record of that exchange exists. Msgr. William Farrell, pastor of Saint Rose, announced that Saint Rose would forfeit the game in lieu of playing without their star player, Jerry O’Malley.<sup>20</sup> He followed up with a letter to league officials to that effect.

One other game offered an exciting evening for Saint Rose fans. The Jesuits-run University of Scranton had started a new high school called Scranton Preparatory School. The prep school had not been around long enough to be incorporated into the Catholic league, but, nonetheless, they were scheduled to play an exhibition game with Saint Rose. The game was played in the Crane Armory in Carbondale, and despite Saint Rose’s best efforts, the Scranton team—led by Bob “Spike” Casey—won a close contest. In later years, Jerry O’Malley stayed in contact with both Bob Casey, who later became governor of Pennsylvania, and a prep guard named Joey McDade, who became the congressional representative for that district. Many years later, when the new armory in Carbondale was dedicated to the memory of Jerry O’Malley, Governor Casey recalled the game in the old Crane Armory as one of the hardest-fought contests in his high school career.<sup>21</sup>

High school days included many activities besides basketball that made life interesting for Jerry and his friends. Jet Conva had an after-school job in the local men's store, and, thus, had a lot more style to his clothes than others in their fraternity had. He was also recognized as a smooth talker with the high school girls and even branched out to date girls from the public school to open up a new social arena. On one occasion, he had determined to drop out of a steady relationship to take up with a new love and told the group that he was going to break the news gently to his girlfriend. As he related later, she immediately caught the message and cut him short with the comment, "Save it: it's been gay, but don't rub it in!"<sup>22</sup>

A young priest, Father Sullivan, offered to take Jerry and Al Casey to New York City to conduct some church business. He was a friendly priest but quite stern in his outlook; so, both boys were somewhat reserved in their conversations on the way. He dropped them in the theater section where they planned to see a movie before the appointed pickup. Jerry suggested that they see the new release *Forever Amber*, which was risqué to the point it had been condemned by the church. As it turned out, they viewed *Forever Amber* and then went by to study—to the extent they could from the playbills—the contents of a Western film that was playing nearby. To Father Sullivan's questions about how they spent their time, they represented the Western film but both felt that their lies were somewhat transparent. Fortunately for them, the priest got interested in other matters over the ride back to Pennsylvania.

While still attending Saint Rose, Jerry thought a lot about career opportunities after finishing high school, as evidenced by the Army summons to Governor's Island. He knew he must get a college education, but he also knew that with two younger sisters and limited income, Mabel was in no position to help with the cost. He talked about West Point with classmate Al Casey, noting particularly that he could compete for a presidential competitive appointment to the academy since his dad had died due to service-connected wounds from World War I.<sup>23</sup> They recognized that Saint Rose was strong on the humanities but not very competitive in math and the sciences. They formed a plan whereby Jerry would take the competitive exams during his 1949 senior year to gain an insight into the entrance

requirements even if he did not get into the class of 1953 at West Point. In that case, they could attend the University of Scranton for a year in the engineering department and compete effectively for the academy one year later. Both of their mothers felt that they should be able to get help from the local congressional representative at least to compete for appointment the next year, since their dads had served in World War I and Casey had lost a brother in air combat in World War II.

Despite the limits on math courses and no real science lab at Saint Rose, Jerry still presented a formidable application to the registrar at West Point. His high school grades were generally in the 90s (there was no Scholastic Assessment Test in those days); he was sophomore and senior class president and basketball team captain.<sup>24</sup> He did not receive immediate feedback from the three days of mental and physical examination at Governors Island, but he knew his standing was very good, for the athletic parameters they measured in real time. Finally, in late May 1949, a letter from Maj Gen Edward F. Witsell, the adjutant general at the US Military Academy at West Point, confirmed his selection for admission as a cadet and contained the order to report to the academy on 1 July 1949.<sup>25</sup> As Jerry remarked later, this letter had attachments with much material about transportation, baggage, and admission matters, but in no way did it fully describe “Beast Barracks,” the cadet indoctrination to the “Long Grey Line.”

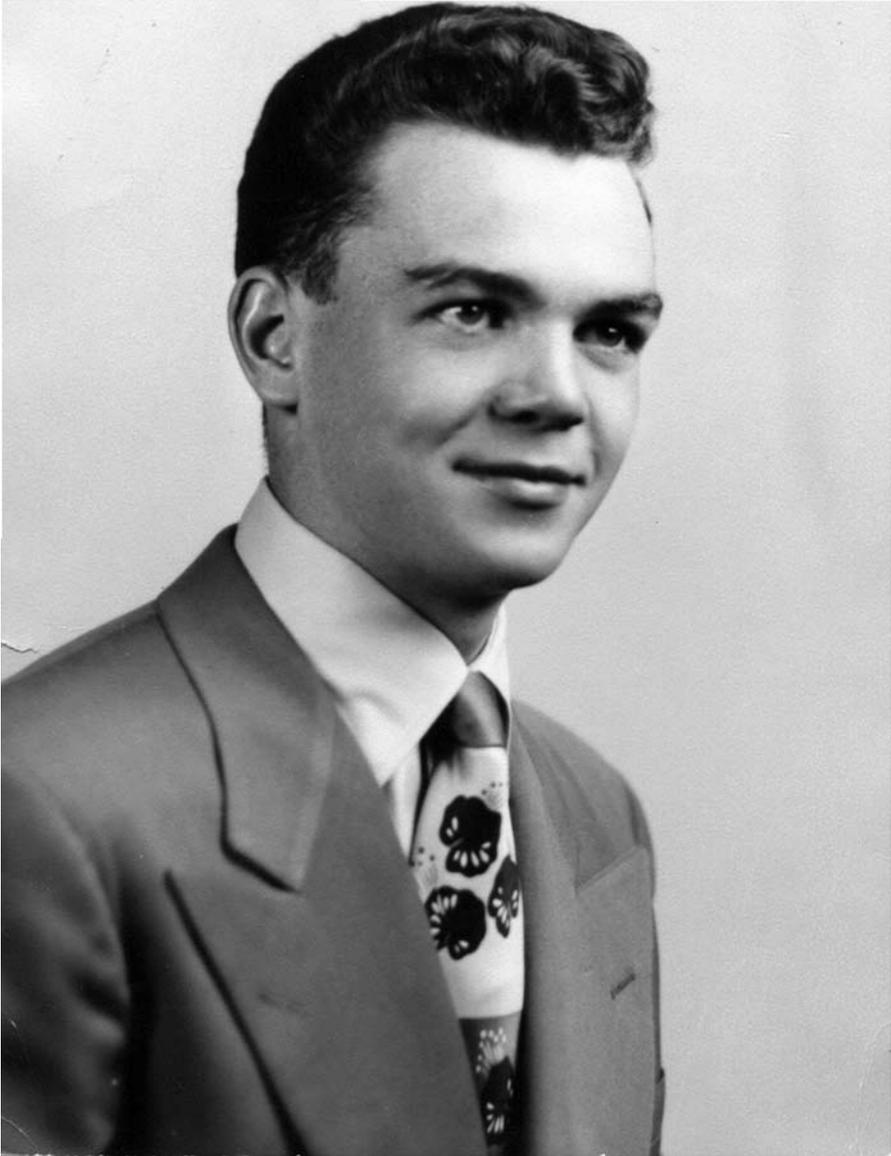
His friend, Al Casey, followed the alternate course; after a year at the University of Scranton, he secured an appointment to the US Naval Academy at Annapolis.<sup>26</sup> They both ultimately opted for careers in the Air Force, but for the next few years, they sat in opposite sides of the grandstands and met at the 50-yard line only after the Army–Navy game had ended.

With postgraduate plans taking shape, O’Malley focused on the remaining weeks at Saint Rose. He led an energetic effort to gather sponsors for the prom booklet to raise money to support a class trip to Washington, DC, before graduation. Although such trips are now common, in 1949 it was a first at Saint Rose. Jerry had appointed a committee, headed by Rodney Brown, to work up the prom booklet. Their activity went well, producing a reasonably slick booklet the day before the dance, with all of the planned advertisements included; however, when

Saint Rose's principal, Mother Evangeline, noticed they used slang terms such as "Big Cheese" to refer to the pastor, Monsignor Farrell, and similarly innocuous terms for the rest of her staff, she became irate.<sup>27</sup>

Faced with the fait accompli of the thick booklet, she kept most of the nuns up the eve of the prom gluing the offensive pages together and inserting a substitute set of pages to properly identify the school officials. As one might expect, this brought a lot more attention to the booklet than it otherwise would have attracted. Most of the attendees pulled the pasted pages apart to see what was hidden and were underwhelmed with the phrases. Some of his committee members complained about the nun's work, but Jerry was only amused by the whole proceeding. Figure 11 shows O'Malley as a high school senior.

The trip to Washington was a great success due to Jerry's leadership. He also received one more honor at the annual Class Day ceremony where he was named salutatorian, with the second highest grade point average in the graduating class. Ann Cosgrove was valedictorian for the class of 1949.<sup>28</sup>



**Figure 11. Jerry as a high school senior.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

**Notes**

1. *Scranton Tribune*, 13 February 1948.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 18 March 1948.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., March 1948.
7. Primary source experience provided by Aloysius G. Casey.
8. Gerald A. Malia to Aloysius G. Casey, letter, 30 July 1998.
9. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. "Scranton Times Box Scores," *Scranton Times*, October 1948.
14. Ibid., 31 January 1949.
15. Ibid.
16. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
17. *Scranton Times*, 26 February 1949.
18. Ibid.
19. Adjutant General, West Point, to Aloysius G. Casey, letter, 10 February 1949.
20. *Scranton Times*, 26 February 1949.
21. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. High school transcript, Saint Rose High School, Carbondale, Pennsylvania.
25. Maj Gen Edward F. Witsell, adjutant general, West Point, to Jerome F. O'Malley, letter, 31 May 1949.
26. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
27. Ibid.
28. *Carbondale News*, June 1949.

## Chapter 5

### **West Point**

Cadet Jerome F. O'Malley July 1950 – June 1953	Freshman - Plebe Sophomore - Yearling Junior - Cow Senior-First Classman- Firstie
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Fresh from his high school experience at Saint Rose, where he received much praise and encouragement, Jerry was taken aback by the harsh verbal treatment that accompanied his indoctrination to Beast Barracks at West Point. The treatment virtually began with the swearing in and continued relentlessly for the rest of the summer. Author Lewis Sorley, who is a third-generation graduate of West Point (class of 1956), said of Beast Barracks, "This is the aptly named initiation routine that each new cadet at West Point must endure to establish his credentials as a worthy member of the corps of cadets. No amount of mental or physical preparation makes this training period easy, comfortable, or pleasant. It is designed to test the resolve of those young men, and now young women, by stressing their ability to take orders and respond with precision, absent whining or any self serving [*sic*] argument."<sup>1</sup>

Jerry soon figured out that it was a formal part of the training, and for the most part, the upperclassmen who led the program were fair and impartial; they made it tough for everyone! The best response was to take what was given without any sign of emotion or weakness.<sup>2</sup> While at times it seemed that some abuse was beyond the bounds of professional conduct, cool competence was the way to respond. He learned to retain his natural optimism and external confidence no matter how high the stress level was raised. Beast Barracks ended with a hike of several days, which consisted of hiking in the morning and sports and relaxation in the afternoon. Completion of the plebe hike marked acceptance into the corps of cadets, some relaxation of the plebe system, and entry into the academic year.

Not yet 17 and one-half years, Jerry was younger than 95 percent of the men entering West Point in the summer of 1949.<sup>3</sup> He was also at least one year younger than the average high school graduate. Since most of his classmates had at least one year of college and the Saint Rose curriculum was strong in the humanities but thin in the sciences, Jerry found that he often had to struggle to maintain the academic record he was expected to achieve.

Jerry was assigned to Company C-2 and drew an interesting set of roommates for his plebe year, Monty Lowry and Jim Lammie.<sup>4</sup> Lowry had been a Golden Gloves boxer who had spent three years in college taking courses aimed at West Point academics. Lammie was right out of high school but was an exceptionally gifted engineering student who always stood near the top of the class. For his senior year, Lammie was number two academically.<sup>5</sup> In their second year (yearling year) at West Point, O'Malley and Lammie picked up Tom Mingledorff as a roommate in lieu of Lowry. Mingledorff was also an academic star, standing third, right behind Lammie in class standing for their senior year.

O'Malley's final class standing at West Point was 397 out of a class of 512, the top of the bottom quarter of the class. Perusal of his academic record shows he usually stood high in physical education, military psychology and leadership, and the humanities (language, literature, and law) but worked hard to earn a B or C in the hard science subjects.<sup>6</sup> He admitted his good fortune to have Lammie readily available over the first three years when particular problems in math or physics troubled him.<sup>7</sup> It also helped to have Mingledorff studying in the same room for the second and third year, but both Lammie and Mingledorff reported that they really studied independently for the most part. They often helped when Jerry asked for assistance.<sup>8</sup>

Upon starting his senior year, O'Malley's exceptional military aptitude, as demonstrated over his first three years as a member of the corps, got him promoted to cadet captain, the top rank assigned to cadets. He was assigned to one of the two regimental staff quarters, meaning he ranked militarily in the top 4 percent of his class of over 500 cadets. His duties required that he move to regimental staff quarters; unfortunately, this separated him from his two academic star classmates.<sup>9</sup>

Jerry played lacrosse on the plebe team; one of his teammates was Stan Touchstone, who happened to be the son of the lacrosse coach and was also in Company C-2. Lammie says Touchstone was so taken with the game that he slept with his stick!<sup>10</sup> Jerry also played varsity basketball and intramural football, soccer, and baseball. He enjoyed all the court games, including handball, squash, and racquetball and was a lifelong tennis advocate.

As he settled into his plebe year, Jerry took some comfort in the magnificent scenery around West Point. Like his native Carbondale, West Point offered a spectacular display of color when the leaves of the deciduous trees of New York State changed from green to bright colors and were ultimately blown away by the wind. By late November, however, West Point was a bit dreary. It was dark when he went to breakfast and dark upon his return to his room after lacrosse practice. One bright note was the Army-Navy football game when the entire corps of cadets was transported to attend the game in Philadelphia.

Jerry's high school friend, Al Casey, attended the Army-Navy game on a bitter-cold day in Philadelphia in December 1949. Navy lost by a big score of 38-0.<sup>11</sup> O'Malley was, of course, delighted, as it meant a little easier treatment of the plebes from the game in early December until the Christmas holiday. In the following years, after Casey entered the Naval Academy as a member of the class of 1954, he and Jerry met on the 50-yard line after the Army-Navy game each year. By far the most exciting of these games was the December 1950 game. As described by Mike Nassr (Naval Academy graduate, class of 1954), "Played before President Harry Truman and 103,000 fans in Municipal Stadium. . . . Army had not lost in 28 straight games and was ranked number 2 in the nation. . . . Navy had won only two of eight games and hadn't beaten Army since 1943. . . . Army was a solid three-touchdown favorite. Navy's rookie coach, Eddie Erdelatz, was pitted against Army's legendary Earl 'Red' Blaik."<sup>12</sup>

When it was all over Navy, led by quarterback Zug Zastrow, had played an inspired game and defeated the Black Knights 14-2. The next two Army-Navy games were also victories for the Naval Academy, largely because Army lost most of its varsity football players in the 1951 cheating scandal, the most dramatic and far-reaching event at West Point during O'Malley's tenure.

Jerry had become a strong believer and lifetime advocate of high standards for personal integrity. As we shall see in the course of his military career, he was often tested by situations of practical relationships but never lost his reverence for the honor code or its importance in the officer corps. As the scandal spread among many athletes who were his regular training tablemates and despite the loss of valued friends in the corps of cadets, Jerry retained his dedication to the honor code as it was written and practiced at West Point. In summary, the honor code states, "We will not lie, or cheat, or steal, or tolerate among us those who do."<sup>13</sup> Many criticized the last phrase of the code because it forced cadets to tell on each other or that it was unrealistic or unenforceable. Jerry firmly believed that the toleration clause was the key to the code being truly respected and enforced by the corps as opposed to being a set of rules enforced by administrators. He was ready to argue the case with critics.<sup>14</sup> Later in his Air Force career, he had a major part in establishing the honor code with the same principles at the Air Force Academy. Certainly, it was unknown to him at this formative stage of his career that his resolve always to put integrity first would be tested by actions of his senior officers in peacetime and in war.

Jerry did not allow losses in the Navy game to dampen his enjoyment of seeing old friends and spending a night away from the academy. His and Al's usual post-Army-Navy game routine was to dine at Dr. Paul Casey's (Al's older brother) house in north Philadelphia, where Jerry was able to converse about the latest news from Carbondale over dinner, and then they would join the Army party at a downtown hotel for a late-night party session.

Annapolis and West Point also maintained an exchange program, where second classmen (juniors) spent a four-day weekend at the other academy to expand their views of what the sister institution was all about and promote their professional development. An example of this exchange is illustrated in the photo of Casey and O'Malley, where each had donned the opposite's full dress uniform during O'Malley's exchange visit to Annapolis (fig. 12).

Tom Mingledorff, also a Catholic, apparently was envious of O'Malley's ease of enjoying life when he was able to escape the rigors of West Point. He wrote, "I think of Jerry as having been



**Figure 12. Cadet O'Malley (second class – junior) and friend, Al Casey, mid-shipman third class.** Both donned the opposite's full dress uniform during O'Malley's exchange visit to Annapolis. (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

one of those black Irish Catholics (who), like the Kennedys, do what you like, just be sorry for it."<sup>15</sup>

He also wrote that Jerry, the quintessential babe hound, reminded him of Sam Malone of the television program *Cheers*. The judgmental flavor of these comments may have stemmed from Mingledorff's committed relationship with his steady girlfriend from back home; he often had quiet weekends broken only by study. O'Malley, in contrast, took every opportunity to enjoy his free time. The somewhat strained relationship between Mingledorff and O'Malley was also obvious in the fact that they never saw each other again, including postgraduation, even though they both opted for a career in the Air Force after leaving West Point. This was certainly unusual for O'Malley, for as the record shows, he retained and renewed friendships throughout his life. The volume of personal correspondence in

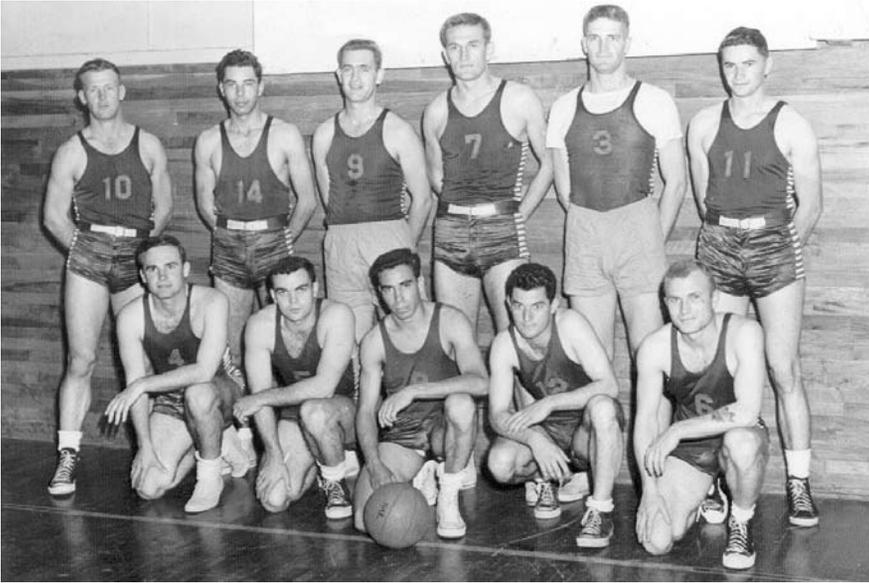
his official Air Force history file at Maxwell Air Force Base was astounding, with most of the letters being penned in his own hand. In contrast, Lammie and O'Malley enjoyed a long and cordial relationship. They relaxed together a few years after graduation when O'Malley was a tactical officer at the new Air Force Academy and Lammie was a Reserve Officers' Training Corps instructor at the Colorado School of Mines in Denver.<sup>16</sup> Almost 30 years after their graduation, O'Malley wrote to Lammie from his office, as vice chief of the Air Force, to discuss plans for their upcoming reunion.<sup>17</sup>

Lammie also recalled a football weekend when he and Jerry double-dated: "As always Jerry had the beauty, and I was matched with a less-attractive but pleasant young lady." Lammie indicated that over the three years when they traveled on weekends, he and Jerry would go to Mass together.<sup>18</sup> Often it was at some quiet post chapel where the priest was alone, and O'Malley would go up on the altar and assist him. His activity record at West Point also reflected his service as an acolyte on the Catholic squad.<sup>19</sup>

At the end of their plebe year, Jim Lammie related, "An officer came into their room and said 'let's see what you are hiding.' He pulled the mantle out to reveal a secret compartment, but he was disappointed to find only a 10-year-old loaf of bread."<sup>20</sup> Jerry and Jim were surprised and wondered what other secrets were buried in that old north barracks.<sup>21</sup>

Jim Lammie had a very distinguished career as a civil engineer after leaving the Army, as he rose to chief executive officer of Parsons Brinkerhoff, Inc., one of the largest engineering firms in the United States. He wrote, "I always knew Jerry would go far, his outgoing personality reminded me of my uncle Louis Lammie—ran away at 15—joined the Army—went to China—regimental boxing champ—transferred to Air Force security and retired as a colonel. He was friends with everyone—so was Jerry."<sup>22</sup>

Athletics and team sports were a large part of O'Malley's career at West Point (fig. 13). In the 1951–52 season, he really thought his big chance to make the West Point varsity team came with the appointment of Elmer Ripley as the academy's head basketball coach.<sup>23</sup> Ripley was 60 years old and had a basketball career that spanned back to 1915, when he played for the



**Figure 13. West Point basketball team. Guard Jerry O'Malley is second from the left in the front row.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

Carbondale Pioneers professional basketball team. The curious full cycle of the Carbondale connection was cited on the *Scranton Tribune* sports page.<sup>24</sup> Ripley was a member of Carbondale's Wonder Five, which won more than 50 successive games and claimed the world's championship after beating the original New York Celtics in 1917. Although only 5 feet 8 inches tall, Ripley made his mark in the rough game that was truly played in a cage in those early days. Ripley appreciated O'Malley's dedication and desire to win and promoted him to the varsity (A corps squad) in his third and fourth years.

Although O'Malley never achieved his goal of becoming a high-scoring, first-string college basketball player, he became a reliable sixth or seventh man. Despite his speed and strength, O'Malley, at 5 feet 10 inches tall, simply was not able to dominate at the college level as he had done in high school.

In the summer of 1952, seniors Tom Hoffman, George Hass, and Jerry O'Malley were selected to train one of the six companies during Beast Barracks that entered West Point with the class of 1956. Hoffman noted that the class included Norman

Schwarzkopf (“Stormin’ Norman” of Gulf War fame), although he was not in the company they trained.<sup>25</sup> At the close of the Beast Barracks, the cadets were sent on a tour of Army bases to expose them to the Army branches. The three self-assured cadets were taking a break in Juarez, Mexico, when a fairly well experienced prostitute approached and proceeded to grope all three cadets! It rattled their pretext of self-assurance, but they were able to convince her they were not ready to strike a deal.

Hoffman also recalled a blind date set up for him by O’Malley at West Point. As usual, Jerry had a knockout, while the girl selected for Hoffman was quite heavy. Things went along reasonably well until Hoffman’s date insisted on visiting flirtation walk and pressed him pretty hard for sexual experience; it was certainly not the norm for the girls of that era who were invited to West Point.

One of the plebes who was in the company trained by O’Malley that summer was author Lewis “Bob” Sorley.<sup>26</sup> He reported that although they were severely constrained in their dialogue with their mentors, they did have an excellent opportunity to observe who among their leaders was hard but fair and who was able to conduct the entire drama in an absolutely professional manner without betraying a mean spirit. Sorley came to admire O’Malley greatly because he seemed to command respect and because he always had that spark of good humor in his voice and manner to make the toughest situations endurable. Sorley reported the following incident:

Just before O’Malley was about to depart for the next phase of his summer program, he directed Sorley to drive around to O’Malley’s quarters at an appointed time. This could be bad news as such sessions often added considerable tasking onto the already full schedule each plebe was struggling to meet. However, Bob was pleased that his favorite leader singled him out and presented himself in his most correct “brace” at the right time. After telling Bob that he had done well so far that summer, O’Malley went on to share what was a bit of special intelligence regarding the first-class cadet who would replace Jerry for the remainder of the “Beast Barracks.” He said, “My replacement as your platoon leader is going to be my classmate Mr. Crevoiserat. There will come a time when he will ask you, ‘Mister,’ do you know me?” When he does, you are going to answer, “Yes sir, you are Mr. C-r-e-v-o-i-s-e-r-a-t.” He is going to ask, “How did you know that?” And, you are going to answer, “Sir Mr. O’Malley taught me.”<sup>27</sup>

Sorley was a bit surprised that it played out exactly as O'Malley predicted. As he snapped out C-r-e-v-o-i-s-e-r-a-t, Sorley secretly smiled as he decided that O'Malley must have considered him a squared-away cadet to have shared this insight with him. It was a source of satisfaction to Sorley as he traced the career of Jerry O'Malley over the years as he rose to four-star rank and commander of the Tactical Air Command.<sup>28</sup>

When graduation time came, O'Malley's mom, Mabel O'Malley, could not have been more proud of his performance and his potential.<sup>29</sup> He managed to shake her up when he invited an attractive remote cousin from Carbondale to June Week. This particular girl had a wide reputation for promiscuity in the local area. O'Malley later said it should not have been a concern to his mother, since this girl disappeared when she was introduced to the corps of cadets. He claimed he had to seek another date for most of the functions!

When it came time to make his branch choice, O'Malley was impressed with the opportunity to go directly into the Air Force. He really wanted to fly at high speeds and test his ability to do it well. At that time, the Air Force was a new service—organized out of the old Army Air Corps—and was just beginning to establish its own traditions. There was no Air Force Academy, and, by law, up to 25 percent of Naval Academy and West Point graduates were allowed to change services and accept an Air Force commission.

Gen Glen K. Otis, who commanded all Army forces in Europe before his retirement in 1988, was a classmate of O'Malley at West Point. He summarized O'Malley's reputation as follows: "He was one of the most admired cadets in the class of 1953 at [the] United States Military Academy (USMA), and we all knew that he was destined for top jobs in the Air Force."<sup>30</sup> He also wrote, "Among Army general officers, it was commonly known that when Jerry was only a two-star, he would be chief of staff some day. That's unusual in my experience for one service to have so early a forecast of another service leader."<sup>31</sup>

#### Notes

1. Lewis Sorley, interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 26 July 1999.
2. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.

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3. Vald Heiberg to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 2 June 1998.
4. Jim Lammie, to Aloysius G. Casey, letter, 6 March 1998.
5. Ibid.
6. US Military Academy Academic Record of Jerome Francis O'Malley.
7. Jim Dalton to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, n.d.
8. Lammie, letter.
9. Cadet Service Record of Jerome F. O'Malley, 2 June 1953, 2.
10. Lammie, letter.
11. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
12. Mike Nassr, "Upset of the Century," *US Naval Academy Alumni Magazine*, December 2000.
13. For a copy of the code, see <http://www.west-point.org/users/usma1983/40768/docs/taylor.html> (accessed 24 April 2007).
14. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
15. Tom Mingleedorff to Aloysius G. Casey, letter, 4 June 1998.
16. Lammie, letter.
17. O'Malley to Jim Lammie, letter, 27 December 1982.
18. Lammie, letter.
19. West Point Activity Record, Jerome F. O'Malley, 3 June 1953, 4-6.
20. Lammie, letter.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. "Basketball Hall of Fame," <http://www.hoopball.com/halloffamers> (accessed 11 August 2001).
24. *Scranton Tribune*, October 1951.
25. Tom Hoffman, telephone interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 14 August 1998.
26. Sorley, interview.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
30. Gen Glen K. Otis (US Army, Ret.) to Aloysius G. Casey, letter, 18 October 2001.
31. Ibid.

## Chapter 6

### **Diane Muennink, Silver Wings, and the Air Force Academy**

Second Lieutenant O'Malley First Lieutenant O'Malley (Promoted December 1954)	Flight Training Diane Muennink O'Malley Air Force Academy
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Jerry loved high speed, or, more accurately, he loved velocity: speed with precise direction. Thus, he looked forward to reporting to the Air Force to learn to fly. He received Department of the Air Force Special Order no. 96, dated May 1953, which appointed 116 of the graduates of the West Point class of 1953 as second lieutenants in the regular Air Force and assigned them to five different bases for primary flight training.<sup>1</sup> Jerry and 21 classmates with a similar contingent from Annapolis were assigned to Hondo Air Base, Texas, for a pilot training program conducted for the Air Training Command by a civilian contractor.

Hondo had, at that time, a large banner on the main street that read, "This is God's Country, don't drive through it like Hell!"<sup>2</sup> It was a dry, dusty, small town 20 miles west of San Antonio that primarily served ranchers in the area. Hondo had been a navigator-training base in World War II and had been leased to a chicken rancher after the war. The legend was that he stripped out the interior partitions in the barracks and raised millions of chickens in them. When the Korean War began, the Air Force took over the base again; but when it rained, the aroma of the chickens returned to the buildings.<sup>3</sup>

The old, open-barracks buildings were partitioned into two-man cubicles by plywood panels that stopped two feet from the ceiling and two feet above the floor. This conversion was meant to upgrade the barracks from enlisted or cadet quarters into bachelor officer quarters. The single latrine at the end of the building continued to serve all occupants. All the officers in Jerry's flight were from either West Point or Annapolis, freshly minted second lieutenants with new cars and a zest for living

beyond the constraints of academy restrictions. Kim Bassett, a 1953 graduate of the Naval Academy, remarked that “among the student officers, there were the usual groups—the drinkers, the gamblers, the lovers—who always wanted to go to Laredo about midnight, etc. Jerry and I became friends because our preferences did not fall at any of these extremes, so we were in the sort of middle, uncommitted group.”<sup>4</sup>

The flying went well for Jerry; he had no significant difficulties in meeting the academic requirements, as well as, logging 145 hours of flying time, most of it in the T-6, a World War II pilot-training aircraft.<sup>5</sup> He wrote, “Flying is somewhat like driving a car, it is best when done at high speed and over a reasonably short time span.”<sup>6</sup> One classmate who was recognized by his peers as a particularly talented pilot was Ted Freeman from the Naval Academy. Freeman was later killed in an aircraft accident as he trained to fly in space for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.<sup>7</sup> Only about 50 active duty Air Force personnel were on the base, for the flight instructors were civilians who were experienced aviators and had been tested during World War II in crop dusting or in stunt flying. In general they had an economy of expression, an evenhanded toughness, and were well seasoned by their earlier experience.<sup>8</sup>

The really big news for Jerry at Hondo appeared when he came to know Diane Muennink, the secretary at the ground school. She was a beautiful blonde Texas girl, with a statuesque figure and a dazzling smile, who enjoyed the attention of virtually all the student officers. Student officers were often clustered around her desk, but it was not long before it became clear that she preferred Jerry O’Malley (fig. 14).<sup>9</sup>

Diane and Jerry became a regular couple at all the parties where their style and grace established a pattern notable throughout the next 30 years. They were both comfortable with themselves and amiable with others at social gatherings.

Upon graduation from Hondo, Jerry was delighted to be recommended for single-engine jets at Bryan AFB, Texas, for his basic flight training.<sup>10</sup> He found it difficult to leave Diane behind at Hondo, but they continued to see each other during the six months Jerry was stationed at Bryan. Diane was able to be there to pin on his silver wings on graduation from basic training in August 1954 (fig. 15).



**Figure 14. Diane Muennink, secretary at the Hondo, Texas, Primary Flying Training School.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

At Bryan, Jerry first flew the T-28, a propeller trainer whose performance was not far from the fighter aircraft of World War II. About halfway through the course, he switched to the T-33, a single-engine jet. It was a two-seat version of the F-80, allowing both dual and solo flying. It was even closer to his concept of a fast-moving vector. In addition to the jet's agility in aerobatics, Jerry particularly enjoyed the ability to take it on cross-country trips.



**Figure 15. Diane pins the silver wings on 2d Lt Jerry O'Malley at Bryan AFB, Texas, in 1954.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

O'Malley's next step was to fly in a regular Air Force combat aircraft as a part of advanced pilot training. For Jerry, this meant Perrin AFB, in northeast Texas, where he became fully qualified in the F86-D, single-seat, all-weather, top-line fighter-

interceptor for US air defense. Before completing the program, Jerry was interviewed for possible assignment to the soon-to-be-established Air Force Academy. As much as he was enjoying the high-speed fighter experience he was gaining, he was excited about having a role in establishing the new academy. He felt proud to be among the select group of young officers being considered to become surrogate upperclassmen for the initial class of cadets. The really difficult part was the impact on the plans he and Diane were making for their marriage upon his graduation from Perrin in January 1955. The new Air Force Academy was highlighted in many news stories and had the personal support of Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Jerry was also impressed with the lineup of top officers who were charged with establishing this new institution so critical to the future of the Air Force.

Lt Gen Hubert R. Harmon was recalled to active duty on 8 November 1953, at the request of the president of the United States, to become special assistant to the chief of staff for air academy matters. He was a 1915 graduate of West Point who had a distinguished record of service before and throughout World War II.<sup>11</sup> He was appointed the first superintendent of the Air Force Academy on 14 August 1954 at its temporary home, Lowry AFB in Colorado.

He selected Brig Gen Robert Stillman as the first commandant of cadets in September.<sup>12</sup> Stillman was also a West Pointer from a much earlier era, the class of 1935. He commanded the 322d Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force in England until he was shot down on a B-26 low-level mission in 1943. Stillman remained a prisoner of war until the end of April 1945. He was chief of the Officers' Assignment Division at Air Force headquarters when he was named to lead the military training at the new Air Force Academy.<sup>13</sup>

In turn, Stillman recruited another military academy graduate and well-known fighter pilot, Col Benjamin Cassiday, as his deputy. Cassiday had flown 116 combat missions in the P-47 in World War II and had logged 43 combat missions in the F-9F during the Korean War as an exchange pilot on carrier duty with the US Navy.

Brigadier General Cassiday (a colonel in 1955, as deputy commandant and director of military training), who is now

retired in Honolulu, described the sequence of events in the following long, handwritten letter:

The Commandant, B/Gen Robert "Moose" Stillman, had seen the need to establish an "upper" class to guide, control, provide discipline, etc. for the incoming cadets, all freshmen with little sense of the military and its related life. He personally interviewed those officers nominated by each Command. One of the first was Jerome.

I add that one of the criteria for the assignment was that of being a bachelor, thus enabling all to live in the barracks and operate as the upperclassmen. The assignment was to be a three year [sic] tour at the Academy. Jerry was a trifle reluctant to volunteer as he was deeply committed to the Belle of his life and planned to marry her upon graduation from flight school. He obviously accepted the delay, much to our glee and happiness.

It became apparent to General Stillman and myself that the "no marriage" requirement was going to give us a problem, but we somewhat hoped for the better and decided that our apprehensions were baseless. Not long after, around eight in the evening, a knock upon my door; answered: There stood Jerry with a very attractive companion. Jerry uncomfortably said that he had to resign because he and his attractive date had felt that their life was to be together and in order to fulfill same, he would have to resign!

I asked him not to do a thing, and I would have an answer for him the next day. I think Jerry believed I was going to give him a lecture about, "The good of the Service; the importance to his career etc." but he agreed to hold off.

The next morning I met with Stillman to tell him our fears had not only been realized, but it had happened to our best officer. I then asked Stillman to let me work out a plan and schedule whereby all the Air Training Officers (the title for the upperclassmen) could spend time, evenings primarily out of the barracks and the cadet routine.

Within an hour, Col Bud Holderness had a schedule whereby each ATO (Air Training Officers) could spend four to five nights a week out of the routine. . . . at [sic] the same time we requested the marriage rule be lifted.

The boss approved the plan and the floodgates opened with Jerry and his beautiful friend leading the way. Life as an upperclassman improved immensely, which greatly improved morale.

I have often wondered since that day if it had not been Jerry who presented the dilemma whether or not we would have changed the policy.

The previously referred to "Attractive Companion" and "Beautiful Friend" was, of course, Diane.<sup>14</sup>

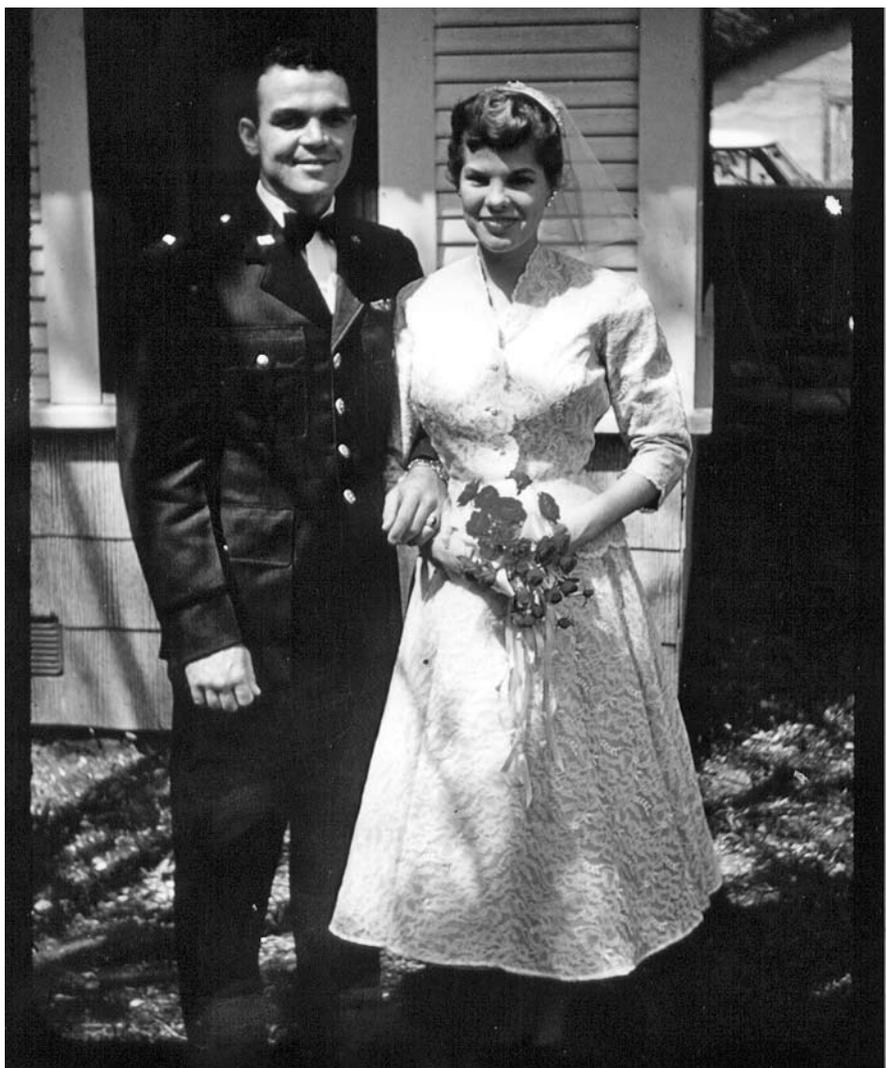
Jerry and Diane were married in St. John's Church in Hondo, Texas, on Saturday morning, 16 April 1955 (fig. 16). Figure 17 portrays a happily married couple.

Before his wedding, Jerry had reported to Lowry AFB in Denver, Colorado, where the nascent academy was to be founded. He was one of five lieutenants assigned to tackle the details of writing policies, procedures, and manuals for the full complement of 65 ATOs to arrive in May. For six weeks they trained this group of ATOs so that the full upper-class structure was ready for the arrival of the cadets in the summer of 1955. That group of five included O'Malley and George Garey from West Point; Kim Bassett and Dick Day from Annapolis; and Jack Doran from the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at Boston College.

Virtually all the senior officers all the way up the command chain to General Harmon, the superintendent, came from West Point; therefore, the default approach was generally to the West Point method of operation. O'Malley and Garey were assigned



**Figure 16. Jerry and Diane exchange vows.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)



**Figure 17. 1st Lt Jerome F. O'Malley and his new bride, Diane Muennink O'Malley.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

to most of the tasks that drew heavily on the West Point model. These included the training manual that specified drill and formations and the honor system.

Jerry had a special interest in the honor code, especially its supporting manual, and was a spokesman for following the

precedence of West Point. Despite the loss of friends in the West Point scandal of 1951, he believed in the principles of the code and the importance of integrity among the officer corps.

Jerry argued strongly to retain the last phrase of the honor code that made cadets caretakers of their own honor system: "We will not lie, or cheat, or steal, or tolerate among us those who do."<sup>15</sup> He worked closely with the cadet honor representatives as shown in the following excerpt from his evaluation by then-colonel Cassiday:

When the Air Force Academy Code of Honor was initiated, Lt. O'Malley was assigned as an air training advisor to the board of honor representatives. In this capacity his direct leadership, guidance, and examples set such standards that this code has become one of the primary assets of the United States Air Force Academy. Further, in connection with his work with the honor representatives, he was responsible for establishing many of the principles of the code, and has acted as a level-headed advisor on all cases involving honor.<sup>16</sup>

One part of the West Point system that they opted not to include was silencing. It was intended for use when a cadet was found not acceptable by the Cadet Honor Code Committee, yet refused to resign. This provision had only seen infrequent use over the years at West Point.<sup>17</sup>

During the training of the 65 new ATOs, they all lived in the barracks and followed a regular cadet class schedule that included physical education and athletics. The schedule not only honed the ideas they had documented but also gave them an understanding of what cadets would face when they reported in. The work was intense but satisfying as these young officers prepared themselves to provide the hands-on leadership the new Air Force cadets would require. Some interesting activities accompanied the training. Kim Bassett, who had been assigned to work on the cadet uniform, noted that he and Dick Day had to fly back to Washington, wearing the new cadet uniform, to obtain the approval of that outfit by Gen Nathan F. Twining, Air Force chief of staff.<sup>18</sup>

They had a big party on July 4th to mark the end of the preparation phase, and three days later the cadets arrived. The Air Force Academy's opening ceremony was the same day, so the ATOs had only a few hours to train those 290 civilians well enough to have a parade for the secretary of the Air Force!<sup>19</sup>

Kim Bassett recalls the hectic early days in the following e-mail notes: "We were with the cadets from reveille until taps. We then had our planning meetings for the next day. Then around 11 PM you could try to have a social life, but we had to be in uniform at 6 AM the next morning for reveille again. We ate all of our meals in the cadet mess hall and lived in our rooms in the barracks."<sup>20</sup>

Jerry was selected to be the initial cadet wing commander, with responsibility for performance and discipline of 65 ATOs and 290 cadets, despite his being outranked by many of the officers. He continued to get the highest possible rating from his supervisor, Colonel Cassiday, and his effectiveness report for that period carries the following endorsement by Brig Gen Robert M. Stillman, cadet commandant: "Lt. O'Malley is the finest of the group of select officers who were brought to the Academy to lead the first class of Air Force cadets. He has the wholehearted respect and admiration of all the cadets, his contemporaries, and superiors. I can think of no other young officer whom I consider his equal. He makes me proud of the Air Force."<sup>21</sup>

The primary job of these young officers was certainly training the cadets, but they were also expected to retain their flying skills. Lt Quincy Collins (also an ATO) was selected to be the chief of staff for O'Malley, and he describes in an interview in 1998 some of the challenges associated with retaining flying proficiency:

The group of young ATO officers at Lowry came from a variety of backgrounds intentionally structured to represent the broad command cultures of the Air Force. A small fleet of aircraft including T-33s and F-86Es were [sic] brought to Lowry to retain the flying proficiency of the ATOs and the academy staff. They initially experienced a very high accident rate. They lacked some of the structure and discipline of the standard command units such as those of the Tactical Air Command or Strategic Air Command (SAC). In addition, the F-86Es were taken from Korea and presented a challenge to the maintenance personnel to get them in first class flying condition. As a result there were a number of "bail-outs." There was also one accident where Jim Townsend crashed in the traffic pattern one half block from his home. Two other ATOs were lost in a T-33 accident when Bev Parrish and Jim Selby crashed in a bad weather approach to the airport at Charlotte, NC.<sup>22</sup>

Ten years later, Quincy Collins would be shot down in an F-105 attack over North Vietnam and then spend more than seven years as a prisoner of war. Subsequent to his academy tour, Collins served as aide-de-camp to Gen Frank Everest. He noted that General Everest was a favorite of General Twining, who was at that time chief of staff. The story was that Twining was lost at sea, and the normal search was unsuccessful. It was Everest who, while flying his own crew in a B-17, extended the search an additional day and was able to locate Twining at sea.<sup>23</sup>

Collins particularly enjoyed working for O'Malley when Jerry was the cadet wing commander. He noted that Jerry loved having a good time with people and probably was a little envious of Collins, who, as a bachelor, had the additional duty as the guy who set up the parties, directed the choir, and made the plans to attend football games.

It was doubtlessly difficult for Diane, who sorely missed her close-knit family in Texas. The quarters at Lowry were adequate, but Jerry was so tied up in the program at the academy along with athletic activities and flying that he was rarely at home.

Kim Bassett wrote, "I know that Diane had a hard time of it after she and Jerry married. She was not a skilled cook, and told Carole that she would sometimes fix dinner by cooking a hot dog on a fork over the gas burner on the stove. After the academic year started, and our schedule eased off because the cadets were in class a good part of the day, we saw more of Jerry and Diane. They invited us for their first Thanksgiving dinner [sic] the turkey was very undercooked; it was the bloodiest turkey I have ever eaten."<sup>24</sup>

Despite the trial of those early months, Diane was delighted with the birth of their daughter, Margaret Anne, or the more familiar Peggy Anne O'Malley, on 12 November 1955. It is obvious why Jerry and Diane decided they could not wait three years to be married; Diane was pregnant at the time they visited Colonel Cassiday. Peggy was born at Fitzsimmons Hospital in Denver on a Saturday after Jerry attended an academy football game in Pueblo, Colorado, on Friday. Jerry was as proud as a father could be and reinforced his already intense focus on building a successful career in light of his new responsibilities.

There was no question that Jerry was highly visible to all the cadets while he served as their wing commander. He was known to be fair but strict with high expectations for all his charges. One of the cadets in the first class, Don Brooks, described O'Malley as follows:

I first met Jerry during our freshman summer training at Lowry AFB, Colorado, in 1955. I recall him to be in every way an example of the military man we were all expected to become. He was very strict, never wavering from the rules. While other ATOs would occasionally relax and joke with us, Jerry never did. There was an air about him that inspired great respect and admiration, along with a degree of fear—not necessarily fear of the man and his “power” over us, but more the fear of disappointing him by not living up to his lofty standards.

During our first winter in Colorado, one (or more) of my classmates that had been corrected rather severely by Lieutenant O'Malley tramped out a cryptic message in the snow, “Jerome, Go Home!” He could be a tough one!

As time went by and we became upperclassmen in our own right, Jerry was one of the first to grant us a bit more respect and recognition, but he always maintained his position; never really fraternizing with us. One of my classmates of Czech descent, named Kozelka, became “Mr. O’Kozelka” on Saint Patty’s Day—only an O’Malley would do this!<sup>25</sup>

Many years later, when O'Malley was a four-star commander of the Pacific Air Forces, he spoke at the 25th reunion of the class of 1959 from the Air Force Academy. He recalled the history of how the West Point of the Air Force began, and in particular, he ironically cited to the former cadets the criteria for selecting the ATOs as those with a “sweet disposition and a natural bent for sympathy.”<sup>26</sup> In that same speech he recalled that he had been through new cadet training five times; his own plebe year at the military academy, as a first classman on Beast Barracks detail, and three classes at the Air Force Academy.

O'Malley was selected to attend Squadron Officer School (SOS) at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, in the class beginning in September 1956. It was a good time for Diane and baby Peggy to visit her parents in Texas while Jerry attended the three-month program. He continued to receive excellent performance evaluations, as detailed in the training report for that period.<sup>27</sup>

Charlie Emmons, who is now a retired Air Force officer in the Colorado Springs area, was also one of the ATOs assigned to the academy in the spring of 1956. In a letter dated February 1998, he recalled his warm appreciation when Jerry and Diane O'Malley were willing to travel to Richardton, North Dakota, to help celebrate his wedding (figs. 18 and 19). His fiancé, Sylvia, wanted a military wedding at the local Benedictine monastery called Assumption Abbey. Six ATOs took annual leave time and traveled to North Dakota at their own expense. Since the new academy had not yet acquired its own swords, the ATOs borrowed them from the Army at Fitzsimmons Hospital in Denver.

During the remainder of his tenure at the Air Force Academy until September of 1957, O'Malley served as squadron commander, while the wing commander position he had initiated was rotated among other air training officers. He was noted for coaching the wing basketball team as well as playing handball



**Figure 18. O'Malley raises his sword over Charlie and Sylvia Emmons at Assumption Abbey.** (Reprinted with permission from Col Charlie Emmons.)



**Figure 19. Diane serves at the wedding reception for Sylvia and Charlie Emmons, Richardton, North Dakota, 8 June 1957.** (Reprinted with permission from Col Charlie Emmons.)

and boxing at the squadron level. He also played first-string guard on the Lowry AFB basketball team.<sup>28</sup> In 1957 he led the Air Force Academy troops as they proudly marched in the second inaugural parade for President Dwight D. Eisenhower.<sup>29</sup>

The disadvantage of serving at the academy was his separation from the flying Air Force. Jerry was well aware that his contemporaries were building up their flying hours and combat skills out in the operational commands while he was focused on cadet training. Officers who had a background in fighter units wrote most of his evaluation reports, and their recommendations generally called for Jerry to go next to a fighter command. He weighed this against the fact that the SAC was the dominant organization within the Air Force at that time. They were not only getting preference on procuring new aircraft, the new six-jet B-47s, but also uniquely enjoyed the spot-

promotion system. Under its provisions, with the designation by the wing commander as a select crew (the top 10 percent of combat-ready crews), they could immediately assume the next rank. This was a special privilege that Gen Curtis E. LeMay, the storied SAC commander, had secured as he built up the nuclear and then thermonuclear capability of SAC. For Jerry, going to SAC meant giving up the opportunity to develop his single-engine fighter expertise. He also had his eye on the future. And, after studying the Air Force organization and structure at SOS, he decided to volunteer for SAC and the B-47 bomber force. In the summer of 1957, he attended the 14-week SOS at the close of his Air Force Academy tour. By September 1957 he had received orders to train in the B-47 aircraft, with follow-on reporting to duty station at Plattsburgh AFB in New York State.

#### Notes

1. Special Order no. 96, Department of the Air Force, 19 May 1953.
2. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
3. Kim Bassett to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 22 January 1998. Bassett was a classmate of O'Malley in pilot training class 1954-O and an air training officer at the Air Force Academy.
4. Ibid.
5. Training Report, 3340th Pilot Training Squadron, 25 March 1954.
6. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
7. Bassett, e-mail.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Training Report, 3530th Student Squadron, 17 August 1954.
11. *Biography of Lt Gen Hubert R. Harmon* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, n.d.).
12. *Biography of Lt Gen Robert M. Stillman* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, n.d.).
13. Ibid.
14. Brig Gen Ben Cassidy (USAF, Ret.) to Aloysius G. Casey, letter, 24 December 1997.
15. For a copy of the code, see <http://www.west-point.org/users/usma1983/40768/docs/taylor.html> (accessed 24 April 2007).
16. Officer Effectiveness Report, unpublished data, 2 January 1956.
17. Bassett, e-mail.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Officer Effectiveness Report.

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22. Col Quincy Collins (USAF, Ret.), interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 6 April 1998.
23. Ibid.
24. Bassett, e-mail.
25. Ibid.
26. Jerry O'Malley speech, 25th Reunion of the class of 1959, US Air Force Academy.
27. Training Report, Squadron Officer School, 10 September 1965 to 10 December 1956.
28. Officer Effectiveness Report, 10 June 1957.
29. Maj Gen Guy Hecker to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 19 December 1997. Hecker was also an air training officer at the academy.

## Chapter 7

### **The B-47 Bomber and the General's Aide**

O'Malley promotions: First Lieutenant, December 1954 Captain, 30 April 1958 Major, 15 July 1964	B-47 Bomber Pilot General Harris' aide: Eighth Air Force, February 1960, Westover AFB SAC, July 1962, Offutt AFB
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Great interest was evident near the end of World War II in exactly what was going on in the secret German laboratories, and it became even more exciting as the real scope of their science and technology programs unfolded. Gen Henry "Hap" Arnold was commanding general of the Army Air Forces at that time, and he foresaw the need to do a careful technical search of the facilities, products, and documents to make an accurate assessment.<sup>1</sup> He commissioned California Institute of Technology professor, Dr. Theodore von Kármán, to lead a team of experts to do the job. It was appropriately called Operation LUSTY, not really because of their "lust" to capture the materials but after **LU**ftwaffe **S**ecret **T**echnolog**Y**.<sup>2</sup> A struggle began to get to the materials quickly, as evidenced by the story of one location where the Navy exploitation team arrived at a site, boxed up all the materials, and labeled them *US Navy*. Two days later, the Army teams made it to the same location whereupon they crated the Navy boxes in larger crates and relabeled them *US Army*.<sup>3</sup> At any rate, there were some remarkable technologies besides the well-publicized V-2 rockets and jet fighters. Among the discoveries were rocket-propelled fighter planes, radio-controlled bombs, guided aircraft missiles, a jet-powered helicopter, and, to the point of our interest here, swept-back wings hung in high-speed wind tunnels.<sup>4</sup>

Boeing aerodynamicist George Schairer was in Germany on this fact-finding mission and observed, from a hidden aeronautics laboratory, the wing models and some wind-tunnel data the Germans had developed for swept-wing aircraft.<sup>5</sup> His report, combined with the recently completed high-speed wind tunnel in Seattle, enabled Boeing engineers to develop and design the XB-47 with its slender fuselage and swept-back wings. The design was a dramatic departure, using technology only previously seen in experimental aircraft. It featured a long, tubular fuselage with tandem cockpits and long, thin wings swept at 35 degrees. The wings drooped (negative dihedral) while on the ground from the weight of six engines. On each wing two engines were hung in a pod inboard, and a single engine hung further out. The wings flexed upward in flight, with the tips moving about 17 feet vertically as they supported the aircraft's weight. The landing gear was a tandem bicycle type under the forward and aft sections of the fuselage, with small outrigger wheels on the inboard engine pods to keep the aircraft upright while on the ground.

After two and one-half years of system studies and design refinements, the Air Force selected the Boeing design. One reason stated for favoring the B-47 over its competitors was that it was able to carry the Mk 28, which was a very large 1.1-megaton-yield atomic bomb (fig. 20).<sup>6</sup> A contract was awarded for just under \$10 million in July 1947 for two developmental airplanes to be built at plant no. 2, next to Boeing Field in Seattle. The B-47 development was the forerunner for large aircraft with all-jet propulsion and swept wings; it later became the standard for commercial jet planes.

In July 1948, in the newly established United States Air Force, General LeMay was selected to command the soon-to-be-formidable SAC, with headquarters at Offutt AFB in Nebraska.<sup>7</sup> He was dedicated to building an all-jet bomber force, manned and supported by professional Airmen dedicated to the preservation of the uneasy peace between the East and the West.<sup>8</sup> Notably, in November 1948 and doubtlessly under pressure from LeMay, the production contract was awarded for 51 B-47 aircraft. Ultimately, Boeing delivered more than 2,000 B-47s, including several different models, before the phaseout of this aircraft began in the mid-1960s as the B-52 took over the role. By June



**Figure 20. The SAC B-47 was the first swept-wing, all-jet bomber.** (Reprinted from <http://www.sacmuseum.org/collections/B-47.html> [accessed 25 April 2007].)

1953, the 306th Bomb Wing made the first operational deployment of the B-47 force from MacDill AFB in Florida to Fairford Air Base in England to be led by Col Michael N. W. McCoy.<sup>9</sup>

This unfolding story of the growing strength and importance of the SAC and the B-47 captured the imagination of Jerry O'Malley when it was time for him to go back to the operational Air Force from his tour at the academy. He reported to McConnell AFB in Wichita, Kansas, for a three-month course in combat crew training for the B-47. Diane and baby Peggy once again visited Texas while Jerry was in Kansas. Later they would join him at Plattsburgh AFB alongside Lake Champlain, in upstate New York.

The B-47 bomber crew consisted of a pilot, copilot, navigator, and three officers. This was also a departure from the much larger crews that included officers and enlisted personnel to man the multiple stations in World War II bomber aircraft. All three crew-member positions were in tandem with the navigator forward at a lower level and the two pilots in line, higher up, under the bubble canopy.

The B-47 was designed to implement different tactics in contrast to the B-17s, B-24s, and B-29s of World War II. No more mass raids of 1,000 or more bombers flying in daylight to attack and reattack targets, using fair-weather optical sighting

or repeatedly flying over the same terrain. With nuclear weapons, single bombers or small flights of them would attack targets by day or by night in good or bad weather. No more fighter escorts. Each bomber and its crew had to be able to attack its assigned target independently, anytime, and in any weather. The bombers had to fly long distances from their home bases or from forward-deployment bases that usually required aerial refueling. Accurate navigation to the desired target area and high accuracy in weapon delivery were essentials.<sup>10</sup>

Eventually, the Soviet Union developed accurate high-altitude ground-to-air missiles. In response, SAC changed to low-altitude penetration tactics, with bombers flying at low altitudes to the target area, and then, in some cases, performing acrobatic weapon delivery. This put a new set of requirements on bomber design, as discussed earlier, and on bomber crew performance. Each member of the three-man crew had a heavy workload.<sup>11</sup>

The aircraft commander—formerly called pilot—was responsible for the overall conduct of the mission and the basic flying of the aircraft. The pilot, with support from the other two crew members, was responsible for making critical go/no-go decisions and selecting alternatives when the situation demanded. He was also responsible for the basic handling of the airplane, although he could split execution with the copilot. With help from the copilot, he assured that fuel consumption, weight and balance, and navigation-aid use were maintained for a successful mission.<sup>12</sup>

The copilot's principal duties were to assist the pilot as described, including making sure he and the other two crew members executed the aircraft checklist. He assisted the navigator by making celestial observations upon demand. The copilot also operated both defensive systems. One of these, the tail-gun system, consisted of a target acquisition/tracking radar and twin 20 mm guns; the other consisted of radar-warning and -jamming equipment.<sup>13</sup>

There were no windows in the navigator position, but the pilot did have radar that looked out from just below the aircraft to 200 miles in front of the airplane. He also had a navigation system that automatically kept a current position computed by dead reckoning; that is, given a fix (location) obtained from the radar or other means, it tracked current position by projecting

the measured airspeed and direction from instruments with correction for wind effects. He also had a periscopic sextant that could be inserted into an overhead fitting to make celestial body observations. The measured angles could be converted to a calculated position known as a celestial fix. This was the principal means of tracking a position when flying over the large ocean areas. Although LORAN (long-range aid to navigation) was the primary navigation aid over the oceans for most aviators in that era, General LeMay did not allow its installation in his bomber force; he felt its use may be denied by enemy attack in wartime. LORAN stations that emitted the signals were in known locations and, thus, were vulnerable to being shut down by a determined attacker.

The navigator was responsible for navigating and controlling the aircraft heading on the final stages of a bombing run. This was accomplished by taking second station, which meant control of the autopilot heading being passed to the navigator's tracking handle as he zeroed in on the radar or an optical sight image of the target. All the practice bomb runs were independently scored by a radar bomb-scoring unit on the ground near the target city. The scores were forwarded to the bomb wing headquarters and also given to the crew over the radio shortly after the run in the form of a numeric code. The crew carried an additive or decoder, which, when added to the broadcast score, yielded the miss distance and direction of the estimated impact. This instant feedback and tracking of bomb scores by crew members in the wing headquarters heightened the intensity of the competition and helped keep the crew members' proficiency high. The ability to attack a variety of targets and achieve consistently accurate scores was a major factor in rating the crew members' performance.<sup>14</sup>

SAC recognized the crews' excellence in training performance through spot promotions. Both navigation consistency and weapon-delivery accuracy were the primary measurements. The navigator made the big difference with any crew in establishing who made (and held onto) spot promotions; thus, the navigator was eligible for recognition, either good or bad. In addition to combat-mission training efforts, SAC also maintained a significant fraction of its aircraft on alert, with crews and aircraft ready to go 24 hours a day. Thus, being on a SAC bomber

crew was challenging, exciting, and, for those crews who performed well, very rewarding.

As described above, the navigator was a busy man in the B-47, but the pilots truly had a formidable task to fly the airplane with some margin of safety. A critical part of the flight envelope involved the pilot's climbing to the optimum (most fuel efficient) altitude; the airspeed for low-speed stall was close to the speed at which the aircraft would enter high-speed buffet. It was called the "coffin corner" and was described in the following quote in an e-mail from retired colonel Richard H. Wood. In February 2000, Colonel Wood wrote:

In the early B-47s, the optimum altitude was just below the point where the low-speed stall curve and the high-speed buffet curve intersected. This was called "coffin corner" because a few knots of airspeed either way would put you in either a stall or a buffet. This was the best place to fly the plane, though. Installation of vortex generators (small devices embedded in the wing to direct airflow) helped by essentially raising the "coffin corner" about 4,000 feet above optimum altitude. Now you could get the navigator above the clouds where he could see the stars. I've done that and had the autopilot malfunction and pitch the nose up into a full-scale stall. I lost about 15,000 feet before I could get the plane flying and climbing again.

Another way to stall the B-47 was during air refueling. In those days, we refueled with KC-97s, which could just barely stay ahead of us. We flew with 20 degrees of flaps down and formatted [sic] (SAC's word for it) at stall speed plus 20 knots. As the tanker passed gas, he got lighter and we got heavier. If the tanker didn't accelerate and give us more airspeed, we stalled. That stall was easier to recover from because we were already down in thick air at 15,000 feet and had some flaps down.<sup>15</sup>

Two pilots were assigned to control the fuel storage and its consumption in such a way that the aircraft's center of gravity (CG) did not violate a fairly narrow range throughout the long flight missions. Other unique features related to takeoff and landing demanded careful attention and close timing. For example, the heavily loaded B-47 required rocket assist to take off safely, even with a two-mile-long runway, and the landing approach required two disposable parachutes to maintain safe airspeed and altitude. The smaller chute was deployed during the approach to restrain airspeed while keeping engine power up for possible go-around; the other was deployed at touchdown to help stop the aircraft roll. This occurred long before effective thrust

reversers were designed for jet engines. Pilots also had to manage the fuel among six tanks (eight if wing-mounted drop tanks were installed) and the six engines. They were required to become proficient at midair refueling, with the B-47 struggling to stay above stall speed as it accepted thousands of pounds of fuel from the much slower (KC-97) large, propeller-driven tanker used by the Air Force. For combat-ready status, the pilots were required to be proficient at flying this close-formation refueling sequence from either the front- or back-seat position. This scenario was not only demonstrated on routine training flights but also became critical on long, overwater missions where the on load was vital to mission success.<sup>16</sup>

The pilot was actually called the aircraft commander because he was responsible for the leadership and performance of his crew. He was also responsible for the operational effectiveness and safety of each flight mission. In general, SAC worked to preserve crew integrity; that is, assignments were controlled to keep trained crews together, and they were expected to fulfill the mandatory quarterly and semiannual training requirements with all three crew members flying together. Each crew was tested annually through firm criteria in flight, in the ground simulator, and on written exams. These standardization checks were administered by an elite group of seasoned crews pulled from the wing squadrons called the Standardization Board. At six-month intervals, the wing commander rated the combat-ready crews on their performance, and the top 10 percent were automatically spot promoted to the next higher rank. The nominal crew rank was captain or major; so, a spot promotion usually meant donning a major's gold or a lieutenant colonel's silver leaves. It was not unusual for crews to move on and off the magic top-10 list and thus have to place or remove their major or lieutenant colonel leaves as directed. Some wings actually scheduled falling leaves parties when the list was published as an ironic celebration of the event!<sup>17</sup>

Despite the focus on training methods and practice bomb runs, the crew also had to maintain proficiency with special weapons, as the thermonuclear weapons were called, since they were the principal armament for the B-47 force. Extremely rigid processes had to be followed to decode messages that controlled each step; from taking off with the weapons to the mis-

sion to be flown, and should the unthinkable happen, proceed beyond the positive control line to attack a preplanned target.<sup>18</sup> There is no question that the SAC bomber crews had to think long and hard about their assigned combat missions. In detailed study sessions they worked over the details of the mission, the tactics to be employed, and study of the specific target. It helped to focus on the mechanical details and commit much of it to memory before having to brief the wing commander on their readiness. However, each crew knew that real people lived in and around the assigned targets and that the effects of the weapons they carried were severe and indiscriminate. The doctrine of peace through deterrence required that the offensive threat of our forces must be enforceable to be creditable. They all knew the concept that we must, in fact, be ready to deliver a devastating attack to deter an aggressive Soviet Union.

When crews proceeded from combat-ready to lead-crew status and then to select crew, they built confidence in their ability to fly literally anywhere in the world and attack any assigned target successfully. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, no commercial airliners could fly at 30,000 feet and above; therefore, even in domestic flights over the United States, they were able to fly great circle routes from point to point without following prescribed airways. The intensity of training, combined with their dominance in that airspace and regular deployment to overseas locations, generated a certain amount of hubris among the B-47 flight crews. The spot-promotion system also contributed to their feelings of importance and exaggerated pride, since it was not available to other flying units in the Air Force. The system began with an argument centered on the nuclear delivery mission, but that rationale paled as fighter units were equipped with nuclear weapons. Ultimately, in the mid-1960s, Air Force leaders recognized the lack of fairness in such major air command preference and eliminated the spot-promotion system.

Jerry O'Malley came into this SAC environment with relative little flying experience; his assignment at the academy allowed only minimum-proficiency flying. In addition, he had no real multiengine experience in his flight records. He, therefore, was trained as a copilot at McConnell AFB in Wichita. Jerry soaked up the training syllabus and found that his natural flying ability easily matched the B-47's demands. Since Diane—already

pregnant with their second child—and Peggy were in Texas, he often took the evening meal at the home of good friends, Gene and Mary Procknal.

Gene and Jerry had a lot in common. Both were Catholics, both had been varsity athletes at West Point—Jerry in basketball and Gene in baseball—and both had served at the Air Force Academy. Gene reported into the B-47 copilot program at the same time, and at completion, Gene and Mary moved on to Pease AFB, New Hampshire, where he served in the 509th Bomb Wing. The O'Malleys kept in touch with the Procknals as they each enjoyed expanding their young families and the challenge of a military career. Unfortunately, about four years later Gene was involved in a fatal takeoff crash, just off the runway at Pease, when one of his outrigger engines failed on the takeoff roll. Gene had also become an aircraft commander and, sadly, his copilot and navigator were also killed. Gene's death left four young children fatherless. Significant effort had been invested in emergency procedures, aided by training in the simulator, but losing an outboard engine at such a critical point not only meant a loss of power but also major asymmetry of engine thrust, making it virtually an unrecoverable situation.

Before reporting into Plattsburgh AFB, Jerry and Diane were thrilled with the birth of their second child, Sharon, at Lackland AFB, Texas, on 6 April 1958.<sup>19</sup> They were delighted to once again get their family together in upstate New York. By their nature, Peggy always seemed to favor the delicate introspective personality of her mother, while Sharon inherited the outgoing attitude and personal drive of her father.<sup>20</sup>

Jerry was teamed up with Capt Charlie Rock as his aircraft commander. During that first year, Jerry also was promoted to captain, which was an advanced promotion based largely on the ratings he had received at the Air Force Academy. Rock seemed to have high regard for Jerry, but in his annual evaluation (September 1957–September 1958), he seemed detached, something that could signify a touch of envy. For example, he referred to Jerry as “this officer” and otherwise described his performance in stilted sentences.<sup>21</sup> This rating, although moderately good, is the lowest in O'Malley's official file. Apparently, the squadron commander, Lt Col Lee R. Senter, also felt Rock had produced a rating that was too low and accordingly raised

the scores for most categories in his endorsement. Their crew received some squadron and wing recognition for performance and also pulled several tours of duty on SAC alert as well as maintained their combat-ready status.<sup>22</sup> The alert duty was for a week-long period during which they lived in a facility next to the flight line and responded within minutes to the Klaxon call to start engines (or take off if it were a real emergency mission) on aircraft fully loaded with fuel and bombs.

One negative note on Rock's crew during the early checkout was its failure to pass a simulator check ride administered by then-lieutenant Harvey Taffet. In a 1998 e-mail, retired colonel Taffet described the uproar that resulted when the results upset the alert rotation roster. It was even raised to the wing commander, the future Lt Col Alvan C. Gillem, who supported the evaluation and the need for a recheck. Harvey noted that while others fumed about it, O'Malley took it in stride and never let it affect their associations in the following years.<sup>23</sup>

A far more serious incident was captured in the same annual evaluation by Captain Rock, as described above. He reported that "during a recent mission while flying at 425 knots true airspeed, in straight and level flight with autopilot on, the aircraft went into a steep dive reaching a speed of Mach 0.93. During this descent I was physically unable to bring the aircraft back to level flight alone. Captain O'Malley's assistance, procedures, and calmness during this emergency was outstanding."<sup>24</sup>

This incident was probably caused by letting the CG of the aircraft move too far forward beyond the recommended range from the setup used to feed fuel to the engines. The three main tanks were in line in the fuselage. The rule of thumb was to retain about a 3,000-pound margin in the aft main tank over that, in the forward and center main, to keep far away from this condition.<sup>25</sup> However, if the fuel pumps, valves, and manifold switches were set up to feed all six engines off the aft main tank, the CG could move into a dangerous forward condition. When the autopilot was no longer able to provide the up elevator required for level flight, such a dive could occur. At any rate, the speed quoted (in the dive) is higher than the Mach 0.88 limit in the technical order, and they were fortunate to pull it out albeit with enormous control forces. Jerry mentioned this

incident once to this author some time later without going into much detail, but he emphasized that he then became a true expert on fuel management.<sup>26</sup> This near-fatal dive must have left an indelible impression on O'Malley, as he clearly seemed in later assignments to develop the skills to understand and fly the most complex future aircraft systems in the Air Force.

Diane and Jerry were busy with their two young daughters over the next year, but they always found time to support squadron activities as was noted in Jerry's evaluation reports.<sup>27</sup> Jerry set about getting the maximum flying experience during that year, since total flying time was the principal SAC criterion for being considered to be upgraded to aircraft commander with his own crew. As he flew all his crew missions and filled in as practical when slots in the schedule came up, he was certainly appreciated by the squadron operations officer. He also was exposed to many other aircraft commanders, which helped spread his reputation for superior performance and excellent flying. By the end of that year his rating official, Captain Rock, had come around to believing that O'Malley was a talented officer with much potential.<sup>28</sup> Jerry also found time for basketball (fig. 21).



**Figure 21. Basketball remained an important recreation for Jerry while flying the B-47. He played guard at Plattsburgh AFB.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

Chuck Taylor was another young officer who was selected to serve at the Air Force Academy as an ATO along with O'Malley and Gene Procknal. Taylor had come into the Air Force as an aviation cadet. All three served in the B-47 force: O'Malley at Plattsburgh AFB, New York; Procknal at Pease AFB, New Hampshire; and Taylor at Homestead AFB, Florida. Taylor relayed the following story in a March 1998 interview:

I was serving a 21-day tour at Torrejon AFB in Spain some months later when I got a few days' break to relax before returning to SAC alert covering a combat sortie. I was sitting in a famous bar in downtown Madrid that was characterized by a balcony, which overlooked the stage. The balcony was accessible by stairs at each end, and I observed O'Malley ascending the right stairs while Procknal climbed the left stairs and I looked on incredulously as they virtually passed each other on the balcony. Finally, I shouted, "Don't you two A-Holes recognize each other?" The surprise reunion was marked by a lot of catching up, some great flying stories, and strong toasts.<sup>29</sup>

In 1959, O'Malley was reassigned to a crew led by Maj Jim Domke, which, although they retained their identification with the 529th Squadron, was assigned to the wing Standardization Board Division, which had the responsibility to administer flight and ground evaluations to other wing crews. At the end of that year, Domke was so impressed with O'Malley that he virtually firewalled his evaluation and forwarded it for special endorsement through the squadron wing and up to the air division for a general officer endorsement. Brig Gen Perry Hoisington not only signed off on it but also noted he saw O'Malley as a future wing commander and urged his advanced promotion to major.<sup>30</sup>

Jerry often had the opportunity to fly with the chief of the Standardization Division, Lawton Magee. He was a seasoned B-47 aircraft commander who enjoyed the reputation as the best B-47 pilot among the more than 120 pilots in the bomb wing. Somewhere along the line, Jerry actually became a member of Magee's crew, as is indicated below. They both worked for the wing commander, Colonel Gillem. Gillem was also a member of the long gray line from West Point, having followed the lead of his father who was an Army general officer. He had flown the famous British Spitfires and the American P-51 during World War II and was credited with destroying three enemy airplanes in aerial combat.<sup>31</sup> Besides his duty tours with SAC,

General Gillem had a long association with Air University at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, from which he retired as a lieutenant general in 1973. His many writings on leadership and integrity were often read and quoted by Jerry O'Malley over the years.

General Gillem provided the following information in his March 2000 letter.<sup>32</sup> "I recall Jerry and Diane well. He joined my wing (the 380th) at Plattsburgh, New York, in 1958, as a B-47 Captain Co-Pilot. The 380th was the largest wing in SAC (probably the largest in the USAF with almost 600 crew members). Jerry stood out—without being pushy about it—from the beginning. In addition to his crew duties, I used him repeatedly on special projects."<sup>33</sup>

General Gillem went on to say, "I remember Magee well. He was a Naval Academy grad and Jerry's aircraft commander on one of our 'select' crews. I never flew with a better pilot. Hunter Harris took over as vice-commander, Eighth Air Force; he came to Plattsburgh for B-47 orientation. Not being stupid, I put him with one of my best crews, i.e., Magee and O'Malley."<sup>34</sup>

The upshot of this decision by Colonel Gillem was that General Harris was greatly impressed with O'Malley. He let Gillem know that he intended to have O'Malley reassigned to the Eighth Air Force headquarters as his aide-de-camp.

Another view of how O'Malley came to be assigned to work for Hunter Harris was portrayed in the following quote in an e-mail from retired colonel Richard H. Wood of Snohomish, Washington. He revealed his feelings about the spot promotion program and offered other insights into how people were selected for key jobs in the Air Force when he wrote in February 2000:

Chief of Standardization and Evaluation, Major Lawton W. (Maggie) McGee [sic] needed a new copilot. He had evaluated Jerry on his check-out and knew a good pilot when he saw one. Jerry became Maggie's copilot and moved to the Stan/Eval office at wing headquarters. Now Maggie and I were good friends. We were actually quite close in age, rank and experience. He was really a junior Captain masquerading as a Major under SAC's spot promotion program. Although I was still a lieutenant, I had four years' practice at it and over 3,000 hours of flying experience. I was an Aircraft Commander with my own crew and I was in the process of upgrading to instructor pilot. I had visions of joining Maggie in the Stan/Eval business and maybe snagging one of those spot promo-

tions for myself. What follows is based largely on discussions with Maggie, usually over a cool one at the club.

General Hunter Harris was either commander or vice commander of Eighth Air Force at Westover AFB, Massachusetts; I forget which. He was new to SAC and knew nothing about the bombing business or his primary bomber, the B-47. He sent himself to Plattsburgh for a couple of weeks to get checked out in it.

The checkout crew, naturally, was Maggie's. They were the best we had. To hear Maggie tell it, checking General Harris out was not a lot of fun. He hadn't flown much of anything recently, and the B-47 was a real handful to fly. Worse, ours were the straight bomber models without all the back-seat goodies installed for the instructors in the training models. The training consisted of General Harris in the front seat, Maggie in the back-seat, and Jerry O'Malley standing in the narrow walkway and leaning over General Harris' left knee to make sure he didn't do anything seriously wrong. Among its other deficiencies, the back-seat pilot of a B-47 couldn't see what was happening in the front seat. The walkway where Jerry was standing was actually about three feet below the floor of the front pilot's seat. Jerry was probably around 5 feet 10 inches, and his chin must have been about level with General Harris' knee.

After five or six flights, Maggie declared General Harris qualified but subtly hinted that he ought to have an IP [instructor pilot] on board if he ever intended to fly it again. General Harris had already figured that out, as he had discovered how unforgiving the B-47 could be.

After the final debriefing, General Harris told Maggie that he wanted Maggie to be his aide-de-camp. Maggie thought that over for about ten seconds and told General Harris that he didn't really like that idea. If he quit his present job, he immediately reverted to his real rank of captain, and that would cost him a bunch of money. That would not make his wife happy, and she didn't even know General Harris.

General Harris saw his point and told Maggie that if his real rank ever caught up with his spot rank or he somehow became ineligible for a spot promotion, he [General Harris] would track him down and have him assigned as his aide.

"In the meantime," he said, "I'll take O'Malley. He'll make a good aide." That's how Jerry got into the aide business. I visited him once while I was passing through Offutt and got an insight into what aides did. I wouldn't last three days in that job, but Jerry could do anything.

After serving a few years as General Harris' aide, Jerry's career started going up like a rocket. With some help from General Harris, he got a series of choice and progressively better assignments and, as far as I know, he did well in all of them. His biggest problem was that his jobs

were running well ahead of his actual flying experience. He flew a lot to try and catch up, but with each promotion that got harder to do.

General Harris didn't forget Maggie McGee. When O'Malley left, he chased McGee down and made him his aide. General Harris may have had a few shortcomings, but [sic] inability to pick good aides wasn't one of them. It's remarkable how many general officers put in a tour as a general's aide at some point in their career.

By then, General Harris had gained his fourth star and was commander in chief of Pacific Air Forces at Hickam AFB, Hawaii. At the time, I was Director of Safety at Hickam, Maggie and I renewed our friendship over a cool one (or two) at the club. Jerry O'Malley's career was still headed straight up, and both of us were cheering him on from the sidelines.<sup>35</sup>

In the midst of the dramatic presidential campaign of 1960, Jerry and Diane moved with their two girls—four-year-old Peggy and two-year-old Sharon—to Westover AFB. At that point, he was 28 years old and confident he could make a contribution to the management of his beloved Air Force. He noted that both Ted Kennedy, who was working for his brother's election, and Elizabeth Taylor were born within days of his birth. He did not particularly admire either of these two celebrities, but he felt the world was moving on and he had not yet hit his stride. While his contemporaries were making headlines, it seemed that his destiny was out there but not yet in focus. He maintained a down-to-earth attitude toward all he served with, but he had a very strong ambition to test his ability to use the leadership skills he had studied for years. Going to work for the vice-commander of the Eighth Air Force, Lt Gen Hunter Harris, certainly intrigued him, but he had some small regrets that he had not had time to check out as an aircraft commander in the B-47 fully before he was assigned to this desk job.<sup>36</sup>

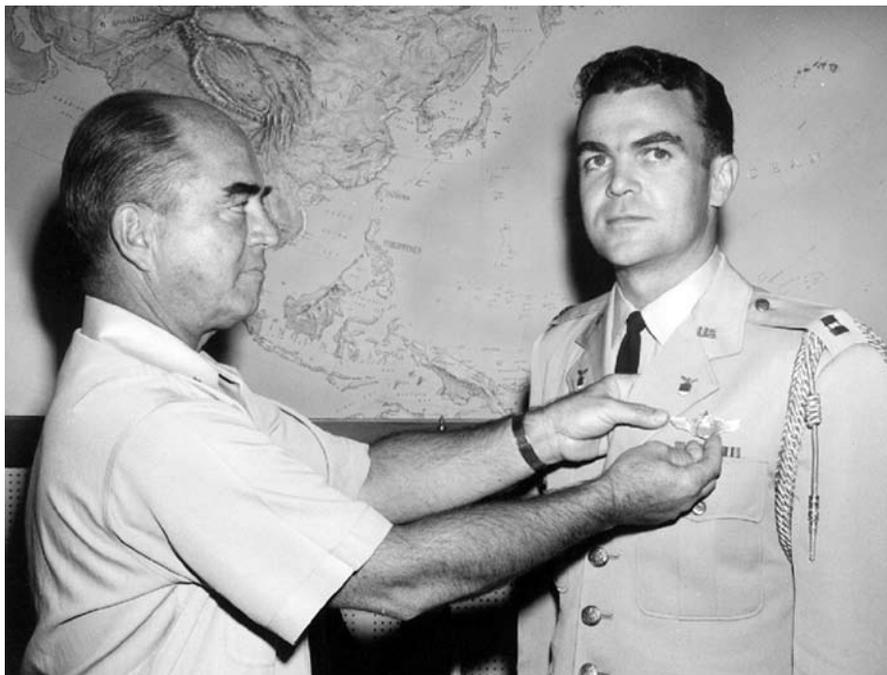
Hunter Harris was one of the crusty old general officers in the Air Force who had checked out early in flying military aircraft and won his stars in combat command positions in World War II. He had attended Virginia Military Institute but later graduated from West Point as a second lieutenant of infantry in June 1932. Harris was detailed to the Army Air Corps for training and won his pilot wings in October 1933. He served with many future Air Corps leaders at March Field in California, and also served in the Philippines before he was assigned to the War Department in Washington at the outbreak of the war. He

filled several combat command positions in B-17 units in Europe, and he logged 25 combat sorties and a few P-51 missions. Hunter held many key jobs as the Air Force was formed into a separate service. In 1958 he became vice-commander of the Eighth Air Force, Strategic Air Command, Westover AFB, Massachusetts.<sup>37</sup> This information is readily available from his official biography; it, of course, does not mention that late in his career he had a significant problem with alcohol addiction. It was not generally known at the time Jerry joined his staff, but it became obvious to many associates over the next few years. It was a concern for O'Malley for virtually all of his remaining life as will be recorded in this biography.

Jerry liked working at the command headquarters. Before long, it was apparent to General Harris that O'Malley was not overcome with the trappings of the headquarters and that he was capable of clear thinking and objective recommendations. Jerry treated each piece of correspondence as if he had to decide how it should be handled from the perspective of the Eighth Air Force commander. His brief, cogent notes to the general were not only appreciated by his boss but usually were the basis for the ultimate directed action. Senior officers from the field sensed that Captain O'Malley really understood what was going forward in the command, and many took the time to talk with him before seeing General Harris. Perhaps even more remarkable was the trust General Harris put in Jerry to write up endorsements for senior officers. Harris always read them carefully and often modified the text, but he relied upon O'Malley to create most of the word pictures on the effectiveness reports from that office.<sup>38</sup> Figure 22 shows O'Malley as he receives his senior pilot wings from General Harris.

From the early days under General LeMay, the SAC was noted as a well-managed military organization with firm discipline. Wing commanders were expected to use their resources to ensure that the crews were highly trained and the airplanes were ready for their assigned combat missions. This mandate was so clearly spelled out that every wing commander knew that his job depended upon meeting the command goals.

Measuring performance was a rigorous exercise. For example, each wing was subject to "no notice" orders to fly a "unit simulated combat mission." This meant that the crews and the air-



**Figure 22. Gen Hunter Harris pins senior pilot wings on his aide-de-camp, Capt Jerome F. O'Malley.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

craft were required to fly a complex mission planned to simulate the challenges of the emergency war order combat mission. The alert horns sounded (usually after midnight) all over the base, and the telephone alert system was exercised to order wing personnel to report for duty. Maintenance teams prepped the aircraft, beginning with the first block. The teams, including those loading weapons, were assembled to be timed in their operation, and the flight crews began checking in to receive their crew-mission folders and make their takeoff time.

The missions were conducted in accordance with the famous SAC security system. This author recalls one of these exercises at Pease AFB that came at 0200 (2 AM) on a Sunday. Since the crew lived on or close to the base, they showed up in a matter of minutes. Somehow, after picking up the crew mission folder, the tail number of the B-47 they were assigned to fly was changed from that given to the air police guarding the planes

on the flight line. Since the air police were also being checked for the thoroughness of their work, they had all three crew members spread-eagled in the snow while they checked out the error on their access sheet. Needless to say, we were happy to get that sortie on the roll for takeoff and to generate some heat in the cockpit. Every wing commander knew that substandard performance in any aspect of preparing the airplanes for the mission or crew execution of the preplanned mission would mean reassignment to a noncommand role and lost opportunity for promotion.

Equal emphasis was placed on periodic training throughout the year. SAC had specific requirements for pilots to accomplish in the aircraft simulator, including time devoted to emergency procedures, in-flight refueling, and a variety of aircraft-instrument flying conditions. There were also requirements for quarterly in-aircraft takeoff and landing events. The navigators had their own set of required celestial navigation legs, high- and low-altitude bomb runs, and training on their emergency war order mission. All of this was quantified and tracked in wing records and statistical summaries reported at all command levels right up to the commander in chief at Offutt AFB. Extensive use of numbers to quantify performance was called the Management Control System. The system was, at times, onerous for the working-level troops who generally understood the need for the constant attention to such detail in the war readiness of a global reach, thermonuclear force.

As often happens in a large, bureaucratic organization, good procedures can be extended and amplified from the reasonable to the ridiculous. This focus on quantification was expanded in the early 1960s to the point that crews had to keep track of each step they took within a training mission and make it a matter of record postflight. In the highly competitive atmosphere within the bomb wings, crews began reporting additional activities for each flight until it became obvious that some were taking credit for more items than they could possibly achieve (such as somehow being able to execute in-flight refueling in the middle of a celestial navigation leg or during a bomb run on a radar target).

In 1961, Gen Thomas S. Power was the commander in chief of SAC, and Lt Gen Hunter Harris became the Eighth Air Force

commander at Westover Field. O'Malley continued to serve as his aide-de-camp. Jerry became concerned about the probability that false reporting was not only creating an unrealistic picture of SAC training but was also placing the integrity of the crew force at stake. About this time Harris made an inspection trip to Pease AFB, where two B-47 wings—the 100th and the 509th—operated a total of 90 B-47 and 40 KC-97 tanker aircraft. While at Pease, O'Malley attended a dinner dance at the Officers' Club, where he joined in the social gathering of several young officers he already knew.

One he knew only by reputation was Bill Francke, who was a spot major on a select crew from the 100th Bomb Wing. Francke was famous for his remarkable performance in the SAC bombing competition in 1959. He had an unusually accurate celestial navigation leg, perfect timing on the rendezvous with the KC-97 for the midair refueling, and a shack on the *bomb run score*; the crew term for a bomb so close to the target that the radar score was “zero error”!

After the pleasantries of their introduction, O'Malley and Francke began to discuss the status of the training situation; one from the headquarters point of view, the other from an active-crew perspective. O'Malley offered that Eighth Air Force was not deceived by the excess activity being reported by 100th crews and that they were actively considering action to remedy the situation. Francke was taken aback by the implication that his crew was reporting falsely and rather clearly told the visitor that his crew did what it reported and that he did not accept indications from headquarters experts to the contrary.

The interplay was interesting; Francke resented the West Point–Air Force Academy guy casting doubt on the integrity of the record he had worked so hard to establish in the B-47 force. O'Malley, on the other hand, had noted the high level of activity that Francke's crew had reported and stated they were suspect!

Perhaps not well understood by O'Malley was that Francke had done enormous preparation for the bomb competition and was able to do four bomb runs against radar-scored targets, while the normal crew would complete only one. In view of the social setting, they both thought better of further confrontation and backed off.<sup>39</sup>

The real problem was the overemphasis on piling activities up within the training flights when the important objective was to complete each in a most professional manner. O'Malley ultimately understood this and argued to restore balance in the management system. It took a few years finally to convince the zealous staff at SAC headquarters that effective training was hindered, not helped, by overly aggressive scorekeeping.

During another visit to Pease, Jerry was able to have Diane accompany him (fig. 23). They renewed their friendship with many other young couples there, including this author and his wife, Patricia. When the Caseys and the O'Malleys got together, the men invariably talked about their Carbondale days and the people and events at Saint Rose High School. Diane and Patricia sometimes felt these conversations failed to recognize that they also had a life before the Air Force, but their husbands seemed to enjoy the old stories so much that they tolerated the discourse. Jerry liked to tell about Josephine Machelli, who was a little more sophisticated than most of their classmates, and, as Jerry said, was "very well built." Josephine left before graduation and moved to Florida, where she later married a football star named George Tynan. As it happened, George was an aircraft commander in the 100th Bomb Wing at Pease, and it was without any preplanning that the Caseys and O'Malleys went to the Officers' Club one evening and reunited with the Tynans. Neither Patricia nor Diane was prepared for meeting Josephine, who was dressed in a shocking low décolletage with a large rose centrally located at the cleavage! Despite their feelings that Josephine was a bit overdressed for the occasion, the women had to admit that Jerry was not off in his description.<sup>40</sup>

General Harris lauded O'Malley's planning for a visit by Cardinal Francis Joseph Spellman to bases in Greenland and Eighth Air Force stations in the northeast. He noted that he selected O'Malley among the more than 4,500 captains in the Eighth Air Force, and he had lived up to his expectations.<sup>41</sup> In a later report, Harris wrote, "Captain O'Malley is an outstanding young officer with unlimited potential within the Air Force. He is a logical thinker and takes positive and complete action on all projects. Captain O'Malley has demonstrated to me the qualities of leadership, which I feel, are seldom found in officers of his experience. Because of his ability as a manager and



**Figure 23. Aide-de-camp Capt Jerry O'Malley and his lovely wife Diane.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

administrator, I feel his future potential within the Air Force lies in the area of command, and his assignments should be directed toward this objective.”<sup>42</sup>

He went on to say that “Captain O’Malley should be promoted to the rank of major ahead of his contemporaries.”<sup>43</sup> Harris subsequently forwarded this report to General Power, then-commander of SAC, who endorsed it positively.

About this time, Jerry also shared with this author that he had come to understand that it was time to steer General Harris toward leaving parties they attended when the general began to stand on his head to impress the women! It was a sign of the problem he was having with alcohol, which later showed up in more serious ways.<sup>44</sup>

By the summer of 1962, Al Casey had been selected to attend the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright Patterson AFB in Ohio, and O’Malley was alerted that General Harris was to go to SAC headquarters at Omaha as the vice-commander. He expected to have O’Malley go with him as his aide. They had the opportunity to visit at Casey’s summer cabin at Lake Wallenpaupack in Pennsylvania, not far from the Lackawanna Valley, where they grew up. Soon after arrival, Jerry sat in the passenger side of Casey’s station wagon with Patrick Casey (the co-author) on his lap as they drove to the dock on the lake. Patrick was two years old and was fascinated with the small fishing boat that he had been able to ride in that summer. He was also talking up a storm as the wide world was opening up for him.

Patrick’s mom, Patricia, sat in the middle as Jerry was in the midst of one of his own intense stories, telling Al some graphic details when they came in sight of the dock. Patrick interrupted with “see the boat!” Jerry continued without recognizing Patrick’s observation, so Patrick twice more exclaimed, “*See the boat!*” By then Jerry could no longer ignore him and said, “Yes, *I see the [expletive deleted] boat!*” Patricia chided Jerry that if her son grew up with a complex she would blame him!

In truth, Jerry greatly enjoyed every aspect of rearing children, and his fond hopes for a boy to complement his two lovely girls was satisfied when James Francis O’Malley was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on 19 November 1963.

A knowledgeable officer who served as director of intelligence at the Eighth Air Force when Hunter Harris and O’Malley were

there was Rockly Triantafellu. In discussions this author had with O'Malley, he often talked about Triantafellu as an example of an officer who made general officer, despite being a navigator instead of pilot in the Air Force. Jerry claimed that Rockly never paid too much attention to the opportunities lost to him because of not being a pilot but rather focused on doing an excellent job in the area to which he was assigned.<sup>45</sup> Triantafellu began his career in 1937 as a member of the Florida National Guard. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in December 1942 after completing the aviation cadet program for Army Air Corps navigators. On his fifth mission in a B-24 attack on Ploesti, Rumania, his crew crash-landed in Turkey. All the other survivors were interned, but Rockly escaped and returned to England and flew 20 more missions to complete his 25-mission tour. Later he served at Mather AFB in California, where he supervised the curriculum used to train B-47 crew members.<sup>46</sup> Eventually, he was assistant chief of staff for intelligence on the Air Staff.

Retired major general Rockly Triantafellu provided another insight on the years O'Malley served under Harris in an e-mail of 21 December 1997.

On Jerry O'Malley—in some 32 yrs of military never met a more intelligent, generous, personable man in subordinate or command positions. His professional flying ability was top notch and marked him as a leader in the profession.

He had a straightforward manner in dealing with subordinates, peers and superiors—he listened, people trusted him. He was loyal and protective of unfortunates to a fault; he never gave up on a man in trouble.

In one case he tried and tried to help a senior Commander in a medically unrecoverable alcoholic condition to a point of jeopardizing his own career, His sound judgments in advising and acting for the Commander were critical in maintaining the visibility of Command presence and authority during many of the crises of the cold war and the war in Vietnam.

Hope foregoing will be of some use in telling the O'Malley story.<sup>47</sup>

Another retired Air Force colonel, Bill Mathay, provided the following anecdotes that provided some insight into O'Malley's job and social activities while he served the SAC vice-commander.

Bill had been selected by Lieutenant General Harris to serve on his aircraft's assigned crew, but Bill had to check out in the KC-135. When his checkout was complete, Bill began to wonder if the assignment was still valid, since he was assigned to normal squadron duty. After a short time, Capt O'Malley called him and, having determined the Stan board check was complete, he advised Bill to report to the general's crew the following day. This was Bill's first contact with O'Malley. The squadron commander, who was a colonel, called Bill in to inform him that he was to remain in the squadron. While Bill was there, Jerry called the colonel and introduced himself as the general's aide. Jerry firmly informed the squadron commander that Bill was to report to the general's crew and the paperwork was on the way. Jerry tactfully tried to set aside the continued objections but had to finally offer the colonel the opportunity to take it to Harris before he acquiesced. Bill was impressed with this captain's ability to get things done.<sup>48</sup>

When both Jerry and Bill lived at Papillion, Nebraska, Bill was a member of the Junior Chamber of Commerce (JC). They had a JC basketball team and were playing the local fire department. Jerry came out to a game, while Diane stayed home with their children. Things did not go well in the first half, as the fire department had a tall center who controlled the game.

At the half, Bill talked things over with Jerry. He knew Jerry had played basketball for West Point; therefore, Bill suggested that if Jerry would join the JCs, he could help out. Jerry signed up as a JC member and rushed home to get his athletic bag. He was ready to play for the second half, and, with his set shots and hard drives, the JCs managed to win by one point. The loser had to buy the keg of beer; so, the JCs and the firemen enjoyed the brew postgame.

Often, Air Force people would come to O'Malley with a complaint that they were not given a fair annual rating. For one reason or another, they felt that the rating official had treated them unfairly, and they thought Jerry could go to General Harris and demand that the rating be revised. Jerry would not take these matters to Harris, but he did look into each case to assess if there was some evidence that the rating official had overlooked something or perhaps did not clearly understand the system, and Jerry would discuss it with the rating official. Not all such problems were eliminated, but Jerry was able to resolve most to the satisfaction of all parties.

Bill, Jerry, and a neighbor, Don Ryan, all lived in the same area in the small town of Papillion. Jerry had a hard time finding a house he could afford and still provide a suitable residence for his growing family. Thus, he was glad to get some help from the builder with whom both Bill Mathay and Don Ryan had dealt in renting their homes. One evening, Don Ryan and Bill Mathay came by to get Jerry to go to a local bar for beer. Getting no answer, they came in the screen door and found Jerry lying on the floor with his charge for the evening, James Francis O'Malley, captured between his legs. Jerry was fast asleep, but the baby was watching the television! Nevertheless, by July 1964, Jerry had been selected for promotion to major well ahead of his contemporaries (fig. 24).



**Figure 24.** Lt Gen Hunter Harris pins major leaves on his aide-de-camp, Jerry O'Malley. (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

The following story indicates the imperial manner of some of the general officers who grew up in the heady days of World War II and continued to assume they could operate outside of regulations as a matter of their own judgment. In addition, it marks another moment when O'Malley had to consider how far he could go in protecting his boss and yet preserve his own integrity. It is relayed here exactly as provided by a retired general officer in a 1997 e-mail, but I shall leave the author nameless.

In the summer of 1964, I was selected to be an officer aide-de-camp for the Vice Commander of 8th [sic] Air Force at Westover AFB, Mass. I went to work for Major General A. J. Russell, a ramrod, straight arrow fellow if there ever was one! General Nazzarro was the 8th Commander at that time, and his officer aide was Major Russ McCarthy. A few weeks after I arrived, I was invited to get my first orientation flight in the T-39. The occasion was a night flight from Westover to Offutt and back to Westover.

Russ McCarthy was the primary Instructor Pilot, another pilot was going and I was the third pilot. We were leaving around 6 PM and would return about Midnight.

What I didn't know was that we were carrying a senior secretary from the 8th [sic] Air Force out to Offutt to "interview" for a job there. The interviewer was General Hunter Harris, who was then the Vice Commander-in-Chief of SAC (and was former Commander at 8th [sic] Air Force). The whole thing had been set up between Russ McCarthy and Hunter Harris's aide—who turned out to be Major Jerry O'Malley.

The simplest way to describe the whole affair was that it was less than an approvable flight. At any rate, the secretary was secreted on the airplane at Westover (I am ashamed to admit that I was too naive to even know she was not authorized to be on the flight).

We went to Offutt and landed without incident. The secretary was secreted off the airplane and went to her "interview". So far, so good. Then our luck turned sour—we discovered that one of our electrical generators had failed and would have to be replaced before we could take off for the return to Westover. It turned out that these generators had a history of failing, hence were in short supply. The only way we were going to get a replacement was to cannibalize one from an Offutt T-39. That required the approval of the Colonel, Deputy Commander for Maintenance, at the Offutt Wing. He was not interested in doing that. In fact, he came down to Base Ops and there was a healthy row between him and Russ McCarthy, which ended in a draw. Russ didn't want to draw any more attention to us than had already happened, and the Colonel was getting quite suspicious that two General's aides were up to no good.

Enter Jerry O'Malley, who tactfully explained to the Colonel that all of us were on a special mission directed by the Vice Commander-in-Chief of SAC; that we could not disclose it, but that it was urgent to the success of the mission that we get our airplane fixed and return to Westover that evening. The Colonel skeptically let us have the generator. A couple hours later, the secretary was secreted back on the airplane and we returned to Westover with no further problems. As a young captain, I was truly impressed with the "dangers" inherent in being an aide. Even more so, I was impressed with Major O'Malley and the cool convincing way he got all of us out of what could have been an incident of national embarrassment.

I have always remembered this incident and marveled at the things some of our old warlords did and got away with. Certainly could not have happened in our environment, could it? I guess we were just wimpier fellows—or we had a lot more sense. Hope this is useful data. My own conclusion was that Hunter Harris must have been a [expletive deleted] general to try and keep out of jail.

Major O'Malley managed to do that on this occasion and I would bet there were many more. What a challenge!<sup>49</sup>

There was a serious incident regarding General Harris and his use of alcohol on a trip to Japan after O'Malley left his service. Departing Yokota, Japan, the general showed up in poor condition due to excessive drinking. He wanted to make the takeoff, but, fortunately, the instructor pilot on the flight dissuaded him and got him to his cabin. On takeoff roll, the aircraft lost all electrical power, and the takeoff had to be aborted at the last moment. Needless to say, General Harris was not happy with the ensuing extended delay, but it was clear to all the crew members the IP had made the right call.<sup>50</sup>

Retired Air Force general Russell E. Dougherty had this to say about General Harris in a telecom in March 1998: "He noted that supporting Harris was always difficult since he was the most irascible and demanding of the earlier breed of WWII [World War II] generals. The saying was: 'The only thing that makes Hunter Harris tolerable is O'Malley.'"<sup>51</sup>

Jerry O'Malley's final effectiveness report from General Harris again recognized his abilities and noted that although assigned as an aide, he actually operated as an executive officer managing many key problems.<sup>52</sup> Despite the difficulties of serving under Harris, it did prove to be a rewarding experience for Jerry in

terms of getting a broad view of major air command operations and having strong recommendations for future assignments.

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## Chapter 8

### **The Blackbird SR-71**

Maj Jerome F. O'Malley	August 1964–July 1965 Air Command and Staff College Maxwell AFB, AL
Promoted to lieutenant colonel 20 February 1967	July 1965–Aug 1969 Aircraft commander 4201st Squadron 1st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (Later the 9th SRW)

In August 1964, four years after he was an aide-de-camp to General Harris, Jerry was more than ready to get back to the real Air Force made up of flights, squadrons, and wings. He was grateful for the support and recognition the general had invested in his career, but he knew that it was time to make his mark outside of the shadow of the command section. His top-level evaluation reports and advanced promotion to major placed him on the select list to attend Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. This not only filled a square in the command officer development process but also provided insight into the latest thinking in the Air Force. From this school, his next assignment would be easier to define, since the school was a virtual recruiting ground for the major air commands to find middle-level officers who might become leaders of the future.

Jerry thrived in the competitive environment of the ACSC. He loved the challenge of argument and presentation that formed the basis of the program. The emphasis on competitive sports activity played to his strength. He also signed up for the parallel course offered by George Washington University so he could leave not only as a distinguished graduate from the Air Force curriculum but also could receive a master's degree in Business Administration for his academic work.<sup>1</sup> In March 1965, on St. Patrick's Day, Diane gave birth to their fourth child, John

O'Malley. Their growing young family, now consisting of two girls and two boys, was further inspiration for Jerry to work hard to realize the full potential of his Air Force career.

During his time at ACSC, Jerry began to think about his next assignment. He knew his career demanded more cockpit experience, but what kind of cockpit? Having been at SAC Headquarters during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, Jerry O'Malley was aware of the importance of aerial reconnaissance. He knew the history of U-2 operations, which had provided the bulk of intelligence information for SAC about the Soviet Union before the celebrated shoot down of Francis Gary Powers on May Day 1960. Even more dramatic was the flight that proved the Soviets had placed ballistic missiles within reach of many American cities. That single U-2 flight by Maj Steve Heyser over Cuba on 14 October 1962 set off a series of events that literally changed the history of the modern world.<sup>2</sup> That another U-2 was shot down while flying over Cuba less than two weeks later and the story of Powers' shoot down underscored the need for a more survivable reconnaissance aircraft. Jerry was also aware of the highly classified planned follow-on program to the U-2. Fortified with this background information and supported by several senior officers he had come to know at SAC Headquarters, Jerry applied for and was selected for the SR-71 program.

In July 1959, long before the Powers incident, Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower had approved funding for a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) project called Gusto. Its purpose was to establish the requirements for the next-generation reconnaissance aircraft by establishing the relationship between speed, altitude, and radar signature that would allow effective reconnaissance over enemy territory with acceptable survivability.<sup>3</sup> Originally, both Lockheed and Convair participated in the refinement studies, but, in January 1960, the CIA had selected the Lockheed team led by Kelly Johnson to manufacture a dozen aircraft of the design that had been named the A-12.<sup>4</sup> By then, the highly classified program name had become Oxcart. Oxcart included the work to upgrade the secret site in the Nevada desert that had been used earlier by the U-2. It would carry out the development and test program for the A-12.<sup>5</sup>

Oxcart proceeded with a rather effective veil of secrecy throughout its early development phase and into its active

flight-test period. When flight testing began out of the secret base in Nevada, it required the cooperation of CIA, Department of Defense, and Federal Aviation Administration officials to keep the activity secret. However, in late 1963, the secret became public, as an A-12 had crashed in Utah, and two of them had made emergency landings at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.<sup>6</sup> Several of the technical magazines had gained some information and were pushing to get the full story. One week after the assassination of Pres. John F. Kennedy, Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson convened a meeting to decide when and how to announce the existence of this covert program. He decided to retain the current security at the time, but, in early 1964, when Republican presidential candidate Barry M. Goldwater accused Democrats of failing to develop new aircraft, President Johnson announced the existence of the A-12 program and noted that it had achieved sustained flight at more than 2,000 miles per hour and above 70,000 feet. He mentioned testing at Edwards AFB, California, to examine the applicability of the technology to long-range interceptor fighters and the applicability to supersonic transport technology.<sup>7</sup> The Oxcart program being, readied for reconnaissance operations within the CIA, was left in the black.

In May 1964, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara cancelled the B-70 program, which was a new, long-range supersonic bomber under development in the Air Force. As candidate Goldwater continued to criticize the track record on airpower issues, President Johnson announced on 25 July 1964 that a new Strategic Air Command program was under way to deliver the SR-71, with a speed of more than three times the speed of sound and capable of operating for long ranges at over 80,000 feet altitude. Before that announcement, the SR-71 had been known as the RS-71, which stood for reconnaissance strike, but Johnson transposed the letters to SR-71 to stand for strategic reconnaissance. Some thought that the president simply made an error and tons of paperwork had to be changed rather than make him look bad. More than likely, Johnson knew exactly what he was saying since McNamara was resisting all attempts to build a strike version of the aircraft that had been proposed as the B-12.<sup>8</sup>

At that point, there were two programs under way, based on the same technology—the covert Oxcart program being run by

the CIA and the overt Air Force program called Senior Crown. Although the aircraft were similar, the CIA version was a single-seat, while the Air Force version was designed for a two-man crew. The early experience of the CIA with the A-12 indicated that the pilot workload was heavy, even without the tasks associated with operating complex sensors to collect intelligence data.<sup>9</sup> By 1966 pressures in the budget forced consideration of alternatives. In December 1966 the decision was made to terminate the Oxcart fleet in January 1968 and assign future missions to the SR-71 fleet managed by the Air Force.<sup>10</sup> As it worked out, the last CIA A-12 operational sortie was flown on 8 May 1968 over North Korea subsequent, but pursuant, to the North Korean capture of the USS *Pueblo* in January 1968.<sup>11</sup> By then the Air Force SR-71 program had been initiated with the first operational flight accomplished by pilot, Lt Col Jerry O'Malley, and systems operator, Ed Payne, on 21 March 1968.<sup>12</sup> The story of that flight continues later, but first a description of the SR-71 and how O'Malley managed to be in that cockpit needs to be told.

One cannot view the SR-71 without being struck by feelings of wonder and mystery (fig. 25). It appears to be some combination of a spaceship and a large fighter aircraft. The ominous black paint covering the surface added to the unusual effect. When the SR-71 later deployed to Kadena AFB, on the island of Okinawa, the local natives (Japanese Ryukyuan islanders) named it Habu after a dark, poisonous, pit viper snake indigenous to the Ryukyu Island chain. Insiders in the Senior Crown program favored that name over the less dramatic Blackbird, and its use became a symbol for one who understood more than the publicly released information.<sup>13</sup>

This awesome aircraft had many strange features, which were kept under extremely tight security wraps for many years but now can be viewed at several flight museums. The long slender fuselage, the aft body delta wings, each holding a large engine nacelle; the sharp spikes protruding from each nacelle; the "all moving" vertical fins canted inward 15 degrees; the wide, thin chine (a boat-like hull form) extending along the sides of the long fuselage forebody; and the ominous black paint suggest a disciplined dedication to certain flight objectives. The SR-71 is a no compromise air vehicle designed for a



**Figure 25. Head-on view of the Blackbird SR-71, also known as Habu.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

unique flight regime in an operational aircraft. This singular accomplishment was done largely through the determination of Kelly Johnson to deliver the fastest, highest-flying, air-breathing machine in the world. He was ably assisted by Ben Rich, the chief thermodynamicist and the guy who had to contend with the heating effects of flying three times the speed of sound.<sup>14</sup>

The structure was 93 percent titanium with the remaining 7 percent Teflon-like high temperature composite radar-absorbing materials, often called RAM. The black paint was used mainly to enhance radiation cooling at high altitudes, but it also contained tiny iron balls to help dissipate electromagnetic radiation.

The propulsion was provided by two Pratt and Whitney J-58s (JT11 D-20, later commercial name), high bypass ratio, after-burning engines with a moving inlet spike to regulate mass airflow rate and control location of the inlet shock wave. With thrust in excess of 30,000 pounds, one of these engines delivered more than the combined thrust of all six engines on the B-47. The J-58 used a special fuel, JP7, which reduced the

signature of the afterburner plume and also reduced the risk of flash fires. It was an expensive formulation and required special provisions in the KC-135 tanker fleet to handle this fuel for midair refueling operations. This fuel was so flame-resistant that it required a special chemical ignition system that injected triethyl borane pyrophoric fluid in lieu of the normal jet engine igniters.

The environmental control system distributed air to various subsystems, maintained temperature control, and pressurized the cockpit to the equivalent of 25,000 feet altitude. Although the crew could bear this condition by using 100 percent oxygen, they always wore full space suits for loss of pressurization or to bail out at extreme altitudes.<sup>15</sup>

A fully automatic Astro Inertial Navigation System provided precise control of the flight path throughout the mission. This system automated the steps required to achieve a position fix by celestial observations. Three celestial bodies were scanned constantly in both day and night conditions. The computer made the necessary corrections, and the information refined the inertial position with constant updates. In that era, long before the satellite-based global positioning system in use today, the SR-71 system maintained its position within a few hundred feet despite traveling at more than 30 miles a minute.<sup>16</sup>

Many versions of the mission sensors were installed in the SR-71 over its operational lifetime, but the primary mission collection, or take, included optical photos and radar data. In general, the SR-71 was too fast to collect electronic information (details about hostile tracking radar and other data). Often it triggered electronic response, but other systems usually were used to record that data, since the SR-71 quickly moved out of the range of transmitting antennas.<sup>17</sup> Highly classified defensive electronic systems were installed to cope with the threat of enemy search radars or the terminal lock-ons that are used to direct intercepting missile systems.<sup>18</sup>

Many more subsystems were installed in the SR-71, as reviewed in Paul F. Crickmore, *Lockheed SR-71, The Secret Mission Exposed*.<sup>19</sup> He provided much technical detail on the Blackbird and its derivatives. For our purposes here, note that virtually all the equipment on board had to have special design features to respond to aerodynamic heating, high-altitude pressure

effects, and the stealth mode that defined the SR-71. This capability made the air vehicle expensive and difficult to maintain. It was never economical to support the SR-71 with the standard Air Force logistics and supply approaches used for other aircraft. The solution was to contract with Lockheed and key equipment suppliers to provide the support for this system.

In June 1965 the O'Malley family moved to Beale AFB, California. At that time, the family consisted of 10-year-old Peggy, 7-year-old Sharon, 2-year-old Jimmy, baby John, Diane, and Jerry (fig. 26). They were happy to return to an operational Air Force environment with the excitement of an entirely new program at this modern Air Force base in northern California.

Once again, Jerry was entering a competitive environment with aviators who had been selected for exceptional skill and experience to establish an important capability for the nation. The commander of SAC, Gen Joseph J. Nazzaro, instructed his director of personnel to assign the best resources to man the new system. The supersonic B-58 program was a logical source



**Figure 26. Diane and Jerry with their fast-growing young family: Front left to right; Diane (holding) John, Jimmy, Peggy; back row Jerry (holding) Sharon.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

for talent as were the U-2, B-47, and B-52 crew members who had distinguished themselves. Two of the selectees came from other than SAC operational crew backgrounds: O'Malley had been a general's aide, and Bill Campbell had come from the Air Force Test Pilot School.<sup>20</sup>

The newly designated SR-71 wing commander, Col Doug Nelson, was able to arrange for eight T-38, small, agile, white jet-training aircraft to maintain overall flying proficiency for the SR-71 crews and provide chase aircraft functions as the new crews checked out their Blackbirds. Because of the difference in size, one of the wives referred to the two aircraft flying over the base as the horse and the horsefly.

Maj Gen Pat Halloran retired in 1983 with more than 8,000 hours of flying time: 1,600 in the U-2 and over 600 in the SR-71. In 1998, when the authors contacted him, he was still building his own antique midget racing aircraft and placing it in competition in flying events. General Halloran later commanded the SR-71 wing, but, in 1966, he was the pilot on crew no. 07. He described the early stages of the activation of the SR-71 wing in the following excerpt from his 1998 e-mail.

The next time I encountered Jerry was when we all reported in to Beale AFB to begin the SR-71 program. As the crews were formed I had crew no. 6 and Jerry had crew no. 9. The first four crew numbers went to the B-58 entrants and no. 5 was Bill Campbell. I was the first of the U-2 guys to go on crew. We all went through ground school together and began our flight checkouts as soon as aircraft began to arrive. It was the beginning of an incredible bond between crewmembers [sic] like I have never experienced in any other program. We did a great amount of socializing, and the Officer's Club was the scene of nightly gatherings and grand weekly parties as this superb group of officers began to jell. Everyone was so excited about being in such a great program. The class of aviator involved was simply outstanding. Jerry was probably near the bottom of the experience level of those in the initial program, and there were some early rumbles as to how he had been selected. Almost everyone else was coming from highly qualified crew positions, primarily from the U-2 and B-58. His natural aviator skills soon surfaced, and he established himself as one of our most reliable and skillful pilots. Jerry had spent a lot of time working with, and for, General Officers in SAC, and if some of them provided the push for him to get into the program, then it is a credit to them for recognizing early on what a superb officer and aviator Jerry was. There was certainly no question on the minds of anyone at Beale as to his right to be there after observing him for a very short time. Of course Jerry could have been the worst pilot in the Air

Force and he would have still been a welcome member because of Diane. She was absolutely the most beautiful, charming, and respected lady on the block. Together, they soon formed the social center of our wing. No gathering was complete unless the O'Malley's were there. But, of course, their acceptance was far more than social skills. . . . Jerry was a very, very intelligent guy with a masterful talent for managing people. Everyone would fall on their spear for Jerry O'Malley.<sup>21</sup>

Pat Halloran was a bachelor, and it is obvious in his message that he appreciated the grace and charm Diane O'Malley brought to their social gatherings.

As the unit formed and before the SR-71 aircraft were delivered, Jerry quickly checked out in the T-38 and became one of the first to achieve T-38 instructor status. His first evaluation report claims that "he enjoys the position of the most capable instructor in the wing."<sup>22</sup> This is more than faint praise among that group of aviators, and the evaluator was the guy who should know; he was the squadron operations officer. Once the actual Blackbirds became available, Jerry continued to receive the highest possible ratings for his ability to rapidly check out in the SR-71; he also received recognition for his knowledge and skill backing up the squadron operations officer.<sup>23</sup>

If one thinks that flying the B-47 is akin to playing professional baseball, then the job of flying the SR-71 is in the major leagues! For the normal automobile driver, an apt analogy may be that the SR-71 was to normal combat aircraft what driving on a farm in Iowa was to handling rush hour on a Los Angeles freeway. A critical problem was the tendency to unstart an engine in flight! The inlet spike had to move aft in accord with an accurate schedule as speed was increased, and the various bypass (air) doors also needed precise control. When these requirements were not met, the violent and sudden expulsion of the normal shock wave from the internal throat to the outside of the inlet occurred. This caused a loss of thrust on that side resulting in a harsh yaw movement that swung the nose sharply in the direction of the unstarted inlet. The pilot would have to open the bypass doors on the unstarted side and move the spike fully forward; then, he would slowly return them to a smooth flowing but slightly less-efficient position than that which they had been in just before the disturbance. This problem plagued

the A-12 and the SR-71 for years until late in the program when a far more sensitive control system was designed.<sup>24</sup>

For a typical mission, the SR-71 was launched with one-half a fuel load for operational safety reasons. This meant the first priority after takeoff was to refuel. Refueling presented special problems: visibility was poor due to the triangular forward window, and the helmet associated with the pressure suit caused undesired reflections. The receptacle (which received the fuel) was aft of the cockpit; therefore, the SR-71 had to fly underneath the tanker. Normally, one would take on about 70,000 pounds or 11,000 gallons of JP7 fuel. Typically, refueling took place at about 25,000 feet. As the weight increased and the air speed had to be held down to accommodate the slower tanker, the aircraft became thrust-limited; that is, drag increased as it approached the stall speed for this unique aircraft (there was no additional thrust available without afterburner). At that point, the pilot had to move one throttle slightly into the afterburner range to hold position. Using one afterburner required the pilot to counter the asymmetry with rudder or just tolerate some sideways flight. Interestingly, the pilots developed the technique of using the left afterburner so the aircraft would yaw slightly to the right. This way, only the left quarter panel had defogged air, and one could get that benefit if needed. Refueling was an intense effort for the pilot and was required two to four times for each mission.<sup>25</sup>

On the day before a mission, the crew studied the route and carefully examined the maps. Their focus was on the weather predictions particularly for the refueling areas, the recovery, and potential diversion bases. Breakfast on mission day was high-protein, low-gas types of food consumed before donning the Gemini-like space suits. About two hours before takeoff, the crew began to inhale 100 percent oxygen to eliminate nitrogen in the body that could cause the bends if subjected to the low pressures due to a cockpit leak. An hour before flight, they were assisted into the cockpit that had already been cocked or prepared by another crew.

At engine start, two 400-horsepower Buick V8 engines were used to rev up each J58 engine to 3,000 revolutions per minute, which caused an ear-splitting roar similar to a racing car going at full tilt. For takeoff, the afterburners were fired at brake

release; since they usually did not light simultaneously, one got a kick to one side of the cockpit until the opposite afterburner was fired. Both had to be turned on within three seconds or the aircraft would go into an uncontrollable yaw. The SR-71 became airborne at 200 knots; the pilot had to retract the landing gear quickly, as it was limited to 300 knots airspeed. Afterburner takeoffs are often used sparingly for military jets, but they were required on every SR-71 flight.<sup>26</sup> Once the fuel had been topped off from a KC-135Q in flight, the profile called for a climb to 35,000 feet, to nose down to about 30,000 feet, to accelerate to Mach 1, followed by a climb to 40,000 feet, to hit Mach 2 and continue to climb to 70,000 feet, and to level out at Mach 3.<sup>27</sup>

A normal mission would involve several more refueling operations, depending on the flight plan, and finally a descent to land at about 200 knots airspeed, using a large drag chute to slow the aircraft. These operations had to be done with the full pressure suit sealed and a 12-pound helmet in place. Water and some liquid foods could be sipped through a long plastic straw.<sup>28</sup>

O'Malley did well in the checkout process as the SR-71s were delivered to this talented group of aviators who worked hard to master the details of safe operation. In February 1967 he and Diane were delighted to realize some payoff for his dedicated service as he pinned on his lieutenant colonel rank. It was advanced, or below the zone, as the Air Force jargon characterized the promotion of someone who was junior in total service to those being considered to be in the primary zone for promotion.<sup>29</sup>

At this point he was 35 years old, the father of four children, and obviously beginning to stand out in his Air Force career. He loved to visit with people from back home in Pennsylvania and "talk Carbondale," as retired Air Force master sergeant Jack Gilhooly was fond of saying. It did not escape Jerry's notice that his old contemporary in the high school basketball days, Joe McDade, already had been elected to the US Congress from the 10th District of Pennsylvania in 1963. Jerry occasionally did indulge some thoughts about returning to his home state and running for office. But for now he was involved in a highly specialized activity; one important to national security and deeply shrouded in secrecy. The aircraft were closely guarded, with no access granted to the public. Details of sensors, equipment, and performance were closely held.

Jerry was teamed up with Ed Payne, who had earned a spot promotion to major as a navigator in the B-47 force, was 32 years old, and had five children. After an extensive medical review at Brooks AFB, Texas, Ed moved his family from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, to Beale AFB. On 1 January 1967, his B-47 wing at Mountain Home, the 9th Bomb Wing, was deactivated and besides losing his spot promotion, Ed was called to gather up the 9th's heraldic items (pictures, trophies, battle flags, and unit histories) and prepare them for shipment to Beale. The new SR-71 wing was to be designated the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, thus picking up a historical designation stemming from World War I. He reported in to Beale AFB in April 1967 and was teamed up with his aircraft commander-pilot, Jerry O'Malley.

The SR-71 had a challenging start into operational flying, as the following episodes demonstrate. On a night air-refueling sortie on 13 April 1967, the first SR-71 accident from Beale resulted in the loss of an SR-71A 64-17966 while pilot Earle Boone and substitute systems operator (RSO) Butch Sheffield escaped with minor injuries. After pulling away from the tanker, they executed the dipsy-doodle maneuver (dive to build air speed and then climb out through the speed of sound) when they had to contend with avoiding a thunderstorm. The aircraft fell into a stall condition, with a pitch up from which there was no recovery. This caused the wing to approach night refueling with greater caution and also resulted in an improved pitch-warning device.

It was common to make unplanned diversions from Beale AFB for precautionary reasons as well in this training era. Jerry O'Malley and Ed Payne landed at Hill AFB in Utah with a generator problem. One week later, they landed the same aircraft at Buckley Field in Colorado for a similar problem. A few weeks later, they departed Beale AFB and lost a nine-foot piece of black aircraft skin that was picked up by a local resident, taken to the county sheriff, and handed over to the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW) headquarters. By that time, Jerry was about to refuel with a tanker over Ft. Walton Beach, Florida, when the KC-135Q crew asked him to pull out ahead of the tanker as the boomer (crew member operating the refueling boom) reported "the [expletive deleted] end of the airplane was missing." Since

they had already flown across the country without any problem, and the tanker crew said the missing skin seemed to simply cover some plumbing, Jerry opted to take on the fuel and continue the mission. When Ed reported this intention to the command post, he and Jerry received an immediate return call from the Fifteenth Air Force headquarters delivered by the commander himself, Lt Gen P. K. Carlton, directing them to divert into Barksdale AFB in Louisiana immediately! As they landed at Barksdale, Jerry set the plane down, jettisoned the drag chute at 50 knots, and turned off the antiskid in accordance with the checklist but almost immediately ran into a layer of standing water. When they exited the water, the aircraft was in a hydroplaning skid and blew all six tires as it regained dry pavement.<sup>30</sup> It was three days later before they finally returned to Beale AFB. Figure 27 shows Jerry and Ed in their flight regalia.

A black-tie dinner was held at Beale Officers' Club on 25 October 1967 with Kelly Johnson as the guest of honor. Maj Roy St. Martin and Capt John Carnochan were flying a night-training sortie when an instrument failure caused them serious trouble.



**Figure 27. Ed Payne and Jerry O'Malley ready for SR-71 flight in their space suits and associated gear.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

Although the instrument showed wings level, they were in a dive from 60,000 feet and building up speed at an alarming rate. By the time they got on the backup instrument, they were in “a screaming dive and a roll-over toward inverted flight.” With no options for recovery, St. Martin ordered bailout, and Carnochan exited at Mach 1.4; St. Martin heard the below 10,000 feet warning horn before he pulled his D-Ring, when his ejection seat fired, flinging him clear of the aircraft. His canopy deployed just before he landed at 5,000 feet terrain altitude. Both survived the ejection and landing.

Unit records showed another loss in January 1968 as the 9th SRW prepared for its operational deployment. The wing had been equipped with two B-model aircraft (SR-71B) that were trainer-type airplanes, equipped for two pilots instead of carrying the mission equipment.<sup>31</sup> On 11 January 1968 Lt Col Robert Sowers and student pilot Dave Freuhauff were airborne over Spokane, Washington, when they experienced a generator failure followed a few minutes later by a second generator failure. This left them with only battery power. Switching off all non-essential equipment, they set up a long, straight-in descent toward Beale, since the only other practical airfields had overcast weather. Without boost pumps to feed fuel to the engines, they soon lost both engines as air filled the lines. They were able to get some intermittent air starts but finally had to bail out at 3,000 feet and watch the SR-71B invert and crash seven miles north of Beale.<sup>32</sup> This kind of incident was probably what led to the unattractive name *Lead Sled* that was at times hung on the SR-71. This very high performance machine was not a very good glider!

The frequent in-flight loss of generators was particularly vexing, as the subsequent ground checks often showed no malfunction. It was much later in the program that a bright, young noncommissioned officer working on the flight line figured out that the solder on certain wires was melting at the high temperatures normally attained during flight and then re-solidifying before landing. A change to higher-temperature soldering finally solved this problem for the fleet.<sup>33</sup>

In summary, the design and development of this new technology aircraft system had to contend not only with stressing demands on the crew but also with many equipment failures in

the severe environment to which the SR-71 was exposed. By the time the 9th SRW was ready for operational deployment, one crew member had been killed and five airplanes had been lost. The score for the CIA with the A-12, at that same time, was three crew members dead and another five planes lost.<sup>34</sup> The 9th unit history pointed out that “the 9th SRW is declared combat-ready on 31 March 1968, and will commence training under the provisions of Vols I and XIII [SAC Manual 50-8] effective 1 April 1968.”<sup>35</sup>

This terse message from Strategic Air Command Headquarters marked the end of the mobilization and training phase for the SR-71 wing and the beginning of their operational phase. Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance had directed the Senior Crown Program to cover Vietnam and the approach was to establish an operating location (OL-8) at Kadena AFB, on the island of Okinawa; the base from which the operational sorties would be staged.

In August 1968 Colonel Nelson moved on to SAC headquarters and was replaced as wing commander by Col Bill Hayes. Hayes, along with his operations officer, Col Hal Confer, selected the first four crews to deploy to Kadena. Three crews were to fly the SR-71 to Kadena from Beale, while the fourth would ride in a tanker aircraft. The crews were assigned numbers; those beginning with “S” indicate “Select crew” (they would get the spot promotions had this been a bomb wing); crew numbers beginning with an “E” designate “Lead crews”; they are considered more qualified than the “R” or combat “Ready crews.” Confer had already designated that the operational sorties would follow the same sequence as that used for deployment once they had arrived in Okinawa. The four crews selected and the order of their departure were as follows:

1. Crew S-04, Major Buddy L. Brown (Pilot) and Capt David J. Jensen (RSO)
2. Crew E-10, Lt Col Jerome F. O’Malley (Pilot) and Maj Edward D. Payne (RSO)
3. Crew E-16, Maj Robert C. Spencer (Pilot) and Maj Ruel K. Branham (RSO)

The fourth backup crew consisted of Lt Col James Watkins (Pilot) and Maj David Dempster (RSO).<sup>36</sup>

The aircraft selected were 64-17978, 64-17976, and 64-17974. The first two digits indicate the fiscal year of the production contract, then a five-digit serial number follows. In normal crew parlance, these aircraft would be called by the last three digits, no. 978, no. 976, and no. 974. The deployment was scheduled for 8, 10, and 12 March, respectively. Three refueling operations were planned for the six hours and 18 minutes' flight plan. Since they would travel faster than Earth rotates around its axis, they essentially would arrive two hours before their start; however, in this case, they crossed the International Date Line, so arrival was one day later but two hours earlier on the clock. All three missions made the takeoff time called for in their execution orders and landed within a few minutes of the expected arrival. The smooth deployment was noted in a congratulatory message signed by Gen Joseph J. Nazzaro, commander, Strategic Air Command.<sup>37</sup>

On Monday, 18 March, OL-8 was ordered to fly its first operational mission, and as planned Major Brown and Captain Jensen prepared to fly the sortie with Colonel O'Malley and Major Payne as the backup crew (fig. 28). However, higher headquarters cancelled the combat mission, and the flight was converted to a training sortie. Three days later a combat sortie was ordered over North Vietnam, and, in accord with the plan, O'Malley and Payne were designated to fly the first SR-71 mission over enemy territory.<sup>38</sup>

On Thursday, 21 March 1968, properly dressed in their space suits and "moon" boots, Jerry and Ed climbed into aircraft no. 976 (now residing in the USAF Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB) and began their preflight checklists. The checks and responses were normal until Ed called out a failure to pressurize the cabin. Jerry adjusted the engine idle a bit, and the canopy seal inflated, fixing the problem. Ed reported a few other minor items, which Jerry concluded had no real effect on the mission. Jerry said, "Well Ed, do you want to be the first guy to abort an operational sortie, or the first to fly one?"<sup>39</sup> With that, Ed called: "Kadena Tower, this is 'Beaver 50', radio check." He soon got the "permission to taxi" clearance. In the run-up area just short of the runway, Ed got a "starlight," which indicated the auto-



**Figure 28. O'Malley and Payne climbing into the cramped cockpit of the SR-71.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

matic star tracked had acquired three stars and provided an accurate position. The chocks were in place for final engine checks but were removed by the ground crew in time for the tower call: "Beaver 50, you are cleared for takeoff." With that, SR-71 no. 976 rolled to make the exact takeoff time.<sup>40</sup> Jerry moved the throttles to mid afterburner position, which resulted in the left-right yaw movement as each afterburner lit. Next he moved them to maximum afterburner, checked the decision speed, and at 180 knots pulled back gently on the stick to lift off. As soon as the gear was up, they climbed out toward the first air-refueling control point.

They carried a complement of side-looking airborne radar (SLAR), and five cameras; two technical objective cameras, two operational objective cameras, and a terrain objective camera. They also were equipped with a defensive electronics system, which was vital when flying over enemy territory. Ed quickly

checked out the functioning of all these equipments and reported the SLAR had failed its built-in test check. Since it was not a mandatory device for their mission, they pressed on. They used a covert radio-ranging system (ARC-50) to rendezvous discreetly with the KC-135Q tanker aircraft. It allowed both crews to get range and azimuth of the other guy without breaking radio silence in the voice radio frequency.

With 70,000 pounds of fuel on-loaded and because they were operating in a near-tropical air mass, the SR-71 began responding sluggishly at the military power settings of the throttles. Jerry engaged the "MIN-Burner" on one engine and cross-controlled slightly to maintain track as they took on the last 10,000 pounds.<sup>41</sup> Now that no. 976 was full of JP7, Jerry cleared the tanker and lit both burners, pushing the throttles up to MAX to accelerate to 0.9 Mach before climbing up to 33,000 feet. Using the standard procedures of easing the nose down to build up to the desired equivalent airspeed followed by a climb to altitude, they arrived at 75,000 feet and 3.0 Mach for the en route cruise. They flew east to the South China Sea and then turned north into the Gulf of Tonkin. Ed's cross-check on a large pier looking toward Hainan Island confirmed the accuracy of their navigation system. Jerry began a cruise climb to 78,000 feet and 3.17 Mach to enter North Vietnam (fig. 29).<sup>42</sup>

The excited chatter of US combat aircrews engaged over Haiphong and Hanoi played out on their radio as they headed in on a heading of 284 degrees. Their track took them over Haiphong, Phuc Yen Airfield, and other targets in the vicinity of Hanoi; the weather looked good for a photo run, and the counter clicked down indicating that their "take" was being properly recorded. The defensive equipment indicated they were being tracked by the Fan-Song RADAR associated with the SA-2 guideline surface-to-air missiles but there was no "lock on" as Ed operated the countering response.

This first run was only 12 minutes long, after which they headed back in a gradual descent toward Thailand for a rendezvous with their tankers near Korat Air Base. At 25,000 feet over the preplanned point, they met Craven "Gibb" Gibbons who was flying the lead tanker, and Jerry quickly took on 40,000 pounds of JP7. They hit the second tanker to top off their tanks and turned back north for another run.<sup>43</sup> Back at



**Figure 29. Map of Vietnam. "Beaver 50" SR-71 976 flew the first operational mission over North Vietnam from the Gulf of Tonkin.** (Available online at <http://www.asiatravel.com/vietmap.html> [accessed 2 April 2007].)

altitude they made a run over the demilitarized zone (DMZ), where the targets were trucks parked, servicing the trails to the south and gun emplacements firing on Khe Sanh.<sup>44</sup>

On the leg back to Kadena they were dismayed to learn that the base was fogged in. They elected to make a low approach in hopes of picking up the runway but despite reports from the ground that they were seen passing barely above the parked tanker tails, Jerry never saw the runway. Now they were getting low on fuel, so they called for the standby tanker. Jerry took on another 25,000 pounds of fuel, and they made their way to Ching Chuan Kang (CCK) Air Base in Taiwan. CCK was a joint tenancy air base with the Nationalist Chinese, so Jerry requested a hangar to park in for security reasons. There was some delay before the hangar was available, so the Blackbird stood with engines running while a small crowd of about 500 Taiwanese gathered to get a look at this strange aircraft. Once no. 976 was properly hangared and security established in the area, they were able to get the raw intelligence data, or take, dispatched to Yokota AFB in Japan for processing. Jerry and Ed had to go to dinner wearing borrowed flight suits and their moon boots.<sup>45</sup>

The now unclassified unit history records are as follows:

The first SR-71 Giant Scale mission, SO-0002, was flown March 21 [1968] and lasted five hours. The aircraft, flown by Lt/Col O'Malley and Major Payne, soared over North Vietnam and Hainan Island, including the Hanoi and Haiphong areas. Photo interpretation of this first operational mission was hindered by the dense cloud coverage encountered during the flight. However, this did not prevent technical analysts from gleaning valuable information on surface-to-air missile (SAM) activity in the Hanoi area. Other activities recorded by the SR-71 sensors during the flight included port facilities, airfields, vehicle maintenance yards, chemical plants, supply depots, army barracks, and road construction.<sup>46</sup>

Both Jerry O'Malley and Ed Payne were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in recognition of this first operational mission of the Mach 3 reconnaissance system.<sup>47</sup>

The obvious pride within the SR-71 unit shows up in the (formerly classified Secret) wing history recording of the successful deployment of the OL-8 unit to Kadena precisely on schedule, the successful first flight operations, and the decla-

ration by SAC Headquarters that they were now combat ready! The words of the wing history office are as follows:

This quarter, the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing stood securely on its own two feet, rolled up its sleeves, and got to work. After months of planning and preparation, the Wing proceeded to deploy one seventh of its personnel force, three of its aircraft, and a great mass of its equipment to an overseas operating location in Okinawa. There, it would do its part in the Southeast Asia war effort. The deployment was spectacularly successful and the initial operations flawless in execution. The "infant" of 1965 had come a long way.<sup>48</sup>

This was the culmination of years of dedicated effort by the contractors delivering equipment, the maintenance NCOs and Airmen who had to contend with very complex handling and servicing of equipment, and also the operational crews who overcame difficult training and operating obstacles. After a series of combat missions being ordered but subsequently changed to training sorties, on 10 April Major Brown and Captain Jensen were set to fly no. 974 on the second operational mission with O'Malley and Payne backing them up in no. 976. However, the automatic navigation system failed to check out, causing no. 974 to return to the hangar so O'Malley taxied no. 976 out to the pre-takeoff run up area in place to make the scheduled takeoff time. As they completed the checklists, they were surprised to see Brown and Jensen coming back out to the run up area after a record fast change out of the navigation system unit. The responsive maintenance crew work and the aggressive attitude of the flight crew left some doubt as to which aircraft was now primary for the mission. The OL-8 detachment commander, Col Charlie Minter, was near the run up area in his mobile control car, and he realized that despite the quick change there was not time to get the full checkout of the navigation unit on no. 974. He held up an 8-by-10-inch pad with "YOU GO" to O'Malley and a similar pad with "YOU STAY" to Major Brown in no. 974.<sup>49</sup> Thus, O'Malley and Payne also had the distinction of logging the second combat sortie for their unit. After refueling, they coasted in near Saigon and headed north to cross the DMZ into North Vietnam. Near the end of their run a message was received to abort the remainder of the mission based on confusion in the command chain on exactly what President Johnson meant in a speech he made that day

about restricting “strike” aircraft flights north of the 19th parallel.<sup>50</sup> Jerry headed south and prepared for descent toward their air refueling over Thailand. As he eased back on the throttles, both engines rumbled in a compression stall and immediately flamed out! Jerry pushed the nose down to get to denser air needed for an air start of the big engines. They decided that if they were unable to achieve an air start at 23,000 feet they would call “MAYDAY” and bail out at 14,000 feet. Attempts at 40,000 feet and 30,000 feet failed, and Ed Payne noted 26,000 feet as he made ready for the call, he called out “MAY. . .” the aircraft shook and O’Malley said one engine had started. By the time they made 20,000 feet, Jerry had both engines “turning and burning.”

The tanker crew waiting for rendezvous heard the partial MAYDAY call and also noticed on radar that the SR-71 was closing at a reduced rate, indicating it was low and slow compared to the hot rate of supersonic closure. They were concerned because the SR remained well up north in bad-guys’ territory. Ed Payne describes the sequence of events in his direct quote from Paul Crickmore’s book:

The transmission we received from the tankers was, “Are you guys okay?” I answered, “No”. They asked, “What can we do?” I answered, “Turn North.” The double-engine flame-out and rapid descent left no. 967 down at a ‘gas gobbling’ 20,000 feet over northern Laos some 300 miles from our planned Air Refueling Control Point. We climbed back to 25,000 feet and headed south. I recall the lead tanker navigator was a woman. I’m sure they must have violated operating procedures coming that far north without some form of fighter cover but we were [expletive deleted] glad to see them. By the time we reached the tanker, no. 976 was below 8,000 pounds of fuel. The tanker turned in front of us and the boomer plugged into our receptacle in a ‘heartbeat’. We drained 80,000 pounds of JP7 out of two tankers and even used a little from the spare—perhaps a record off load. We used the extra gas because we had to lengthen the air-refueling track from Laos to mid-Thailand. Had we just filled up and climbed for home we wouldn’t have been able to fly the profile properly, so we just stayed behind those beautiful tankers until we reached the originally planned disengagement point.<sup>51</sup>

Jerry discussed at length the data he wanted Ed to record as they flew the normal profile back to home base. When it came time to ease back on the throttles, the engines spooled down normally and they landed back at Kadena without further

incident. The double-engine flameout was the precursor to several similar incidents that followed over Laos and served to reinforce the undesired nickname of Lead Sled back at the SAC Reconnaissance Center.

Having completed the first two combat missions, Jerry and Ed were relegated to flying the test sorties, while the other crews took over the operational flights, which by this time were called "Habu" missions. Double-engine flameouts continued to plague the operation over the next few weeks until Lt Col Jim Watkins came up with an idea to keep the engines a few hundred rotations per minute above the checklist-approved values while slowing down from supersonic speeds. Once they standardized that procedure, flameout occurrences became rare.

On 13 May, Colonel Watkins and Maj Dave Dempster, his systems operator, had a rather harrowing experience after flying a combat sortie over North Vietnam. As they hung on the boom of the tanker in the final refueling before returning to Kadena, Colonel Watkins opened his helmet faceplate to drink some cool water. In accord with the plan, they lit the burners and soared up into the high-speed, high-altitude regime to cruise home. Major Dempster noticed that Colonel Watkins' words had begun to slur and soon figured out that he was suffering from lack of oxygen. He realized that a total loss of consciousness was imminent unless Watkins got back on oxygen or they descended to a much lower altitude. Dempster had only autopilot directional control from his rear seat; he knew his options were narrowing very fast. Despite the fact that they were out over the open sea, Dempster decided to appeal to Watkins' ingrained pilot training and began to read the "Start Descent" checklist in a loud authoritative voice over the interphone. To his delight Watkins responded with each command, and by the time they dropped below 25,000 feet, he came around. Although the last 10 minutes were a complete blank, Watkins fully understood that he had failed to properly close the helmet faceplate.<sup>52</sup> It was just one more reminder that flying a Mach 3.2 aircraft is a demanding activity; the simplest error can have grave consequences.

With all the problems related to bringing the SR-71 into routine safe operations, it nevertheless established a record that proved the value of the original assumptions that drove the

design. The crews reported on the surreal effect of flying more than 15 miles above the raging ground war, and well above the strike aircraft in daily combat operations in Southeast Asia. At Mach 3+ they were at the speed of a high-powered rifle bullet; if a missile were fired at them, it had to be launched 30 miles ahead of the SR-71 to reach its altitude. Usually, the missiles that were fired to their altitude exploded above and behind them. Crews reported that the exploding missile warhead appeared to billow out and then collapse in on itself. That effect was caused by the rapid rate at which the jet was escaping the area of the detonation.<sup>53</sup>

The tight security about the SR-71 is highlighted by a story told by an old friend of Jerry O'Malley, from his B-47 days at Plattsburg, who happened to be at Kadena when the SR-71 was operating out of there. The friend, Pat Finlay, had breakfast with O'Malley one day and asked him about the airplane. Jerry said, "Pat the only thing I am authorized to say about the aircraft is that it is *Black* in color!"<sup>54</sup>

Jerry O'Malley was happy to return to Beale AFB, California, when his tour at Kadena was completed. Diane was also grateful to have him home and helping with their active family. By this time his two girls were 13 and 10 years old, and the boys were five and three years old. He was selected to be operations officer for the 1st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron and often stepped in for his squadron commander when the latter was on a deployment to the Kadena operating location.

In the summer of the following year, 1969, Jerry was once again ready to move on to a new career opportunity. He was selected for another advanced promotion to full colonel and to attend the Naval War College. Since he was one of the most junior officers on the "colonels" list, he would not pin on that rank until well into the program at the Senior Naval School at Newport, Rhode Island.

### Notes

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4. Ibid., 11.
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6. Ibid., 20.
7. Ibid., 21.
8. Ibid., 72.
9. Ibid., 19.
10. Ibid., 33.
11. Ibid.
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13. Ibid., 120.
14. Ibid., 43.
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16. Crickmore, *Lockheed SR-71*, 62.
17. Ibid., 67.
18. Ibid.
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20. Ibid., 79.
21. Maj Gen Patrick Halloran to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 14 May 1998.
22. O'Malley, USAF Officer Effectiveness Report, June 1965–March 1966.
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26. Ibid., 45.
27. Ibid., 59.
28. Ibid., 41.
29. O'Malley, USAF Officer Effectiveness Report, October 1966–July 1967.
30. Crickmore, *Lockheed SR-71*, 88.
31. Unit History, 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Fifteenth Air Force, March 1968 (declassified 13 April 2001), chap. 3, 21.
32. Crickmore, *Lockheed SR-71*, 93.
33. Ibid., 206.
34. Ibid., 248.
35. Unit History, 9th SRW, chap. 3, 18.
36. Ibid., chap. 3, 51–52.
37. Ibid.
38. Crickmore, *Lockheed SR-71*, 21.
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40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 4.
42. Ibid., 5.
43. Ibid., 6.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., 8.
46. Unit History, 9th SRW, chap. 3, 58.
47. Crickmore, *Lockheed SR-71*, 8.
48. Unit History, 9th SRW, intro., v.

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49. Crickmore, *Lockheed SR-71*, 122.
50. *Ibid.*, 123.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*, 126.
53. *Ibid.*, 135.
54. Pat Finley, telephone interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 11 March 2000.

## Chapter 9

### **Colonel O'Malley and Combat in Country**

August 1969–July 1970 <b>Lieutenant Colonel–Colonel</b>	Student at Naval War College Newport, Rhode Island
July 1970–April 1971 <b>Colonel</b>	Director of operations, 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing (TRW), Mountain Home AFB, Idaho
April 1971–Sept 1971 <b>Combat Flying</b>	Vice-commander, then commander, 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam

Attending the Naval War College was a particularly beneficial experience for O'Malley because it allowed him to know and work with officers from all three services. He had developed a keen sense of the importance of how the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force needed to work closely. He had served at the Strategic Air Command (SAC) Headquarters, where the commander was also charged with the national effort to create an overall plan to integrate targeting for the strategic forces, including bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and Navy ballistic-missile-firing submarines. Jerry also gathered and distributed high-value intelligence for the services in the SR-71. The war fighter needs intelligence and doesn't really care which service or agency acquires it. The operational concern is accuracy and whether it is still relevant due to delays in processing and distribution. In short, Jerry understood how parochial interests militated against joint operations to the detriment of the best possible effect. How this attitude became an important factor in the decisions he influenced as a general officer in the Pentagon will be discussed later.<sup>1</sup>

Twelve Air Force officers were selected to attend this Naval War College class, mostly from below-the-zone or advanced promotion to colonel. Retired colonel Ray Hope, a member of that group, offered the following insights about O'Malley:

Jerry was the most junior USAF officer in the group, and I was the next most junior. The Navy, Army, and USAF promotion systems have a number of differences. Several of the USAF officers including Jerry and myself arrived at the Naval War College as Lt. Colonels [sic] even though we had been selected for Colonel almost a year before. The Navy, and Army to a lesser degree, are [sic] extremely rank conscious. Much to the consternation of both, several months into the college we suddenly appeared wearing the eagles of Full Colonel. In addition, our DOR [date of rank] was adjusted back to 1968, which meant we out ranked many of the Navy Captains and Army Colonels who were wearing their rank when we arrived at the college. It created a lot of confusion and animosity but was really sort of humorous.

The USAF contingent of officers had a number of social events where Jerry and Diane attended. Jerry was a very charismatic individual who was obviously destined for greater things in the USAF. He had a great sense of humor but was rather quiet spoken although when he talked everyone listened. Without a doubt, he was the most popular USAF officer at the college.<sup>2</sup>

Once again, Jerry had the opportunity to participate in the professional arguments and embraced the school's decision not only to allow this type of discussion but also to encourage it. He once remarked that his afternoon seminar leader told the class, "If you get into a good argument over lunch, please, do not cut it short to report back here; it is far better to order a martini and thrash it out to where you can resolve it, or form your separate conclusions."<sup>3</sup> It is not clear that the martini would add any clarity to the interservice arguments, but he was attempting to get bright leaders to reach outside of their service cocoons.

The Navy provided an official letter of completion that included the statement, "The Naval War College is the highest educational institution of the Navy, and its curricula are conducted at the graduate school level. Its resident courses have been variously evaluated up to 15 semester hours of transfer credit toward a Masters Degree in International Affairs (Political Science) or for Bachelor of Arts degrees [sic]."<sup>4</sup>

The war in Southeast Asia continued, and as he completed the Navy program in the summer of 1970, Jerry looked for his next assignment to be one where he could contribute as well as take advantage of his reconnaissance background. The most prominent Air Force aircraft had become the F-4 because it took over the principal role in both strike and reconnaissance missions.

The F-4C was a derivative of the Navy F-4 Phantom that was designed to be capable of a variety of missions (air-to-air combat or strike, with the RF-4C for reconnaissance). The F-4C is a supersonic, two-seat, twin-engine, all-weather aircraft. The major distinction between the F-4C and all other F-4s was that it packed a 20 mm Gatling gun. The F-4 enjoyed a large production run of more than 5,000 airplanes due to its unusual versatility being employed by the US Navy, Marines, and Air Force and 10 allied nations during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>5</sup>

The F-4 looked like a rugged warplane with its two large J-79 engines; thin, short delta wings; and drooping stabilizer surfaces. One major change for the Air Force version (F-4C) was the installation of a set of flight controls in the rear cockpit. The reconnaissance version (RF-4C) had the armament and radar replaced with equipment specialized for photographic, radar, and infrared reconnaissance that was evidenced by a new longer and more pointed nose. It carried three cameras in the nose, with a fuselage-mounted photoflash ejection system for night work. A small radar was included in the nose for terrain following (flying low over the nape of the earth) and mapping as well as side-looking radar for intelligence gathering. Other variants were introduced over time as the last of the 503 production RF-4C aircraft was delivered in 1973.<sup>6</sup>

On completion of the Naval War College course, O'Malley's strong record and solid reputation easily qualified him to be assigned as director of operations for the RF-4Cs, stationed at the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. It was another family move for Diane, Peggy, Sharon, Jimmy, and John O'Malley. By now, their ages ranged from five to 14, and Diane worked hard at making a home for them and at getting all their school arrangements set up. Jerry and Diane enjoyed returning to the social life of the flying Air Force, as

indicated in this photo from the Officers' Club (fig. 30). On one occasion, Diane drove the wrong way on a local street (fig. 31).



**Figure 30. Jerry and Diane at a party at Mountain Home AFB in Idaho.** (Reprinted with permission from Col Lou Piccotti.)



**Figure 31. Diane is chided for driving the wrong way on a Mountain Home street.** (Reprinted with permission from Col Lou Piccotti.)

Note that the Officer Effectiveness Report covering the first nine months of Jerry's service at Mountain Home was written by the wing commander, Col Henry Warren, who had also evaluated O'Malley when O'Malley was a first lieutenant at the air academy and Warren was a major.<sup>7</sup> Warren was one of the professional aviators in the Air Force whose assignments since his 1945 graduation from West Point were mostly in fighter aircraft. He logged 100 combat missions in the P-51 Mustang aircraft in the Korean War and 85 missions in the F-4C aircraft while in the Vietnam War. The 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing history showed Warren and O'Malley were assigned on the same date, 1 September 1970, as commander and director of operations, respectively.<sup>8</sup> Surely, Colonel Warren requested O'Malley for his command. His annual evaluation report continued to reflect the high opinion of Jerry and his performance that he foresaw in 1955.<sup>9</sup> This period of service soon led to a return to the combat scene; Jerry was ordered in the summer of 1971 to assume the role of vice-commander of the 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in the Republic of Vietnam.<sup>10</sup> In a few weeks of arrival, he took over as commander of the 460th TRW.

Leaving his young family was difficult for Jerry, but he knew his entire professional life had prepared him for a return to combat operations. He quickly adapted to the leadership role and flew his regular turn on combat missions (fig. 32).

Colonel O'Malley had an encounter with legendary Air Force triple ace (total of 17 kills) Brig Gen Robin Olds at Tan Son Nhut. Olds, a West Point graduate and an all-American tackle in 1942, was credited with 13 kills in World War II. He also flew combat in Korea and had four more kills in Vietnam.<sup>11</sup> The story was provided by retired colonel Lou Persiani, who headed the aircraft maintenance squadron in O'Malley's new wing. It is quoted from an e-mail message dated 18 March 2000:

General Robin Olds was the inspector general for (PACAF) Pacific Air Component Force. The team was visiting our unit at Ton Son Nhut. During the visit, the general had a person-to-person visit with Col. O'Malley. We were all anxious to hear what was going on when the general slammed out of the conference room and stormed off. I asked the boss what the [expletive deleted] had happened. Jerry said that the General had asked him how he thought he would do now that he was



**Figure 32. Colonel O'Malley climbing into an RF-4C.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

out of the big birds in SAC and into fighters. Jerry, who had just left the SR-71 program answered, "I guess I can handle it if I get used to *flying slow*" (emphasis in original).<sup>12</sup>

In July 1971 two RF-4C aircraft from the 460th were lost to enemy ground fire. Fortunately, both aircrews were returned to home base after successful ejections. The first, an RF-4C 66-392, was hit over Stoeng Treng, Cambodia, and since the aircraft was controllable, the crew attempted to recover at Tan Son Nhut. Visual scan from the ground revealed that since the centerline fuel tank was in place and the gear would not come down, the crew elected to bail out. They landed about 17 miles from Tan Son Nhut, where Air Force search and rescue forces picked them up.

The second, an RF-4C 65-847, was hit in Southeastern Cambodia, where the crew ejected when the aircraft went into violent maneuvers; crew members were returned to base by an Army helicopter.<sup>13</sup> For navigator, 1st Lt Jeffery F. Stuermer, the incident marked his *second ejection* due to battle damage in his first two weeks in Vietnam (emphasis in original).<sup>14</sup>

A photo of a recovered section of an RF-4C turned up among O'Malley's papers (fig. 33). Although it is not possible to identify the picture below with certainty, there is little doubt that it was from aircraft no. 392 that crashed near Tan Son Nhut. In addition, the temporary ramp material obvious in the photo (metal grating) indicates the type of construction used in Vietnam at the time. Often commanders would have their name on an aircraft, but then they and the other crews would actually fly the aircraft that was normally generated in the regular rotation.

At that time, the Vietnamization of the war was in progress, as Pres. Richard M. Nixon was attempting to turn the fighting in South Vietnam over to the South Vietnamese. O'Malley's charge was to shut down the wing and disperse its resources by the end of August. It was an eclectic mixture of aircraft joined only by the mission statement, which was to "fly reconnaissance missions as directed: process, interpret, classify,



**Figure 33. Canopy section from an RF-4C, suspected to be from serial number 66-392, assigned to the 460th TRW. (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)**

evaluate, and distribute tactical information and intelligence acquired from reconnaissance; keep assigned forces combat ready for employment in general war; and to conduct or participate in operational tests and evaluation of reconnaissance equipment as directed.”<sup>15</sup>

Four electronic-warfare units flew EC-47s. This venerable aircraft was a derivative of the ancient DC-3 (commercial name) or C-47 Gooney Bird, one RB-57F unit, which is a high-flying adaptation of the medium-sized, two-engine jet-bomber aircraft taken from the British Canberra, and one RF-4C squadron. This diverse group of assets was operating from four different bases in Vietnam and Thailand. The record showed they were operating right up to the closure, as shown by the loss of two RF-4C aircrafts to ground fire in July (fig. 34). Associates met him after his last sortie (fig. 35).



**Figure 34. Jerry climbs out of the RF-4C after his last sortie from the 460th TRW at Tan Son Nhut.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)



**Figure 35. Colonel O'Malley is met on the flight line after his last combat sortie in the 460th TRW.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

O'Malley and his staff worked through numerous requests, some conflicting directions, and significant transfers of personnel as they moved people, planes, and equipment to new destinations. However, as the unit history notes, "At 1600 hours, on 31 August, the final formations of the 460th TRW assembled to see the commander, Colonel Jerome F. O'Malley, present the wing colors to General John D. Lavelle, commander, Seventh Air Force. In his remarks to the formation, General Lavelle gave tribute to all of the personnel who were killed in action or are presently being held captive."<sup>16</sup>

#### **Notes**

1. Primary source experience of Aloysius G. Casey.
2. Raymond L. Hope (USAF, Ret.), to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 9 April 2000.
3. Primary source experience of Aloysius G. Casey.
4. President, Naval War College, to Col Jerome F. O'Malley, letter, 22 June 1970.
5. F-4 Phantom, "Introduction," 7 May 2002, <http://www.boeing.com>.
6. See <http://members.tripod.com/~Wobert/rf4c.html>, 7 May 2002, 3.
7. Jerome F. O'Malley, USAF Officer Effectiveness Report, June 1970–February 1971.

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8. History, 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1 July–30 September 1970.
9. *Ibid.*, (entire report).
10. O'Malley, USAF Officer Effectiveness Report, March 1971–July 1971.
11. *Biography of Brig Gen Robin Olds* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, n.d.).
12. Col Lou Persiani (USAF, Ret.), to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 18 March 2000.
13. History, 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, n.d., vi.
14. *Ibid.*, 12.
15. *Ibid.*, 1.
16. *Ibid.*, 11.

## Chapter 10

### **Combat Operations in North Vietnam**

Col Jerome F. O'Malley, 432d Tactical Fighter Wing, vice-commander, located at Royal Thai AFB Udorn, Thailand.

Jerry O'Malley entered combat in Vietnam in 1971 when the war was a raging political issue. His one year of combat service, leading reconnaissance missions into North Vietnam, catapulted him into one of the most controversial issues in US Air Force history. This would be one of the most disconcerting events of Jerry O'Malley's Air Force career.

Pres. Richard Nixon had narrowly defeated Hubert Humphrey in the 1968 election in part on a promise to end the war. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird devised a program of Vietnamization that envisioned training the South Vietnamese to protect themselves, while the United States systematically reduced its force levels. The ultimate objective was to train and equip the South Vietnamese so they could prevent Communist invasion, thereby enabling the United States to pull out of Vietnam. A great concern of President Nixon during the Cold War pressures was that his administration did not appear to be defaulting on an American ally.

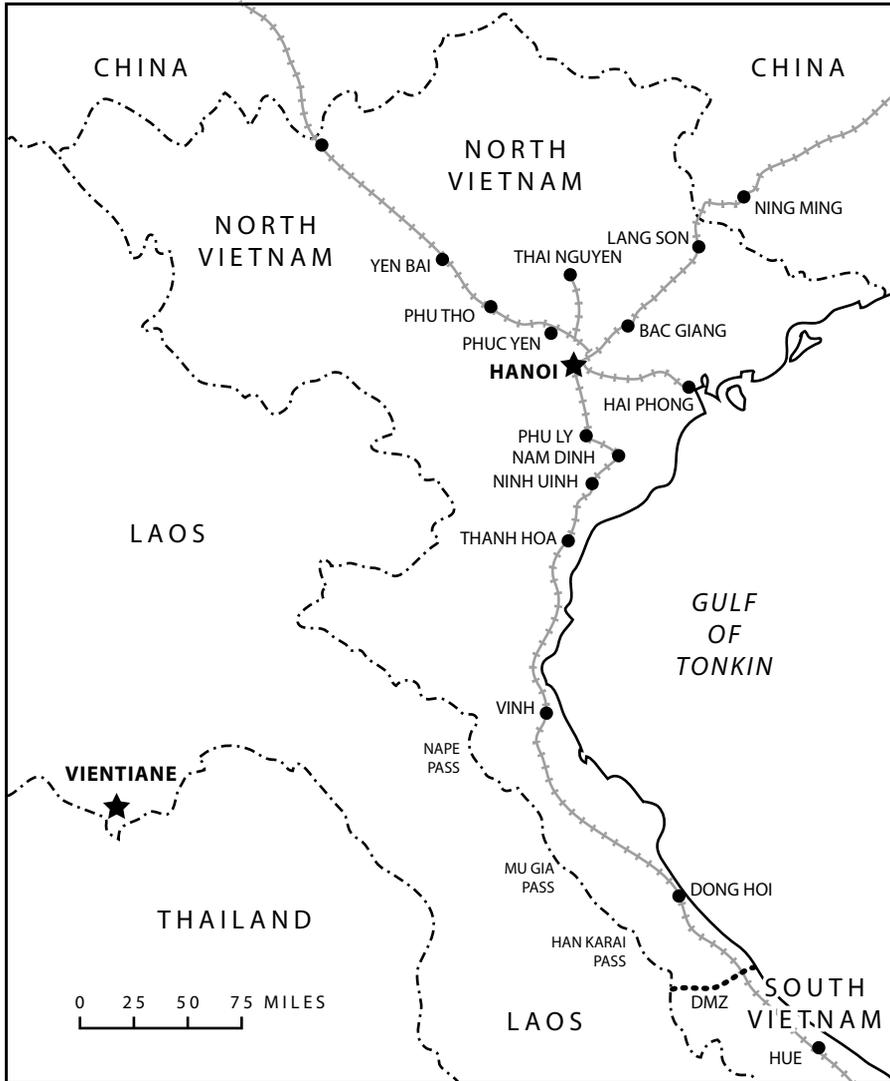
The Department of Defense (DOD) was proclaiming to the American public that Vietnamization was a success. In support of his claims of success, the US secretary of defense pointed to the significant force reduction of American soldiers. In 1968, 545,000 American soldiers were stationed in Vietnam, but by 1971 that force had been reduced to 64,500.<sup>1</sup> The undisclosed reality, however, was that the force reduction was only possible because of a massive increase in American airpower.<sup>2</sup> The troop ceiling statistic published by the DOD included only those soldiers on the ground in South Vietnam. It did not include the thousands of Air Force and Navy personnel carrying out airborne attacks in South Vietnam, Laos, North Vietnam, and Cambodia.<sup>3</sup> The dramatic increase in bombing missions

buttressed the false impression that the South Vietnamese could keep the North Vietnamese at bay as the American soldiers were sent home.

Col Charles A. Gabriel assumed command of the 432d TRW on 29 October 1971 and picked Col Jerry O'Malley as his vice-commander.<sup>4</sup> Colonels Gabriel and O'Malley led a major element of the US airpower then operating in Southeast Asia. The 432d TRW had over 4,000 people, including approximately 500 officers, 600 civilians, and 3,000 Airmen.<sup>5</sup> Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base was the most northerly location of US fighters in Southeast Asia. The sheer number of landings at this fighter base in August 1971 was 193,466—statistically the busiest single runway in the world.<sup>6</sup> It had proximity to Laos and the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the principal channel for the enemy to transport people and materiel from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. A wartime map of the operational area of the 432d TRW details the combat zone. Figure 36 outlines wing operations.

Colonels Gabriel and O'Malley had complementary styles of management.<sup>7</sup> Gabriel was the strong, stoic persona.<sup>8</sup> O'Malley was articulate, and he radiated competence and professionalism.<sup>9</sup> O'Malley was the detail man, and Gabriel was the authority figure.

The overall American military commander in Vietnam was Army four-star general Creighton T. Abrams.<sup>10</sup> The responsibility of the air war was delegated to Air Force four-star general John D. Lavelle. General Lavelle operated out of the command center of the Seventh Air Force at Ton Son Nhut, Vietnam. The Seventh Air Force operationally controlled all fighter and bomber aircraft in Vietnam. As General Lavelle's operations officer, Maj Gen Alton D. Slay implemented that control (fig. 37). The Seventh Air Force commanded the air war through orders to multiple wings, including the 432d TRW led by Colonels Gabriel and O'Malley. Table 1 outlines a simplified chain of command.



**Figure 36. Wartime map of the 432d wing operations area.** (Reprinted from History, 432d TRW, January–March 1972.)



**Figure 37. General Lavelle assumes command of the Seventh Air Force from General Slay.** (Reprinted with permission from *Air Force Magazine*.)

**Table 1. Seventh Air Force chain of command**

Commander	Pres. Richard M. Nixon
Secretary of Defense	Melvin Laird
Joint Chiefs of Staff	Chairman – Adm. Thomas H. Moorer (Air Force member) Gen John Ryan
Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) commander	Amb. Ellsworth Bunker Gen Creighton T. Abrams
MACV deputy for Air (Seventh Air Force commander)	Gen John D. Lavelle
Seventh Air Force director of operations	Maj Gen Alton D. Slay
432d wing commander 432d vice-commander	Col Charles A. Gabriel Col Jerome F. O'Malley

Condensed from <http://www.afa.org/magazine/feb2007/0207tapes.asp> (accessed 27 April 2007).

The stated political objective of the military action was, in theory, to protect South Vietnam from invasion by North Vietnam. It was sometimes referred to as a police action as opposed to a war since the military objective did not include defeating the North Vietnamese. The objective was to keep the North Vietnamese from imposing their will on the South Vietnamese.

The Johnson administration suspended bombing in North Vietnam on 1 November 1968 to induce the North Vietnamese to come to the negotiating table. The unilateral American suspension of bombing in North Vietnam created a safe haven to which the enemy retreated after attacks. The issue in which Gabriel and O'Malley became involved arose from the rules of engagement (ROE). The ROEs specified guidelines within which aircrews were required to operate in the prosecution of the war. They were consolidated at Seventh Air Force into a manual of operating authorities and disseminated to the flying units. Aircrews received briefings on the ROEs before each mission. A highly stringent set of rules applied to missions in North Vietnam.

The key ROEs prohibited American warplanes from firing at targets in North Vietnam unless the American aircraft were either "fired" at or "activated against" by enemy radar.<sup>11</sup> At the time the rule was written (June 1968), surface-to-air missiles (SAM) were controlled at the missile site only. US aircraft that were locked onto by radar would receive an alarm in the cockpit to provide warning time to the pilot to enable the pilot to take evasive action.<sup>12</sup> If the American aircraft were fired upon or activated against, they were then permitted to execute a protective-reaction strike. The American aircraft were permitted to "protect" themselves by responding to the enemy reaction. The North Vietnamese exploited this self-imposed US restriction to the fullest. The enemy massed large arsenals of weapons and built several fighter bases close enough to launch on US bombers and gunships flying in northern South Vietnam. The rule never induced the North Vietnamese to negotiate.

This limitation became more and more hazardous to US flyers. In 1968 the enemy had limited ability to track American aircraft. By late 1971 the enemy had integrated its radar systems. The search (early warning) radars that in 1968 gave only general information of American planes traveling into North Vietnamese airspace were now interconnected and fed much more

specific targeting data regarding US aircraft traveling into North Vietnam.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the enemy early warning radar that was previously not considered an immediate threat to US aircraft was now an instrument of grave danger to US flyers. Interconnecting enemy radars significantly reduced the time necessary for a targeting fix. Consequently, aircrews attempting to execute missions with cumbersome ROEs were exposed to an enemy technology leap that exposed them to SAM or antiaircraft artillery (AAA) attacks virtually without warning. This hazard was compounded by the comparison of the maximum velocity of a SAM, Mach 3.5, to the maximum velocity of an F-4, Mach 2.17.

The enemy's response to the gradual withdrawal of American forces was to significantly build up its forces and materiel in the safe harbor of North Vietnam. The North Vietnamese accumulated thousands of additional SAMs and antiaircraft batteries.<sup>14</sup> For example, in the three months before that—July to September—only two SAMs were fired.<sup>15</sup> By comparison, only two SAMs were fired the previous three months, July to September 1971.<sup>16</sup> The only rebuttal to the unmitigated North Vietnamese buildup was the air combat missions into North Vietnam. In the winter of 1971–72, the air war became the focal point of the Vietnam War.

Within the 432d TRW, two strike squadrons were equipped with close to 25 F-4D fighter-bombers each. These aircraft held the capability to deliver napalm and cluster, regular, or laser-designated bombs on assigned targets. They also could be equipped to fire air-to-air missiles that were either radar-guided or infrared seekers to target enemy aircraft.<sup>17</sup> The third squadron of the 432d TRW, with which O'Malley most frequently flew, was the tactical reconnaissance squadron. The reconnaissance squadron flew RF-4Cs that were equipped with highly sensitive cameras and other sensors to collect topographical and intelligence about enemy forces.

As vice-commander, O'Malley helped to plan air operations and to personally lead missions. Many of these missions were high risk and critical. By 1971 North Vietnam served as a sanctuary for enemy aircraft; it was heavily defended with anti-aircraft weapons: SAMs, antiaircraft batteries, MiG fighters, and sophisticated radars.

The RF-4C had a two-man crew: a pilot (aircraft commander) and a navigator (weapons systems operator). The “R” in RF-4C meant reconnaissance, and the “F” stood for fighter; the “4” was the sequence of the development of fighter aircraft, and “C” was the model (fig. 38). Equipped with sensitive cameras to conduct surveillance of military targets on the ground, the RF-4C provided critical intelligence for targeting troop movements, existence of radars, location of tanks, and increase of anti-aircraft batteries.<sup>18</sup> When crews were completed, film was developed, and the target-selection process started again.<sup>19</sup>

When flying combat missions, personal items, rings, name-tags, and other identification were left behind.<sup>20</sup> Flyers carried military identification cards and the normal array of life-support equipment. This included a revolver, 20 to 30 rounds of ball, and/or tracer ammunition.<sup>21</sup>

Reconnaissance tactics required that the RF-4C be flown straight and level over its objective to get a clear image for targeting photos.<sup>22</sup> Photo distortion could be created by fluctuations in altitude. Consequently, pilots were required to adhere to preordained altitudes.<sup>23</sup> The inherent risk of the RF-4C was the need to fly unarmed, level, and directly over enemy targets.



**Figure 38. RF-4C.**

To counter this obvious risk, reconnaissance aircraft were always escorted by F-4D fighter-bombers.<sup>24</sup> The fighter-bombers protected the reconnaissance aircraft by expelling ordnance on such active threats as radar-tracking flights, guns firing, or SAM sites.<sup>25</sup>

In the eight months that Colonel O'Malley was in Vietnam, he flew an ambitious 115 combat sorties. Seventy of the missions were in the RF-4C reconnaissance aircraft, and 45 were in the F-4D fighter bomber.

In the fall of 1971, the 432d TRW suffered several attacks from AAA fire in North Vietnam. On 2 September 1971, an F-4D was on its second pass over the target when it was hit.<sup>26</sup> Immediately, it went into a violent rapid roll at low altitude, and both Airmen bailed out. Air America later was able to pick up the crew members by helicopter, and they were hospitalized.<sup>27</sup> A week later, on 9 September 1971, another plane in the 432d was hit and went down. This time though, crew members could not be retrieved. They were never found.<sup>28</sup> Also in September four additional planes were hit by ground fire but were able to return to the base.<sup>29</sup>

The intensity of the North's air defenses continued to increase in October. On 7 October 1971, an RF-4C from the 432d was flying at 7,000 feet above ground level when the crew felt a jolt aft of the rear cockpit.<sup>30</sup> Moments later the aircraft began to have violent, uncontrolled flight.<sup>31</sup> The aircraft broke out of the clouds, and the pilot made several unsuccessful attempts to regain control.<sup>32</sup> When the pilot gave the command, the navigator ejected successfully at approximately 1,000 feet.<sup>33</sup> The pilot never got out and was found by Army Special Forces still tied into his ejection seat within the fuselage.<sup>34</sup> The crash site was located near an active Vietcong trail, and Special Forces in the vicinity killed five enemy troops in the immediate area. An attempt to examine the wreckage from the ground was considered hazardous. Special Forces blew up the nose section of the aircraft before departing.<sup>35</sup> It was clearly becoming a more hazardous environment in North Vietnam.<sup>36</sup>

Friction between planners in Washington and commanders in the theater of combat was apparent through the top secret messages exchanged between Vietnam and the Pentagon. Combat commanders realized that it was increasingly vital to give

discretion to their forces to defend themselves by attacking high-priority targets (SAM sites and MiG airfields) instead of waiting for a SAM site to launch a missile or a MiG to attack. Military chiefs in Washington were frequently informed of the “emphasis the enemy has placed on integrating [its] air defense system.” Washington urged commanders in Vietnam to “take all possible measures to protect our aircrews.”<sup>37</sup> Yet Washington superiors limited the measures available. Communiqués from General Abrams in Vietnam to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in Washington requested authority “to destroy the MiG threat and recommended that immediate authority be granted to conduct strikes against Bai Thuong, Quan Lang, and Vinh Airfields.”<sup>38</sup> These requests were repeatedly denied by the JCS.<sup>39</sup>

However, on 8 November 1971, when chairman of the JCS (CJCS), Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, traveled to Vietnam, he immediately appreciated the danger presented by the dramatic increase in SAM attacks. Admiral Moorer responded to a request from General Lavelle to attack a MiG airfield in the North: “I encouraged him to go ahead and make the mission as long as he coordinated with the Navy.” Admiral Moorer personally cleared the mission.<sup>40</sup> Four strike F-4D aircraft accompanied one RF-4C as they left Udorn and flew to North Vietnam on 8 November 1971.<sup>41</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Kittinger led the strike mission, saying, “We were given just a few minutes to assemble the aircraft and crews for the mission.”<sup>42</sup> The US strike aircraft flew to the North Vietnamese airfield at Dong Hoi and released ordnance on the airfield target. The RF-4C photographed the area to get bomb-damage information. Before leaving Vietnam the next day, Admiral Moorer reviewed the results of the mission and the bombed airfield.<sup>43</sup> The bomb mission results also were sent to the JCS in Washington where Gen John Ryan, chief of the Air Force, critiqued the mission results. No member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff questioned whether General Lavelle had appropriate authority to order these preplanned strikes. Instead of questioning the fact that the mission was preplanned, the JCS suggested more careful planning.<sup>44</sup>

A couple of weeks later, on 21 November 1971, the commanders in Vietnam attempted to use Admiral Moorer’s November 7–8 endorsement of preplanned strikes as an accepted precedent in an effort to obtain authority to strike airfields

again. The need for this request was prompted by a MiG attack on a B-52. Past strikes on North Vietnam airfields south of 20 degrees north were protective-reaction strikes conducted in accordance with current air operating authorities. Three such protective-reaction strikes were conducted against Dong Hoi and Vinh Airfields on 8 November 1971 and on Quan Lang on 9 November 1971. That MiGs continued to deploy to these airfields in spite of the recent strikes provided strong evidence that the existing authorities were inadequate to deter the enemy from continuing attacks against the American B-52 aircraft. A strike against all four airfields south of 20 degrees north (latitude) in North Vietnam would clearly demonstrate a US resolve to protect aircrews and aircraft in spite of a US force draw-down.<sup>45</sup> The Pentagon again provided no additional authority.<sup>46</sup>

Not long after this request, another near-miss of a B-52 by a MiG occurred that changed the mood. The JCS reacted by ordering a conference to develop procedures to minimize the risk to B-52s.<sup>47</sup> Meetings were held in Honolulu, Hawaii, on 4 and 5 December 1971. The JCS issued instructions to theater commanders to be more aggressive. The JCS representative, Lt Gen John Vogt, chastised combat commanders for not making full use of the authorities. The JCS instructed commanders to increase the number of escort aircraft from two to four, eight, or 16 to ensure maximum damage to the enemy on protective-reaction strikes.<sup>48</sup> Critical to the field commander's concern for the appropriate authority was the unambiguous verbal assurance that they could expect full backing from the JCS.<sup>49</sup> Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird reaffirmed this support on a visit to South Vietnam in December 1971. Laird specifically suggested to General Lavelle a liberal interpretation of the ROEs and that he would be backed up (fig. 39).<sup>50</sup>

The US military knew by December 1971 that the North Vietnamese were preparing for a massive attack on the South.<sup>51</sup> O'Malley's wing was attempting to pressure the North Vietnamese by flying an average of over 200 combat sorties a week.<sup>52</sup> MiG warnings increased during this time to a level greater than any corresponding time since 1968.<sup>53</sup> Gunships were being fired upon more frequently.<sup>54</sup> The wing commander, Colonel Gabriel, sent the following message to Seventh Air Force: "With the increased aggressiveness of enemy MiG forces, it has become in-



**Figure 39. Secretary Laird and Admiral Moorer.** (Reprinted with permission from *Air Force Magazine*.)

creasingly evident that recently arrived [pilots] are not adequately trained in the air-to-air mission before their arrival.”<sup>55</sup> A rotation of new and inexperienced pilots, combined with a

dramatic increase in enemy fighters, created alarm in the 432d. This was compounded by enemy tactics. At night, when most enemy logistical movements occurred, enemy gunners would hose the sky with antiaircraft fire.<sup>56</sup> Based upon the amount of AAA fire, 432d TRW crews were flying into the most heavily defended airspace since World War II in Berlin.<sup>57</sup> By January 1972, AAA sites were estimated at 194,200.<sup>58</sup> MiG and SAM alerts in the 432d TRW alone, from January to March, totaled 1,197.<sup>59</sup>

The Nixon administration was conducting secret negotiations with the North Vietnamese during the fall of 1971. In November 1971, the United States sent a note offering to meet with any member of the Hanoi leadership to end the war on a basis just for all parties.<sup>60</sup> The North Vietnamese did not reply. Out of frustration, the Nixon administration response was to authorize a period of limited-duration bombing. The condition of requiring protective-reaction strikes or restraining attacks until they saw enemy reaction was officially and publicly suspended from 26 to 30 December 1971.<sup>61</sup> During this five-day period, 245 aircraft flew 1,100 sorties.<sup>62</sup> On 29 December 1971 O'Malley led a mission of 12 F-4D tactical fighters against one of the most heavily defended airfields in North Vietnam.<sup>63</sup> For this mission, he was awarded his ninth oak leaf cluster to the Air Medal.<sup>64</sup>

A disastrous day hit the 432d TRW on 18 December 1971 when three aircraft were shot down in one day. At 5:50 AM on 18 December 1971, an F-4D from the 432d TRW, identified as Falcon 66<sup>65</sup> was assigned to protect against the MiG threat.<sup>66</sup> After topping off with a tanker, Falcon 66 headed for high orbit. Immediately thereafter, a radio transmission was heard: "Falcon 66 is down, position unknown, have two good chutes."<sup>67</sup> No further transmissions were heard. Despite a rescue effort, the crew was never recovered.

At the same time, Falcon 75 was diverted to chase MiG fighter bandits.<sup>68</sup> They were unable to close, even though they punched their external tanks and hit Mach 1.6.<sup>69</sup> Running low on fuel, Falcon 75 turned to return to the base when three MiGs appeared on their tail. After two hard turns, the bandits disengaged. Running out of fuel, the crew of Falcon 75 decided to go feet wet into the gulf so the Navy could pick them up.<sup>70</sup> They didn't make it.<sup>71</sup> Falcon 74 began to have instrument trouble and was calling a tanker to refuel when it took evasive actions

to avoid a SAM launch.<sup>72</sup> Though the crew avoided the SAM, the aircraft flamed out, and the crew ejected. After a night on the ground with enemy forces nearby, however, both crew members were recovered.<sup>73</sup>

On 19 December 1971, Falcon 82 and Falcon 83 departed Udorn at 0923 hours to strike several antiaircraft gun positions. While they were orbiting seeking target information, from their airborne forward air controller (FAC), 37 mm antiaircraft rounds were fired at them. Falcon 82 was transmitting but stopped abruptly. When Falcon 83 reacquired Falcon 82, the aircraft was enveloped in flames and headed for the ground. Falcon 82 impacted within seconds. No chutes were observed nor were any beeper signals received.<sup>74</sup> The crew did not survive.

On 5 January 1972, a strike in North Vietnam again raised the issue of authority to execute preplanned protective-reaction strikes. Located at Moc Chau, North Vietnam, was a radar site that controlled MiG aircraft. The radar was a major threat, as it provided current information on the slower-moving American gunships.<sup>75</sup> After a briefing, General Abrams authorized a preplanned strike. Air-to-surface missiles hit the Moc Chau radar on the night of 5 January, completely disabling the radar.<sup>76</sup> The JCS sent a message from Washington saying that while they were sympathetic with conducting preplanned strikes, the raids should not be conducted unless the JCS could get approval from higher authority.<sup>77</sup>

On 8 January 1972, wing vice-commander Colonel O'Malley led a strike near Tchepone, Laos.<sup>78</sup> Tchepone was a main terminal on the Ho Chi Minh Trail and was notorious for its concentration of antiaircraft batteries and mobile SAMs. O'Malley was able to take the high-priority photoreconnaissance needed over another target area blanketed with SAMs and AAA. He was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission.<sup>79</sup>

American aircraft losses continued to mount. On 17 January, the enemy hit two AC-130 gunships, each carrying more than 10 crew members.<sup>80</sup> Even though there was no loss of life, O'Malley's unit lost an RF-4C on 20 January 1972.<sup>81</sup> The pilot started a normal maneuver; at 8,000 feet antiaircraft fire struck the aircraft, causing the stick to go dead and the plane to enter

a negative-G spin. The pilot hit the eject function, and both crew members bailed out. They were later recovered by Air America.<sup>82</sup>

Colonel O'Malley had firsthand experience with netted radars setting up a SAM attack of US aircraft. On a protective-reaction mission over the North, O'Malley was flying in formation just ahead of legendary fighter pilot Lt Col Joseph Kittinger. A SAM missile was launched and burning directly towards the belly of O'Malley's aircraft. O'Malley apparently did not receive any electronic warning from his aircraft that the SAM had locked on to his aircraft, thus he received no warning that the SAM had been launched toward him. The missile was traveling at three times the speed of sound and carrying 430 pounds of high explosives. Colonel Kittinger radioed O'Malley to dive. At just the right moment, Kittinger instructed O'Malley to break right.<sup>83</sup> O'Malley scrupulously followed Kittinger's rapid guidance and defeated the SAM.<sup>84</sup> The maneuver demonstrated O'Malley's high confidence in Kittinger.

MiGs previously had launched from Dong Hoi Airfield and attacked B-52s.<sup>85</sup> On 23 January 1972, General Lavelle targeted a MiG at this airfield.<sup>86</sup> The strike on Dong Hoi was successful; however, a miscue within the Seventh Air Force headquarters command post caused some misunderstandings. During the flight back, the pilot reported over the radio, "Expended all ordnance, the mission was successful, no enemy reaction."<sup>87</sup> General Lavelle, sensitive to the need for enemy reaction to properly justify each strike, snapped at the director of operations, Major General Slay, saying, "We can't report no reaction."<sup>88</sup> Lavelle instructed Slay, "He must report reaction."<sup>89</sup> Although Lavelle intended the pilot to report hostile radar as the basis to report enemy reaction, he did not take the time to explain himself.<sup>90</sup> Lavelle's order was interpreted literally and passed down through the chain of command. General Slay told Gabriel and O'Malley<sup>91</sup> that "you must assume by General Lavelle's direction that you have reaction and hopefully you can see the bursts and tell us what it is."<sup>92</sup> Major General Slay talked about this definition of reaction directly with Colonel Gabriel on two separate occasions.<sup>93</sup> General Lavelle personally told Colonel Gabriel that illumination by enemy radar was

reaction under his view of the ROEs.<sup>94</sup> Gabriel instructed Colonel O'Malley accordingly.

All the preflight briefings conducted by O'Malley were classified as secret or top secret. Dutifully following the orders from the Seventh Air Force, O'Malley ordered crew members to record that reaction regardless of whether it had been received from the enemy.<sup>95</sup> Out of thousands of sorties, nearly every mission flown over North Vietnam caused AAA, SAM, or MiG reaction. Only an infinitesimal number of missions failed to create observable enemy reaction. But on the few that did not, these instructions caused crews to report receipt of hostile enemy fire when none was observed.<sup>96</sup>

General Lavelle earnestly believed that recording hostile radar complied with the ROEs since the netted enemy radar constituted activation against US aircraft. However, he never took the time to explain to Major General Slay, director of operations, how he wanted the reaction documented.

O'Malley was aware of General Lavelle's opinion that illumination by enemy radar was *de facto* enemy reaction.<sup>97</sup> O'Malley assumed that the Seventh Air Force was conducting these preplanned protective-reaction strikes based upon higher authority.<sup>98</sup> Colonel Gabriel recognized that there was a valid military purpose for the strikes since every target was a valid military objective.<sup>99</sup> Colonels Gabriel and O'Malley recognized that wartime environments required secrets. It was not unusual to make false denials to preserve that secrecy. Concealing the absence of reaction would not have been inconsistent with acceptable military tactics.<sup>100</sup>

At times post-mission reporting on the few missions on which no reaction was detected became a complex and cumbersome process for the 432d TRW. The customary debrief of the aircrew created consternation when crews were required to report enemy reaction when there had been none.

On 25 January 1972, a sergeant attached to the current intelligence division was tasked to debrief the crew that had just returned from a mission.<sup>101</sup> When he asked the crew if they had received hostile fire, a crew member said, "No, we didn't, but we have to report that we did."<sup>102</sup> The sergeant objected to the reporting of false information, but two superiors told him that orders were to report fictional enemy reaction.<sup>103</sup> Although

disturbed with the response of superiors, the sergeant returned to the crew and complied with the order by finishing with a bogus description of 23 mm ground fire.<sup>104</sup> Had the sergeant sought advice from the next highest supervisor in the chain of command, he would have been directed to the 432d TRW, Colonel O'Malley, wing inspector general (IG).<sup>105</sup> Regrettably, the sergeant did not pursue his concern beyond the captain who was his immediate supervisor.<sup>106</sup> As the wing IG, Colonel O'Malley would have had the authority to bring the issue directly to General Lavelle, who had no idea at the time that his impassioned order was causing a chain reaction with the ultimate result of inaccurate reporting. A month later, the sergeant was confronted with the situation again. Instead of speaking to the IG about it, he wrote to his US senator in Washington. This letter would ricochet around Washington, resulting in military inquiries, congressional hearings, and demotion of the Seventh Air Force commander.

The issue of authority to bomb in North Vietnam without the need for enemy reaction was heating up at the highest levels of government. In the Oval Office of the White House, on Thursday, 3 February 1972, at 10:53 AM, US ambassador to Vietnam, Ellsworth F. Bunker, met with the president and the National Security Council (NSC) (fig. 40).

The ambassador was seeking great strike authority devoid of the precondition of enemy reaction. He explained to the president that it was too dangerous for US crews. Ambassador Bunker pressed the president, saying, "If we could get authority to bomb these SAM sites. . . ." <sup>107</sup> "Now the authority is for bomb when, when they fire at aircraft" or "when the radar's locked on." <sup>108</sup> Explaining the vulnerability of American flyers, he continued, "The problem is, that that's, that's late to start attacking." National Security Advisor Dr. Henry A. Kissinger suggested that the president authorize US forces to hit any SAM that ever targeted a US aircraft. Dr. Kissinger asked the president to say that "Abrams can hit any SAM site that has locked on even if it is no longer locked on." <sup>109</sup>

After a lengthy discussion, President Nixon instructed Ambassador Bunker to relay the following presidential orders to General Abrams in Vietnam: "He [General Abrams] is to call all of these things protective-reaction. Just call it protective reaction.



**Figure 40. Ellsworth Bunker, advisor to Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson.** (Reprinted with permission from Wikimedia Commons.)

Alright? Because preventive reaction. I am simply saying that we expand the definition of protective reaction to mean preventive reaction where a SAM site is concerned. And I think that, that, to be sure that anything that goes down there, just call it ordinary protective reaction. Who knows or would say they didn't fire?"<sup>110</sup>

Aware of the inevitable hostile public reaction from an expansion of the ROEs, Dr. Kissinger recommended to the president that the change of the ROEs be kept secret: "Now, could they stop from blabbing it at every bloody briefing?" The president agreed, saying, "I want you to tell Abrams when you get back that he is to tell the military not to put out extensive briefings with regard to our military activities from now on until we get back from China."<sup>111</sup> (Ultimately the American public would never be informed of this presidential change in the rules of engagement.) Figure 41 captures a meeting between President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger.

The president agreed: "You've worked out the authority. He can hit SAM sites period. Okay? But he is not to do it with a public declaration. Alright? And if it does get out, to the extent it does, he says it's a protective-reaction strike. He is to describe



**Figure 41. President Nixon meets with Secretary Kissinger.** (Reprinted with permission from Corbis, Inc.)

it as protective reaction. And he doesn't have to spell it out, they struck, that's all he needs is a SAM site, a protective-reaction strike against a SAM site."<sup>112</sup> The president concluded, "Do it, but don't say anything."<sup>113</sup>

Because of the president's actions, the US military now had authorization from the highest level to strike without the precondition of enemy reaction. Yet, operating forces were not permitted to disclose an official change in the ROEs. This conundrum ultimately would pit planners in Washington against commanders in Vietnam. The chairman of the JCS confirmed the order of secrecy on 7 February 1972 in a top secret communication. In a message to the commanders in Vietnam, Admiral Moorer said, "To help minimize the possibility that the North Vietnamese [will] build a military capability within the DMZ for sudden strikes across the PMDL, you are authorized to conduct tactical air strikes into the northern portion of the DMZ whenever US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) determines the North Vietnamese are using the area in preparation for an attack southward. Public Affairs

Guidance. No public announcement of any kind will be made with regard to these actions."<sup>14</sup> The White House and the JCS were working together to conceal the rule change, which undoubtedly would be met with significant political opposition. The message appears below (fig. 42).

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NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

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~~T O P S E C R E T~~ SPECAT EXCLUSIVE 5084

FOR ADMIRAL MCCAIN, INFO FOR GENERAL ABRAM: FROM ADMIRAL MOORER  
CJCS SENDS  
DELIVER DURING WAKING HOURS ONLY  
JBJ: OPERATING AUTHORITY, DMZ (S)

**IMMEDIATE**  
**SPECAT EXCLUSIVE** *Asst/PA*

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PAGE 1 ~~T O P S E C R E T~~ 0000001

**Figure 42. Joint Chief of Staff message (from Admiral Moorer to McCain advising him not to release any information.** (Reprinted from Joint Chiefs of Staff messages as listed in the appendix.) (Note: This message appears in its entirety in the appendix.)

A second round of publicly acknowledged limited-duration strikes were executed on 16 February 1972.<sup>115</sup> Seventh Air Force issued orders suspending the need to have enemy reaction before striking.<sup>116</sup> On this 16 February mission, 14 escort fighter-bombers accompanied a reconnaissance aircraft. Nine of the bombers expended ordnance.<sup>117</sup> The targets were 130 mm and 122 mm heavy guns located just north of the DMZ.<sup>118</sup> The first wave of American aircraft struck the defending SAMs sites and then proceeded to hit the heavy guns.<sup>119</sup>

The 432d TRW suffered losses. In this February raid, Falcon 74 was the lead aircraft in a flight of three fighter aircraft over North Vietnam when the cockpit alarms sounded to indicate a SAM attack.<sup>120</sup> A SAM was launched: it went high, and three more SAMs were launched.<sup>121</sup> Falcon 75 called "SAM," but the Falcon 74 did not take expected evasive action and was struck. Since the SAM approached from directly below the aircraft, there was no way of it being seen from the cockpit. The crew was lost.<sup>122</sup> The number of preplanned protective-reaction strikes increased considerably in February 1972 with strikes on 18, 21, and 22 February.<sup>123</sup>

The media did not question the use of the term *protective-reaction* strike. On 24 February 1971, the *New York Times* reported from Saigon, South Vietnam, that the US Military Assistance Command to Vietnam (MACV) "disclosed yesterday that 50 American fighter-bombers flew 'protective-reaction strikes' against missile and antiaircraft artillery positions in North Vietnam last weekend."<sup>124</sup> The MACV spokesman said that news of the raids last weekend had been withheld until yesterday "mostly for security reasons."<sup>125</sup> The US command said that the plane instruments told the pilots that radar-controlled guns on the ground were tracking them preparatory to firing.<sup>126</sup> The raids had the sole objective of striking positions in North Vietnam that previously had fired on American planes.<sup>127</sup>

On 25 February 1972, the sergeant sent his critical letter about issuing false reports: "I and other members of the 432nd TRW have been falsifying classified reports for missions into North Viet Nam. That is, we have been reporting that our planes have received hostile reactions such as AAA and SAM firings whether they have or not. We have also been falsifying targets

struck and bomb damage assessments. I have been informed by my immediate OIC, Captain Murray, that authorization for this falsification of classified documents comes from secure telephone communications from the Deputy of Operations, 7th Air Force."<sup>128</sup>

On 25 February, the 432d TRW conducted three preplanned protective-reaction missions, utilizing 17 escort aircraft.<sup>129</sup> The preplanned protective-reaction strikes went unabated until the arrival of the letter in Washington. Preplanned protective-reaction strikes occurred on 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 March.<sup>130</sup> On 8 March 1972, however, Senator Harold E. Hughes received the letter in Washington. The next day, Gen John Ryan dispatched an Air Force IG to Vietnam to investigate.

General Lavelle met with the IG and told him, "You never go over North Vietnam that that system isn't activated against you" because the North Vietnamese radar system was totally netted.<sup>131</sup> The discovery of false reports came as a surprise.<sup>132</sup> However, as the person who gave the order "not to report 'no reaction,'" General Lavelle stepped up and assumed full responsibility for the miscommunication within the Seventh Air Force.<sup>133</sup> He said that "[M]y instructions were not clear and were subject to misinterpretation and, in retrospect, were apparently interpreted by my subordinates as an exhortation to report enemy fire when there was none. 'Hostile action, enemy radar,' would in my judgment, have been an accurate report."<sup>134</sup> General Lavelle remarked that "it happened in my command. . . . It was my fault."<sup>135</sup> As the issue exploded upon the national scene, his unwavering assumption of responsibility was to provide protection for the careers of all those officers below in the chain of command.

On 21 March 1972, Admiral Moorer sent an odd top secret message to the Seventh Air Force warning that "the increased number of protective-reaction strikes since 1 January 1972 has attracted a considerable amount of high-level interest here and is receiving increasing attention from the press."<sup>136</sup> In reality the number of strikes was not getting increased attention; however, Admiral Moorer had to communicate to those in Vietnam that the secret change in the ROEs could no longer be utilized. He proceeded to underscore the "extreme sensitivity" of this subject and requested that all crews be "thoroughly briefed

that current authority permits protective reaction to be taken only when enemy air defenses either fire at or [are] activated against friendly forces.”<sup>137</sup> So began the JCS’s effort to secretly erase the previously issued authority.

On 23 March 1972, the IG’s report found that “some missions had not been flown in accordance with the ROEs and that there were irregularities in the operational reports.”<sup>138</sup> General Lavelle was summoned to Washington immediately.<sup>139</sup> He was instructed to go directly to the quarters of Gen John Ryan.<sup>140</sup> The chief told General Lavelle that he had two options: he could then be given a new assignment in the grade of major general; or he could retire as a lieutenant general.<sup>141</sup> General Lavelle wished to speak directly with the secretaries of the Air Force and DOD.<sup>142</sup> The meeting concluded with an understanding that General Lavelle would meet with one of the secretaries. Lavelle spent the following week at the Pentagon, waiting for an audience with one of the secretaries, but neither the secretary of defense nor the secretary of Air Force could find the time to discuss the basis of his removal. Realizing he would not get to explain his position to the secretaries, General Lavelle agreed to retirement on 5 April 1972.<sup>143</sup>

On 30 March 1972, the North Vietnamese poured over the DMZ in full force with its resources in a massive invasion by conventional forces.<sup>144</sup> The South Vietnamese were losing ground rapidly and fighting for their lives.<sup>145</sup> The niceties of protective reaction were promptly scuttled. On 7 April 1972, American forces received unrestricted authority to bomb in North Vietnam. During April 1972 the US forces would fly more than 700 heavy-bomber (B-52) missions over North Vietnam.<sup>146</sup> Back in Washington, General Ryan released an Air Force statement, saying that General Lavelle was retiring for “personal and health reasons.”<sup>147</sup> No mention was made by the Air Force of bombing without authority or of false reporting.

On 2 May 1972, Jerry O’Malley departed Vietnam for the United States to assume command of the top-rated 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Beale AFB, California. The command was a reward for a job well done in combat. Jerry had no understanding of the brewing national story.

On 15 May 1972, Cong. Otis Pike said the following on the floor of the House: “Mr. Speaker, it is time the Air Force and the

Pentagon told the American people the truth about the so-called retirement of a four-star general who was removed as the head of all of our Air Force operations in Vietnam.”<sup>148</sup> The “Air Force put out a little story that the general had retired for ‘personal and health reasons.’ The Air Force did not tell the truth.”<sup>149</sup>

General Ryan quickly tried to get ahead of the controversy with the release of a second statement saying that he “personally relieved Gen. John D. Lavelle as commander of the Seventh Air Force in Vietnam because of irregularities in the conduct of his command responsibilities.”<sup>150</sup> Immediately the national press jumped into the fray. On 10 June 1972, *New York Times* investigative reporter Seymour M. Hersh revealed that General Lavelle was “demoted after ordering repeated and unauthorized bombing attacks of military targets in North Vietnam.”<sup>151</sup> It was the first time in modern military history that a four-star general or admiral has been nominated to retire at a lower rank.”<sup>152</sup> Undoubtedly, Colonel O’Malley was affected by this burgeoning political and military scandal. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were national news sources. And, both papers were raising serious questions about military leadership. The criticism was being directed at missions that Jerry had led. “Is it possible for a battlefield commander to grossly violate operations orders and not be detected for three months?” is the question that was posed in the *New York Times*.<sup>153</sup> This question had direct application to Colonel O’Malley. It was the first time in Jerry’s professional career that his integrity had been directly or publicly questioned. Friends of Jerry reported that he was greatly disturbed by what was happening. He was confounded by the suggestion that General Lavelle, a very experienced senior officer with an impeccable record, made such an egregious mistake. O’Malley was offended at the inference of improper actions. Congressional hearings were announced. Serious questions were to be explored regarding the primacy of civilian control of the military, the ROEs, false reporting, and the role of the wing IG.<sup>154</sup> As the wing IG, the young colonel saw the tornado-like national story was taking a path directly towards him.

The House Armed Services Committee summoned Generals Lavelle and Ryan to testify on 12 June 1972.<sup>155</sup> Instead of end-

ing the controversy, the House hearing sparked calls for a Senate inquiry. Senator William Proxmire called for courts-marshal for violating the principle of civilian control of the military.<sup>156</sup> Other senators called for courts-marshal of junior officers who participated in preparing false reports. On 13 June Senator Hughes announced that he was planning to seek a full hearing on the matter before the Senate Armed Services Committee.<sup>157</sup>

Behind the scenes at the White House, the political issue of General Lavelle's treatment became a point for discussion. On Wednesday, 14 June, during an NSC in the Oval Office, the president said, "Well let me ask you about Lavelle. I was, I had it on my list this morning. I just don't want him to be made a goat. We all know what protective reaction is, this [expletive deleted] Laird."<sup>158</sup> Dr. Kissinger blamed Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird for the removal of General Lavelle, "And he had him already removed by the time I even learned about it."<sup>159</sup> President Nixon said in an aggravated tone, "Why did he even remove him? You, you destroy a man's career."<sup>160</sup> Dr. Kissinger did not answer the question, but rather diverted the conversation to the Russians. President Nixon interrupted and demanded, "Come back to Lavelle, I don't want a man persecuted for doing what he thought was right. I just don't want it done."<sup>161</sup> President Nixon insisted, "Can we do anything now to stop this [expletive deleted] thing, or? Why'd he even remove 'em'?"<sup>162</sup> Dr. Kissinger said, "Lavelle was removed at the end of March."<sup>163</sup> The president asked incredulously, "Because of this?" Dr. Kissinger responded, "Yea." President Nixon was furious, "Why the [expletive deleted] did this happen? A decision of that magnitude without? I should have known about it, Henry. Because this is something we told. You remember we, we, we told Laird to keep pressure on there in March." President Nixon concluded: "Because Laird knows [expletive deleted] well, that a, I told him, I said it's protective reaction. He winks, he says, 'Oh I understand.'"<sup>164</sup>

As each day passed public positions became polemical. Senator William Proxmire said on 15 June 1972: "I call on the Air Force to begin formal proceedings against Gen John D. Lavelle under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, leading to his court-martial. The time has come to determine wither [sic] a civilian or a military finger is on the trigger. . . ." Senator Proxmire publicly opined that General Lavelle "countermanded the rules laid down

by the President of the United States. He definitely violated the principles of civilian control of the military." On 21 June 1972, 1st Lt Delbert R. Terrill Jr., a 1970 graduate of the Air Force Academy, preferred charges against General Lavelle for disobedience of orders for violation of the ROEs.<sup>165</sup>

Dr. Kissinger and the president met in the White House on 26 June 1972 at 8:57 AM. The president had been advised not to become involved in the Senate inquiry. President Nixon said, "Frankly, Henry, I don't feel right about our pushing him into this thing and then, and then giving him a bad rap! You see what I mean?" President Nixon closed the discussion, "I want to keep it away if I can, but I don't want to hurt an innocent man."<sup>166</sup>

From 11 to 28 September 1972, the Senate Armed Services Committee conducted hearings.<sup>167</sup> At issue were four concerns: (1) the retirement of John D. Lavelle as a lieutenant general; (2) inquiry into matters relating to authority for certain bombing missions in North Vietnam between November 1971 and March 1972; (3) the appointment of Creighton W. Abrams to Army chief of staff; and (4) the renewal of Adm Thomas H. Moorer's position as CJCS.<sup>168</sup> Witnesses included Col Charles A. Gabriel, 432d TRW wing commander; Maj Gen Alton D. Slay, Seventh Air Force, director of operations; Capt Douglas J. Murray, 432d TRW, branch chief of operational intelligence; and Sgt Lonnie Franks for intelligence serving the 432d TRW.

Colonel O'Malley spent two days with Senate staffers who were conducting interviews, but ultimately he was not called as a witness.<sup>169</sup> Like Major General Slay and Colonel Gabriel, O'Malley felt that he had acted with integrity throughout his combat service.<sup>170</sup> He felt so strongly of the propriety of his conduct while executing these missions into North Vietnam that he considered resigning his commission before acknowledging any wrongdoing.<sup>171</sup>

In dramatic terms, General Lavelle testified that all his actions were authorized.<sup>172</sup> He said, "All of my judgments were made as a field commander acutely mindful of my often-anguishing responsibility for the protection of the lives and safety of thousands of courageous young Airmen in my command."<sup>173</sup> He rejected the assertion that he had exceeded his authority and said that he had applied the ROEs as he had been urged to by the JCS.<sup>174</sup> He testified to his understanding that the enemy's

netted radar system established “reaction,” which authorized force when the enemy radar “activated against” US aircraft.<sup>175</sup> He explained that a commander is always ultimately responsible for the consequences of his orders.<sup>176</sup> “The young men who made these reports were daily risking their lives for their country; they had been asked to fight an onerous war under morale-shattering handicaps which, as fighting men, they found difficult to understand. Under these circumstances I could not and would not recommend that they be disciplined and, as their commander, I have never suggested that the responsibility was other than my own.”<sup>177</sup>

General Lavelle told the Senate Armed Services Committee that he conferred with General Abrams on all missions. He also consulted with the CJCS, Admiral Moorer, before ordering attacks on North Vietnamese airfields in November 1971.<sup>178</sup> General Lavelle concluded: “Mr. Chairman, it is not pleasant to contemplate ending a long and distinguished military career with a catastrophic blemish on my record—a blemish for conscientiously doing the job I believe I was expected to do, and doing it with a minimum loss of American lives.”<sup>179</sup>

The Senate suspended General Abrams’ nomination to be chief of staff of the US Army until the completion of the hearings. On 13 September 1972, General Abrams testified that General Lavelle “acted against the rules” of engagement.<sup>180</sup> Generals Lavelle and Abrams who had worked well together in combat in Vietnam were now at odds on the crucial issue of authority to strike.

On 15 September 1972, the president met in the Oval Office with NSC advisor Brig Gen Alexander M. Haig. The president told General Haig, “We’ve got to be able to do something on this a, this Lavelle.” General Haig responded, “I don’t think so sir. I’ve been watchin’ it.” The president said, “We told Laird that if your guy Moorer isn’t sure if it is protective-reaction that to protect yourselves, we would back you to the hilt. The way I look at it.”<sup>181</sup> The chief of staff of the Air Force, Gen John D. Ryan, was summoned before Congress on 19 September 1972.<sup>182</sup> “I can unequivocally say I never gave him the authority,” General Ryan said when asked whether General Lavelle received encouragement or implied authority by superior officers to execute preplanned protective-reaction strikes.<sup>183</sup>

The wall of testimony against General Lavelle was capped off on 29 September 1972 with the appearance of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Admiral Moorer's renomination as chairman of JCS was put on hold by the Senate until the vote on the Lavelle issue. He testified that "at no time did I suggest to General Lavelle that we should preplan these strikes against these fields,"<sup>184</sup> even though he was present for the Quan Lang strikes of 8 November 1971.<sup>185</sup> "But I think where General Lavelle made his mistake was to give that direct order to release the weapons regardless of whether they were fired upon or not," said Admiral Moorer.<sup>186</sup>

On 6 October 1972, General Lavelle's nomination to be retired as a lieutenant general was disapproved by the Senate Armed Services Committee in a 14-2 vote, recording the first time in modern military history that the Congress rejected a Pentagon recommendation on retirement for a general officer. Lavelle was retired at the rank of major general, a demotion of two stars.<sup>187</sup>

Two weeks later in the Old Executive Office Building, President Nixon complained to General Haig, "All of this [expletive deleted] crap about Lavelle! And I feel sorry for the fellow, because you and I know we did tell him about 'protective reaction' being, very generally." General Haig responded, "Very liberal." President Nixon continued, "Ya, very liberally, very liberally. Remember I said it was, if they, if they hit there, go back and hit it again. Go back and do it right. You don't have to wait till they fire before you fire back. Remember I told Laird that. And I meant it. Now Lavelle apparently knew that and received that at some time."<sup>188</sup>

Six years after these events, General Lavelle was interviewed at his home. "The Senate vote," he said, "condemned me as being wrong."<sup>189</sup> "But," he maintained, "I did what was right. I did what was authorized."<sup>190</sup>

On 3 November 1972, the complaining sergeant from the 432d preferred court-martial charges against Col Jerome F. O'Malley and 22 other Air Force officers. The list of charges included *inter alia* (1) violation of the rules of engagement; (2) false reporting; (3) wrongfully hazarding aircraft units by making unauthorized strikes; and (4) inducing others to disobey the rules of engagement. Eighteen days later the secretary of

the Air Force dismissed all charges. The secretary ultimately also threw out all charges filed against General Lavelle.<sup>191</sup>

From 7 November 1971 to 9 March 1972, more than 25,000 strike sorties were flown from Udorn.<sup>192</sup> Twenty-nine of those missions were later questioned by Congress and dubbed in the press as the “Lavelle Raids.”

Neither Colonel O’Malley, Colonel Gabriel, nor Major General Slay suffered any permanent negative consequences from these events. The three eventually became four-star generals.

### Notes

1. Henry Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War: A History of America’s Involvement in and Extrication from the Vietnam War* (Rockefeller Center, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1983), 236.

2. Message, Top-Secret 9881–9884, Pacific Air Forces, to chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), 1 April 1972. Document is declassified.

3. Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War*, 236.

4. History, 432d Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, July 1971–December 1971, 1.

5. *Ibid.*, 8, fig. 2.

6. *Ibid.*, 70.

7. Charles Munroe to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 12 September 2000.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. The technical term was *Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV)*.

11. House, *Unauthorized Bombing of Military Targets in North Vietnam: Hearings of 15 December 1972 by the Special Subcommittee on Armed Services Investigations*, 92d Cong., 2d sess., 1972, 33.

12. *Ibid.*, 34.

13. Marshall L. Michel III, *Clashes: Air Combat over North Vietnam, 1965–1972* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 234. North Vietnam was “now capable of controlling SAMs, MiGs, and AAA.” See *ibid.*, 235–36. (They were using their ground-control intercept to conduct their operations: MiG, anti-aircraft artillery, and surface-to-air missile.) See message 9900 from Adm John McCain, 8 October 1971; and message 9935 from Adm John McCain, 21 November 1971; and Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain: Hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee, September 11–22, 1972*, 92d Cong., 2d sess., 1972.

14. History, 432d TRW, January–March 1972, 28.

15. Michel, *Clashes*, 192.

16. *Ibid.*

17. History, 432d TRW, January–March 1972, 26.

18. Patrick A. Tower, "An Affair to Remember," <http://www.usafa.af.mil/jscope/cases/affair.html>, 6.
19. Ibid.
20. Munroe to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 17 June 2003.
21. Ibid.
22. Tower, "An Affair to Remember," 6.
23. Ibid.
24. History, 432d TRW, July–December 1971, 43.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 52.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 51.
30. Ibid., 53.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 47.
37. Message, Top-Secret 9899 (special category), commander, Pacific Air Forces (Adm John McCain) Area Command, to Gen Creighton Abrams, commander, USMACV, 8 October 1971.
38. Ibid., Top-Secret 9898 (special category), commander, Pacific Air Forces (Adm John McCain) Area Command, to Adm Thomas H. Moorer, CJCS, 20 October 1971.
39. Ibid.
40. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, 29 September 1972, 456.
41. Ibid., "Testimony of Gen John Ryan," 18 September 1972, 282.
42. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, "Testimony of Gen John D. Lavelle," 12 September 1972, 60.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Message, Top Secret (special category), commander, Admiral McCain, Pacific Command, to Adm Thomas H. Moorer, CJCS, 21 November 1971.
46. Ibid., Top Secret (special category), Admiral Moorer, to Admiral McCain, 28 November 1971.
47. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, "Testimony of Gen Alton D. Slay," 19 September 1972, 284.
48. Ibid., "Testimony of General Lavelle," 11–12 September 1972, 20, 47.
49. Ibid., 12 September 1972, 50.
50. Ibid.
51. Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War*, 229.
52. History, 432d TRW, July–December 1971, 38.

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53. Ibid., 47.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., 21.
56. Ibid., 25.
57. See <http://dans.history.com/aircover.Shtml>.
58. History, 432d TRW, January–March 1972, 29.
59. Ibid.
60. Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War*, 229.
61. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, “Testimony of General Ryan,” 18 September 1971, 282; and Message, Top Secret, CJCS, to commander, Pacific Command, 26 December 1971. This message authorized strikes until 31 December 1971.
62. Michael Getler, “Target Curbs,” *Washington Post*, 25 January 1972.
63. History, 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, January–March 1973, 25.
64. Ibid.
65. *Falcon* was the call sign for these fighters.
66. History, 432d TRW, July–December 1971, 54.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., 55.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., 56.
75. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, “Testimony of General Lavelle,” 11 September 1972, 6.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Citation to Distinguished Flying Cross (First Oak Leaf Cluster), n.d., Department of the Air Force records.
79. Ibid.
80. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, “Testimony of General Lavelle,” 11 September 1972, 87.
81. History, 432d TRW, January–March, 1972, 51.
82. Ibid.
83. Joe Kittinger to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 3 February 2000.
84. Ibid.
85. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, “Testimony of General Lavelle,” 11 September 1972, 66.
86. Ibid., 7.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid., 31.

89. Ibid., "Testimony of General Slay," 290.
90. Ibid., "Testimony of General Lavelle," 11 September 1971, 7.
91. Ibid., "Testimony of General Slay," 19 September 1971, 290.
92. Ibid., 290-7635.
93. Gen Alton D. Slay (USAF, Ret.), to Lt Gen A. G. Casey, e-mail, 28 February 2006.
94. Ibid. "Not only did I discuss this with Charlie on at least 2 occasions, he was actually told the same thing by General Lavelle in Saigon in my presence and in Bones Marshall's presence," recounted General Slay.
95. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, "Testimony of Gen Charles A. Gabriel," 15 September 1972, 204; and Munroe to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 17 June 2003, 3.
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100. Ibid.
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102. Ibid.
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105. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, "Testimony of Colonel Gabriel," 15 September 1972, 211.
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109. Ibid.
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111. Ibid.
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116. *Ibid.*, "Testimony of General Ryan."
117. *Ibid.*, 281.
118. *Ibid.*, "Testimony of General Lavelle," 11 September 1972, 8.
119. *Ibid.*
120. History, 432d TRW, January-March 1972, ii.
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*

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126. *Ibid.*

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129. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, "Testimony of General Ryan," 18 September 1972, 281.

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135. Lavelle, Air Force Oral History interview, 642.

136. Message, Top Secret (special category), commander, Pacific Command, to JCS, 31 March 1972.

137. *Ibid.*, 3 March 1972.

138. Tower, "An Affair to Remember," 7.

139. *Ibid.*

140. *Ibid.*

141. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, "Testimony of General Ryan," 18 September 1972, 243.

142. *Ibid.*; and Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, "Testimony of General Lavelle," 11 September 1972, 82.

143. *Ibid.*, 83.

144. Lt Gen Phillip B. Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946–1975* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1991), 673.

145. *Ibid.*, 683.

146. Seymour M. Hersh, *Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (NY: Summit Books, 1983), 507–8.

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148. *Ibid.*, 8.

149. *Ibid.*

150. *Ibid.*

151. Seymour M. Hersh, "Reaction Strikes Called Cover-up," *New York Times*, 14 June 1972.

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153. *Ibid.*

154. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, "Testimony of General Gabriel," 15 September 1972, 82.
155. Tower, "An Affair to Remember," 8.
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160. Ibid.
161. Ibid.
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164. Ibid.
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169. Al Caldwell to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 18 December 2001.
170. Gregory, "A Man's Flight through Life," 12.
171. Ibid.
172. Tower, "An Affair to Remember," 9.
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176. Tower, "An Affair to Remember," 9.
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178. Seymour M. Hersh, "Lavelle is Reported . . . Approved Raids," *New York Times*, 12 September 1972.
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182. Senate, *Nomination of John D. Lavelle, General Creighton W. Abrams, and Admiral John S. McCain*, "Testimony of General Ryan," 18 September 1972, 241.
183. *Ibid.*, 247.
184. *Ibid.*, "Testimony of Admiral Moorer," 29 September 1972, 444.
185. *Ibid.*
186. *Ibid.*, 490.
187. Tower, "An Affair to Remember," 17.
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189. Lavelle, Air Force Oral History interview, 17–24 April 1978, 687.
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## Chapter 11

### **SAC Wing Commander**

May 1972–May 1973 Colonel O'Malley	Wing commander, 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Beale AFB, California (SR-71 wing)
May 1973–Feb 1974 Colonel O'Malley	Wing commander, 22d Bombardment Wing, March AFB, California (B-52 wing)
Feb–June 1974 Colonel O'Malley	Chief of staff, Fifteenth Air Force, March AFB, California (commanded SAC bombers and missiles)

The spring of 1972 was euphoric for Jerry O'Malley. Although the nation was still enmeshed in attempting to pull out of an unpopular war, he returned to his loving wife, Diane, and his vibrant young family after a year in Southeast Asia. Peggy was a high school senior; Sharon was a teenager; Jimmy was nine; and John, seven. The sacrifice of missing so many critical periods in the lives of his children was a burden but not unlike the circumstance of so many of his fellow officers and Airmen in the Air Force. Like most of his contemporaries, he held a deep concern for those who remained in captivity in North Vietnam and were totally separated from their families and the rest of the world.

Jerry relieved Col Hal Confer as commander of the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing on 31 May 1972.<sup>1</sup> The job itself was almost perfect for O'Malley. He was confident of his firsthand knowledge of the complexities of flying the SR-71 and supporting it at distant locations. Most of the key personnel were old hands at making high-quality intelligence come out of the odd-looking Habu. Almost two years of flying with the Air Force tactical aviation gave him a clear understanding of what the cutting edge of US airpower was up against in putting bombs on target. The quality of intelligence stood out as a prime factor

in making that ordnance effective as opposed to simply creating noise and dust. His long, former service in the SAC helped him to understand not only the (then) current involvement of the B-52 aircraft in the Vietnam War effort but also the hard elements of the Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union. The SAC bomber force and intercontinental range ballistic missiles of the Minuteman and Titan II force remained on instant alert. The Cold War made its own fierce demands for accurate intelligence.

Fresh from the combat theatre, Jerry looked for ways to accelerate the flow of critical intelligence his SR-71 wing dispatched to the field commanders. It was a bit of a surprise to him that the numbered Air Force commanders in the Pacific—the Seventh Air Force and the Thirteenth Air Force—did not take him up on his offer to provide a rapid direct flow of SR-71 take. It was doubtless a budget problem for them to invest in the processing resources. On the other hand, the Navy accepted his offer and channeled the data to their field commanders.<sup>2</sup>

As noted by Brig Gen Ed Harris, his immediate boss, 14th Division commander, in O'Malley's evaluation report, the SR-71 wing enjoyed its most active and productive year to date during O'Malley's tenure as commander.<sup>3</sup> Although the SR-71 had been operating out of Kadena, Okinawa, for four years, over 40 percent of all missions accomplished from there were in the first 10 months of O'Malley's command tour. That these missions were 96 percent effective indicated the maturity of the system, the experience of the crews, and the quality of the management by Jerry and his team.<sup>4</sup>

On 26 April 1971, Lt Col Thomas B. Estes, pilot, and Lt Col Dewain C. Vick, systems officer, flew 10 hours and 30 minutes in SR-71 no. 968. They covered more than 15,000 miles on this remarkable non-stop mission. Although this flight took place before O'Malley assumed command of the wing, it was recognized in July 1972 when the chief of staff of the Air Force, General Ryan, awarded the Mackay Trophy to Lieutenant Colonels Estes and Vick for the "most meritorious flight of the year."<sup>5</sup> Later, in 1973, the same feat was recognized by the president of the United States, who awarded the International Harmon Trophy to the individual Airmen for 1971.<sup>6</sup>

The 1st Squadron of the 9th Wing also received the Air Force Association's David C. Shilling Award in September 1972 for

“pioneering operational long-range flight above 80,000 feet at speeds in excess of Mach 3 while performing vital defense missions with the SR-71.”<sup>7</sup> In addition, the 9th Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award from the Fifteenth Air Force for effective aircraft maintenance.<sup>8</sup>

Despite all that good news, O'Malley met many challenges as wing commander. Early in his command, he was faced with the total loss of one of the expensive Blackbirds. Moreover, it became clear in the accident investigation that the crash was probably preventable, especially as was estimated to be the conclusion of Jerry's top boss, SAC commander in chief (CINCSAC), Gen John C. Meyer.

An extended period of downtime had occurred due to the fuel crises of the early 1970s. The sharp edge of crew expertise always affected such inactivity. The accident occurred at the overseas station in Okinawa when an SR-71 landed in poor weather, slid off the runway, and struck the concrete housing supporting the pop-up safety barrier net. The barrier was a nylon net that arrested an aircraft when it overran the runway. Fortunately, the crew escaped without injury. A questionable decision regarding weather conditions by the on-site supervisor and diminished crew proficiency caused by the stand down led to the conclusion that the accident may have been preventable. Nothing could shorten the career potential more quickly in SAC than to have CINCSAC decide that the wing commander was guilty of an error of commission or omission. Nonetheless, O'Malley gave strong command support to his chief of safety, Lt Col George H. Sewell, to ferret out the details of this accident and present it for the harsh scrutiny of a suspect headquarters.

An interesting side issue of the report was a special study of the role of the safety net barrier and its concrete pillars. Sewell followed the wise policy of a good safety investigation and tracked down every element that contributed to the accident. He determined that this particular barrier never had really saved an aircraft from serious damage but had actually been a factor in the loss of another aircraft largely because of its design and proximity to the critical area of the runway. Thus, one of his recommendations called for costly redesign of the barriers in use at SR-71 installations.

Finally, after the report was submitted, it came time for O'Malley to face the lion in his den and go to SAC headquarters to personally brief the CINCSAC on the accident. The tension was raised a notch when O'Malley and Sewell briefed the one- and two-star generals as a prelude to briefing the CINCSAC. The director of operations (SACDO) closed the session with the following comment: "Jerry, I hope you realize the CINC is burning mad about this accident, and he intends to make somebody pay for the loss of this aircraft."<sup>9</sup> At dinner that evening, Sewell worried about the SACDO comment, but O'Malley said: "The secret tomorrow is not to be gratuitous. We must answer the questions that we are asked, no more."<sup>10</sup> O'Malley felt they were all working the problem in the best interest of the Air Force, and as long as they stayed with the facts, the resulting decisions would be sound. He did not want any hint of making excuses to set off unwarranted reactions.

The following morning, the mood was somber as they waited for the CINCSAC to take his place at the head of his conference table. He arrived late, probably by design, and sat down with a scowl on his face and directed O'Malley to start in a manner that suggested O'Malley had caused the delay.

O'Malley was at his best when speaking before an attentive audience, and for this one, he had prepared very well. He led the briefing through the details of the accident, the analysis of the cause, and the recommendations of the accident investigation board. He smoothly inserted Sewell into the process precisely to articulate technical details. In all, a masterful performance. General Meyer did not interrupt but slowly leaned back in his chair and put his feet up on the table to perhaps indicate he was withdrawing from accepting all of the information as it was given.

Finally, as O'Malley got to the recommendation to make a costly improvement to the barrier, General Meyer cut him off with the following comment: "Jerry, so you agree with the Board. You want to spend more money on a *no* [expletive deleted] *good barrier*, so that you will then have a more expensive *no* [expletive deleted] *good barrier* (emphasis in original). Is that right?" You could hear a pin drop. Colonel O'Malley just stood there. He did not answer. The general just looked at Colonel O'Malley. Finally, after what seemed an interminable delay,

General Meyer asked, "Jerry, are you trying to tell me that barrier needs improvement, even if you can not make it perfect?" Colonel O'Malley replied, "Yes, sir. That is it." General Meyer then said, "Okay, I guess I could agree with that."<sup>11</sup> From that point on, General Meyer fully engaged in the positive recommendations O'Malley had laid out to prevent recurrence.

Meyer obviously had been on the lookout for any sign of an attempt to gloss over errors that had been made or wavering on the steps to be taken. He decided that this wing commander was strong and confident; he was not going to back away when pressed.

Flying safety was a constant concern for every operational unit in the Air Force, but nowhere was it more critical than in the SR-71 where each flight challenged the limits of equipment and personnel. O'Malley took an active part in the monthly meetings focused on shaping the attitude and awareness of each crew. He lectured on the dependence of the Air Force on the *individual in the cockpit to be responsible* not only for the safety of the crew but also for everyone else who could be affected by their actions (emphasis in original).<sup>12</sup>

Light, agile T-38 aircraft were used to maintain proficiency for the pilots and to fly chase on each takeoff and landing of the SR-71. Despite the management emphasis O'Malley placed on safety, he was greatly chagrined, a few months after the SR-71 loss, when the chief of his Standardization Division caused a major T-38 incident. He carelessly cut off 36 inches of the right wing by flying upside down through a tall conifer tree; it was good fortune that he was able to control the aircraft and return to base for a safe landing.

Complicating the situation was the fact that this pilot was about to go to Washington to receive the award for the SR-71 mission described earlier. Although he was allowed to go forward for his trophy, the investigation of the incident was pursued thoroughly and resulted in the pilot being relegated to a nonflying job.<sup>13</sup>

Since this was an incident and not a major accident, O'Malley had to answer to the Air Force director of flight safety, Brig Gen Robin Olds, instead of the CINCSAC. This is the same General Olds who had stormed out of O'Malley's office in Vietnam when Jerry remarked that he had to get used to "slowing down" to fly

the mach 2 RF-4. Olds gave O'Malley a hard time about the incident report using such terms as *perceptual illusion* to describe how the pilot got the aircraft into the unusual fix instead of calling it *unauthorized bussing* (emphasis in original). Jerry quietly accepted the admonishment and said he would fix the report.

Despite O'Malley's long association with insiders in the SR-71 program, he sought to broaden the experience of the flight crews. The prime source of experience for SR-71 pilots was still from U-2, B-58, and B-52 (all SAC units), but Jerry got the rules changed to a criteria for selection that credited having flown two or more fighter-type aircrafts. He held fighter pilots, with whom he had flown in combat, in high regard. The wing accident rate continued to decline during his tenure and afterwards, which may have been partly due to this change in criteria.<sup>14</sup>

On the more human side, O'Malley developed tactics to tolerate some of the painful methods often used by SAC's top commanders to direct their troops (fig. 43). The following quote from an e-mail by retired Maj Gen Pat Halloran, then vice-commander under O'Malley for the 9th, illustrated his regard,

I also remember how General P. K. Carlton, 15th [sic] AF commander, used to have conference calls with all of his wing commanders. They were frequently on Saturday mornings. They were interminable affairs that could go on for an hour while he aired the sins of each commander,



**Figure 43. A relaxed Colonel O'Malley works the telephone from the wing commander's office.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

and informed everyone of what a dolt they were. Jerry used to get bored with the calls and would quietly pass the phone to me while he went on with his paperwork. It was my job to give him a signal when it was his turn to either be praised, berated, or sign off, and then he would come back on line.<sup>15</sup>

Another insight into Jerry's concern for those who worked hard for the Air Force was shown in a later quote from the same e-mail from Pat Halloran, an unmarried officer:

When Jerry got me back at Beale as his vice-commander, he directed me to move out of the temporary (BOQ) Bachelor Officers' Quarters and into the house in the senior officers' circle. I did this and enjoyed my year in that magnificent house immensely. It was my first time in 23 years of Air Force living that I was ever allowed to live in a "house." While moving in, Jerry's two little boys, Jim and John, used to spend every day at my place "helping me" unpack. They were intrigued by the "neat stuff" I had collected over the years and diligently arrived on my doorstep early every morning. Diane used to bring over sandwiches, cookies, etc., to help me keep the boys in line. When Jerry left the wing, I was in the process of moving across the street into the commander's house when the SAC IG (inspector general) hit. One of the first things they did, was to determine that I was an illegal occupant of "family housing," even though the commander's house was classed as "designated" housing. After several months, and tons of paperwork up and down the chain of command, I was directed to move out of my house and into a BOQ for my remaining 2 years as wing commander. Jerry was really ticked off about it but was unable to convince anyone up the line of the folly of that decision. My position was supported by the local Air Division, 15th Air Force, and SAC, but Air Force said "No." It would set a precedence.<sup>16</sup>

On 16 October 1972, two high-ranking members of Congress, Hale Boggs (D-Louisiana) and Nick Begich (D-Alaska), disappeared on a flight from Anchorage to Juneau. Their Cessna 310 was lost near the Chugach Mountains range in southeast Alaska with four people on board, including pilot, Don Jonz, and Begich's aide, Russ Brown.<sup>17</sup> A massive search was conducted with military and civilian aircraft. O'Malley was tasked to provide SR-71 support, and four sorties were flown, but no sign of the crash was found. After 39 days, the search was abandoned.

The war in Vietnam was grinding down to the final negotiated conclusion, when, on 15 January 1973, all SAC units received notification of the presidential decision to halt the bomb-

ing of North Vietnam at 1000 hours Eastern Standard Time. Several weeks later, it was announced that a peace treaty would be signed, and the return of prisoners of war (POW) held in Hanoi would begin.<sup>18</sup>

The return of the POWs was particularly poignant for O'Malley as he found out that one of his old friends, Col Quincy Collins, was scheduled to come home. They had served together at the Air Force Academy in 1955, and Colonel Collins had been shot down in an F-105 over North Vietnam. He was held captive in Vietnam for more than seven years. When the prisoners were finally released, Collins was on the first flight out of Hanoi but was faced with a "Dear John" letter from his wife on his arrival in the Philippines. When the initial processing was completed, he was scheduled to fly back to Travis AFB in California. Unfortunately, his wife had a "business meeting" the day of his arrival and did not plan to meet the aircraft. Col Jerry O'Malley flew to Travis to greet his old friend on his return to the United States after the long and painful detention. Colonel Collins recalled seeing Jerry in his orange flight suit on the flight line at Travis. Later in the day, Mrs. Collins did arrive with their three children to meet with Quincy. Despite some extensive counseling, they were unable to resolve the differences, and the marriage was ultimately dissolved.<sup>19</sup>

Jerry continued to stay in touch with northeastern Pennsylvania principally through his two sisters, Jane and Ellen, whose husbands were Scranton natives. At this point, an old friend from the basketball days at Saint Rose, Bob "Spike" Casey, had made two runs at the Democratic nomination for governor of Pennsylvania. Milton Shapp beat Casey in 1970 and went on to win the general election and to serve two terms.<sup>20</sup> Jerry had found his potential interest in returning to Pennsylvania to run for political office had significantly waned as he now was on an exciting track toward senior leadership and responsibility in the Air Force. Nonetheless, he enjoyed seeing and talking with old friends.

A penalty for hard-charging young colonels in the service was that they were often required frequently to move to build the experience base essential for selection as general officers. With only one year at Beale, O'Malley received orders to report to March AFB in Southern California.



**Figure 44. O'Malley kept his flying proficiency while leading the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

Taking over as wing commander for the 22d Bomb Wing at March was Jerry's first crack at the venerable old workhorse of the modern Air Force—the B-52 (fig. 44). The eight-engine B-52 was designed in the 1950s, with the first flight of the B-52A in 1954. A total of 744 B-52s were built; the last, a B-52H, was delivered in October 1962.<sup>21</sup> Originally designed for nuclear weapons delivery, it was converted to a conventional bomber and became a major factor in the Vietnam War. At that period, O'Malley took over the B-52 unit at March AFB. Since that time, the aircraft has been totally modernized with such new avionics and sensors that it was then capable of carrying the

whole spectrum of gravity bombs, cluster bombs, precision-guided munitions, and Joint Direct Attack Munitions with their GPS-aided accuracy. Even the 1973 version had virtually unlimited range with aerial refueling and packed a devastating load of over 70,000 pounds of mixed ordnance. It had a crew of five: aircraft commander, pilot, radar navigator, navigator, and electronic warfare officer.

Jerry found little reason to focus on improving the operations of the B-52 unit since they had long been well defined, so he largely put his considerable energy into the people-oriented programs that had suffered over the war years. His evaluation credited him with improvements to dormitories, housing areas, and imaginative programs to enhance morale.<sup>22</sup> In less than a year, the Fifteenth Air Force commander, Lt Gen William F. Pitts, moved him into the chief of staff role for the Fifteenth Air Force. Fortunate for Jerry, this role did not incur another move. His efforts continued to direct the “reconstitution of the command bomber force during the post-SEA (Southeast Asia) period” and to standardize the people program initiatives across Fifteenth Air Force bases.<sup>23</sup>

In the fall of 1973 O'Malley was sent to Guam as a deputy to the Air Division commander to help redeploy the B-52 units that had operated out of Guam during the Vietnam War. This effort involved a lot of intense and somewhat bureaucratic, detailed work; so, when Halloween came around, Jerry was ready for a night off. Ray Volkwine, who was working on redeployment activities, provided the following anecdote:

O'Malley suggested that four of us, General Ed Harris, his aide, he, and I go trick or drinking. The aide found a large white bunny suit for General Harris. Well, with this large rabbit leading the way, we started at the base Commander's house. The ever-growing group proceeded up Commanders' row, ending unannounced at the home of the 8th [sic] AF commander (I believe it was Gen. McKee). He was very surprised to see a group of about 40 led by the white rabbit. The entire group then went to the club for a specially arranged Mongolian Bar-B-Que.<sup>24</sup>

The exciting news for the O'Malley family at this time was his selection for brigadier general. Special orders dated 1 September 1974 promoted Jerome F. O'Malley, along with 20 other colonels, to the temporary rank of brigadier general with effective date of 2 August 1974.<sup>25</sup>

With the others selected for general officer that year, he attended general officer orientation or, as it was commonly called, “charm school for generals.” It consisted of a visit to each major air command as well as detailed briefings and discussions at the Pentagon. One feature of the experience was a stern warning to all these virile young colonels to insure that if they had ever strayed in any way from the straight and narrow path of exemplary behavior it was now “time to clean up their act.” Jerry described the whole experience to Diane complete with vivid word pictures of the senior commanders and civilian officials they had seen.<sup>26</sup>

As the time to pin on his new rank approached, he and Diane traveled to SAC headquarters for the ceremony. Diane Muennink O'Malley was a very beautiful statuesque blonde of German descent with the soft accents of growing up in Hondo, Texas, west of San Antonio. She not only was a sparkling companion for Jerry but also the devoted mother of four children whose ages ranged from nine to 19 years. While gathered for a reception at the CINCSAC commander's quarters, home of General and Mrs. Dougherty, Diane O'Malley and Penny Ryan (wife of selectee Tom Ryan) were chatting. Diane turned to Mrs. Dougherty with her captivating smile and said, “*Penny and I were just wondering if we are now going to have to clean up our act* (emphasis in original)!” Gerry Dougherty's soft response was, “Both of you seem to have done so well, just keep up the good work and do what you are doing!”<sup>27</sup>

### Notes

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2. Lt Col George H. Sewell Jr. (USAF, Ret.), to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 31 March 2000.
3. Jerome F. O'Malley, USAF Officer Effectiveness Report, April 1972–March 1973.
4. Ibid.
5. History, 9th SRW (formerly classified), July–September 1972.
6. “The International Harmon Trophy Award Record,” [www.nasm.edu/nasm/trophy/harmon.htm](http://www.nasm.edu/nasm/trophy/harmon.htm).
7. History, 9th SRW, fig. 3.
8. Ibid., January–March 1973, 24, 25.

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9. Sewell to Casey, e-mail, 31 March 2000.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Maj Gen Patrick Halloran (USAF, Ret.), to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 14 May 1998.
16. Ibid.
17. [www.check-siz.com/lib/Famous\\_Missing/Boggs.htm](http://www.check-siz.com/lib/Famous_Missing/Boggs.htm), accessed 6 March 2003.
18. History, 9th SRW (formerly classified), January–March 1973, 69.
19. Col Quincy Collins (USAF, Ret.), telephone interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 6 April 1998.
20. Christopher Casey (son of Gov. Robert Casey), telephone interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 10 May 2002.
21. "USAF Fact Sheet," [www.af.mil/news/factsheets/B\\_52\\_Stratofortress.html](http://www.af.mil/news/factsheets/B_52_Stratofortress.html), 3 June 2003.
22. O'Malley, USAF Officer Effectiveness Report, April 1973–September 1973.
23. Ibid., September 1973–June 1974.
24. Ray Volkwine to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 1 March 2000.
25. Special Order AA-1803, dated 1 September 1974.
26. Gen Russell E. Dougherty (USAF, Ret.), telephone interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 1 March 1998.
27. Ibid.

## Chapter 12

### **Brigadier General**

#### **First General Officer Assignments**

July 1974–May 1975 <b>One-Star</b>	Assistant deputy chief of staff, plans, Headquarters SAC, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska <b>Assistant SAC Planner</b>
June 1975–January 1977 <b>One-Star</b>	Deputy chief of staff, plans, Headquarters SAC, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska; additional duty as chief, Single Integrated Operational Plan Division, Joint Strategic Targeting Planning Staff <b>SAC planner and SIOP chief</b>

With promotion to brigadier general, Jerry was headed for a new job, and once again, the O'Malleys were on the move (figs. 45, 46).<sup>1</sup> At the least, Headquarters SAC was an area where they had lived previously. This time, unlike back in 1961 when they had to find a house in a nearby community, they would move onto Generals' Row at Offutt AFB near Omaha, Nebraska. These were fine, old brick quarters, a bit dated but serviceable and in proximity to everything on the station.

Being assigned to Headquarters SAC as a general officer also meant taking a regular turn at flying in the airborne command post. This was a specially equipped C-135 (a similar commercial version was the Boeing 707) with call sign, Looking Glass—a command post kept in the air at all times. The aircraft flew 12-hour missions, with changeover managed so that one was always airborne and thus safe from any large-scale attack on the United States. (Even the SAC underground command post was considered vulnerable to a large-missile attack from the Soviet Union.) Each sortie had a general officer on board. Their normal duty provided continuity of communication between



**Figure 45. General O'Malley receives a one-star pin on.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

the strategic forces and the national command authority (direct line to the president in emergencies). Specific authority relative to the release of weapons on Cold War targets was and remains a highly classified secret. One can only guess that in extreme situations, they had such authority, or they would not have required a general officer to be on board.<sup>2</sup>

Jerry's day-to-day job was assistant deputy chief of staff for plans for the Headquarters SAC. This involved defining requirements for new weapons systems, modifying existing systems, and integrating these developments with the SAC mission. After a few months as assistant, he took over the plans office and managed that activity for about two and one-half years.<sup>3</sup>

His staff kept close contact with the development offices in the Air Force Systems Command on several projects; the most



**Figure 46. General O'Malley is saluted with a one-star kiss.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

significant of these projects was the B-1 bomber. SAC had encountered a troubled recent experience with its efforts to replace the venerable B-52. SAC never was happy with the supersonic B-58 despite its ability to fly at twice the speed of sound. As a result, a few B-58s were produced, but they were phased out in 1970.<sup>4</sup> The XB-70 was cancelled before ever reaching production; mainly, because it had been designed to fly high and fast, but ground-to-air missiles were projected to hold it vulnerable. SAC had acquired a limited number of the bomber version of McNamara's TFX, which was known as the FB-111, but this aircraft also lacked the legs or payload of the B-52.<sup>5</sup>

The B-1 was started in 1970, and it promised to do everything the B-52 could, but better. It had four powerful engines and a graceful, blended-wing configuration; and, it had the

ability to swing the wings aft to an angle suited for high-speed supersonic flight. Unlike the XB-70, the B-1 was also capable of low-altitude attack to escape radar detection.

By the time O'Malley was involved in SAC plans, the B-1 had already experienced some cost and development problems. Some overly ambitious requirements were modified to keep the program on track. A complex crew-escape system was abandoned after test failures; SAC accepted the familiar ejection seat concept for emergency escape. SAC also gave up on high-supersonic speeds to simplify the engine inlet design. Despite these changes, the electronics still presented major development challenges—in particular, the defensive avionics meant to protect the aircraft from attack.

The cruise missile concept was emerging during the 1970s through the progress on the navigation of these missiles. Precise navigation was demonstrated in low-level flight of these unmanned missiles simply by tracking known terrain variations with a radar altimeter. The development community at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, was pushing for an air-launched version called ALCM (air launched cruise missile) to be designed for use from long-range bombers. O'Malley considered the concept interesting and worth pursuing, but he stopped short of defining a SAC requirement for the ALCM. He was concerned that it might place the B-1 program at risk as some might argue the new bomber was not needed if the B-52s were equipped with ALCMs.<sup>6</sup> O'Malley and his deputy, Brig Gen Kelly Burke, worked hard to keep the B-1 on track, and they supported the Air Staff at the Pentagon to keep it sold to Congress.

They did not see the real threat to the B-1 program embodied in the November election of Jimmy Carter for the presidency, but it would become clear shortly after the January inauguration. When Pres. Jimmy Carter decided to cancel the B-1, O'Malley was already on his way to the Pentagon to serve in the JCS; Kelly Burke had taken over the SAC plans job. The Air Force establishment was shocked to have its crown jewel cancelled, but planners were able to retain some development with the four test aircraft already built, which later proved to be important. They also generated a plan to upgrade the avionics in the B-52, because it looked like a long period before a replacement bomber would be produced.

During this tour, O'Malley was required by the personnel office to submit a bureaucratic form titled Ethnic/Race Identification. He checked the race block for *Caucasian*, but not finding an ethnic block that suited him, he inked in *Irish*.<sup>7</sup>

Old friends from the early days at the Air Force Academy often dropped by to see O'Malley. Col Jack Dornan, who was visiting SAC headquarters from his station at Wurtsmith AFB, Michigan, visited O'Malley in his office and suggested they get together at the Officers' Club for a drink after work. Jerry explained that it was Halloween and that he had to go lie in a casket that his boys had constructed for the occasion. Dornan responded, "That is what happens to a good colonel when he becomes a SAC general; he would rather lie dormant in his casket than go out for a good time!"<sup>8</sup>

Besides being the planner for the SAC weapons systems, O'Malley had an additional duty to lead the operations planning for the US strategic forces. This plan was called the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) and was placed under the control of the JCS back at the Pentagon. It consolidated the plans for all US bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles and the Navy's submarine-launched ballistic missiles.<sup>9</sup> In layman's terms, it was the master plan to put nuclear weapons on Cold War targets without interfering with each other. O'Malley wrote a paper on the mechanics of building this strategic plan that appeared in the *Air University Review* (May–June 1977). That report is too technical for this biography, but the following paragraph from the introduction is excerpted to illustrate the main purpose of this planning staff:

The Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff (JSTPS) conceived in the late 1950s, brought into being in 1960, and which from that day to this, has been the nuclear general war planner for all United States forces. Comprised of 340 highly talented men and women from all services, this unique organization converts broad national strategy into the detailed plan that forms the framework of our deterrent. This plan—the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP)—integrates and coordinates the forces committed by the nuclear Commanders in Chief (CINC). Because this plan is based on the actual capabilities of forces in being, it measurably increases the credibility of the US deterrent as perceived by our adversaries as well as our allies.<sup>10</sup>

The CINCSAC was Gen Russell E. Dougherty who had been both a lawyer (staff judge advocate) and a pilot operational commander. In 1952 he elected to leave the judge advocate specialty, and he rose rapidly through command assignments in SAC.<sup>11</sup> He was O'Malley's boss at SAC and provided the following insight in a telephone interview in March 1998:

O'Malley became the senior planner for SAC (DCS Ops Plans) and deputy Director for the Joint Strategic Target Planning Organization JSTPS (under the Joint Chiefs of Staff). . . . He was asked to come and speak to the classes at the Air War College at Maxwell AFB, AL. . . .his inclination was to lay out specifically and directly the entire process for these young potential future Air Force leaders. However, a check of the past references indicated that SAC had been quite abstract and even evasive in prior descriptions of the nuclear planning process to the point of being somewhat obtuse. I gave him the "go ahead" to tell the story as he saw it and as he did his job; with the only restriction to be the classification of information rules. He was to pay no attention to past references. O'Malley prepared a brilliant presentation that became a baseline and standard of excellence in explaining how the SAC plans staff and the JSTPS operated for years afterward.<sup>12</sup>

Being a trained lawyer, Dougherty had a long view of the history of the United States and its ability to project airpower in support of the nation's goals. As was his nature, he looked for ways to connect the chain of leadership that made the continuity of the Air Force possible. Thus, he decided to pin on Jerry O'Malley's second star, major general rank, while the famed general Curtis E. LeMay was visiting the command and could be made a part of the proceedings. General LeMay was a renowned Air Force hero of World War II. Before his appointment as vice-chief of staff, and later chief of staff of the Air Force, General LeMay had led SAC for nine years (1948–57). During these years, he transformed it from a residual collection of World War II bombers to a disciplined, strategic force of 224,000 active duty personnel and 2,700 aircraft of the latest turbojet technology. SAC was the world's most powerful force and a major factor in the US Cold-War posture.<sup>13</sup> Figure 47 shows O'Malley receiving his second star.

Dougherty described the occasion in the following quote:

The one obstacle was that the effective date of the orders was for two days later. Not to be dissuaded I had the predating done and even arranged to have the calendars in the appropriate conference room



**Figure 47. General Dougherty watches Diane pin on O'Malley's second star.**  
(Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

changed. LeMay noticed the calendar change and asked what was going on. I said I am just doing what you taught me to do, that is "Seize the Moment!"<sup>14</sup>

Gen David Jones, the CJCS for the United States, called General Dougherty to have O'Malley come to Washington and become the deputy director of operations plans (J-3) for the JCS. Dougherty agreed, with the proviso that Jones would release Jerry for a European assignment within a few years to insure he gained the broad range of experiences he would need in future leadership roles. Even then, Dougherty considered O'Malley a leading candidate to be the Air Force chief of staff.<sup>15</sup> Although Jones agreed at the time, the press of job responsibilities and continued movement of Jerry to higher positions in the Pentagon never allowed the European tour. As a result, it was almost seven years of Pentagon duty for the O'Malleys before Jerry moved to command the Air Forces in the Pacific at Hickam AFB, Hawaii. As Dougherty later said to those in the know, it was clear that Jerry always performed so well that his boss could not bring himself to let him go.<sup>16</sup>

Once again, in January 1977, the O'Malleys were on the move to Bolling AFB, near Washington, DC, which is just across the Potomac River from the Pentagon and where Jerry was assigned to the JCS as the vice director of plans. By then Peggy and Sharon were off to college, and Jimmy and John were 14 and 12 years old, respectively (fig. 48).



**Figure 48. Jerry and Diane delighted in their maturing family. The girls were college age, and the boys were in high school.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

**Notes**

1. *Biography of Gen Jerome F. O'Malley* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, January 1985).
2. Primary source experience of Aloysius G. Casey.
3. *Biography of Gen Jerome F. O'Malley*, n.p.
4. See Convair B-58 Hustler web site, b-58hustler.com.
5. See FB-111 web site, fas.org/nuke/guide/usa/bomber/fb-111.htm.
6. Lt Gen Kelly H. Burke, Oral History Report, 22 April 1991, 148.
7. AF Form 1262, 14 January 1977.
8. Charles Taylor, telephone interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 13 March 1998.
9. *Biography of Gen Jerome F. O'Malley*, n.p.
10. Brig Gen Jerome F. O'Malley, *Strategic Target Planning—Theory and Practice* (Montgomery, AL: Maxwell Air Force Base, 1977), introduction.
11. Russell E. Dougherty (USAF, Ret.), telephone interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 11 March 1998.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.

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## Chapter 13

### **Joint Chiefs of Staff**

January 1977–April 1979 <b>One star to two star</b>	Vice director of operations (J-3) Joint Staff, organization of the JCS <b>Vice JCS operations</b>
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The Pentagon is a baffling structure. With five sides, five rings, and five stories, it is a monstrous structure, full of mysterious meetings that were conducted in an arcane, acronym-loaded rhetoric that appeared impenetrable to an outsider. The Pentagon has been assailed as the place where admirals and generals plot to wrestle taxpayer's money from the Congress at the other end of the mall. Even worse, it was said to be the leverage point for unprincipled contractors to make unreasonable profits. In fact, it was the place where the best and the brightest military minds concentrated on what it took to preserve American freedom. It is the place where decisions are made to risk the lives of our forces and to test the concept that Americans prefer liberty over life.

Although he had been there many times, Jerry was happy that his first Pentagon assignment was as a general officer. It meant he had a reasonably sized office but far more important was the assigned parking place close to the entrance in lieu of the far reaches of the enormous lots.

George S. Brown was chairman of the JCS; Dr. Harold Brown was the secretary of defense; and Jimmy Carter was president when O'Malley arrived on station. General Brown was appointed to West Point in 1937, and he graduated just in time to earn his wings and fly combat with the 93d Bombardment Group in B-24 Liberators during World War II. Major Brown took over the 93d during one of the famous low-level bombing raids over Ploesti, Rumania, when the commander's plane and 10 others were shot down. He led the battered group back to their base at Bengasi, Libya, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his skill and valor.<sup>1</sup> He had a long career in the Air

Force, including serving as the chief, before he took over as chairman of the joint chiefs in July 1974.

The senior officers in the Department of Defense were all concerned about the steady decline in support for the armed forces that began with the late stages of the Vietnam War and continued to be expressed through the funds Congress appropriated. The second year of the Carter administration saw the lowest point in funding for the Pentagon as a percentage of the total budget since post-World War II.<sup>2</sup>

Concern about the future really peaked when President Carter announced in June 1977 that he was canceling the plan for production of the B-1 system. The Air Force chief, Gen David C. Jones, was confident that the bomber study conducted by Edward C. "Pete" Aldridge, had recommended B-1 production to Secretary Brown.<sup>3</sup> Thus, it was a complete surprise when President Carter announced his decision. General Jones was criticized for not taking a public stand against the cancellation. Some in Congress tried to force the president to spend the money appropriated for the B-1 by rejecting the recession measure to remove the funds. General Jones testified that it was not sensible to do so. He felt that the best argument in favor of the program had been put forward and that the president made his decision; therefore, it was his job to salute and implement the direction. He considered it wasteful and counter-productive to prolong development with several hundred million dollars when the program was cancelled.<sup>4</sup> Some accused General Jones of playing politics when he was later selected by President Carter to replace General Brown as chairman, but the Air Force senior leadership accepted his rationale and began to focus on B-52 upgrades in lieu of the B-1 program. The leadership was able to retain the three B-1 test articles and continue a low-scale research program to keep future options open.

O'Malley described the candor that General Brown, chairman of the JCS, showed on the same issue when confronted by a congressman: "By the way General Brown, you are a senior General, [President] Carter has just decided to cancel the B-1 [Bomber] why don't you resign from the Air Force?" General Brown said, "I certainly could. It would have about as much effect on this country as your resigning from the Congress."<sup>5</sup>

O'Malley considered George Brown one of the greatest role models for senior military leaders he had ever met. It was Chairman Brown's routine to eat lunch with his senior officers daily. O'Malley really appreciated these sessions. Brown used the lunch sessions to get to know his subordinates and as his staff meetings. He would tell the staff what he did that morning, what he was going to do that afternoon, and what he expected from his staff.<sup>6</sup>

O'Malley liked the way General Brown focused on the important matters and was able to set aside the deluge of detail that poured into the Pentagon on every issue. In a later oral history interview, O'Malley illustrated that talent with the following stories. "He [General Brown] was being briefed by an action officer, and the action officer was giving him vast numbers of statistics. He was getting ready to go to the White House for a National Security Council Meeting. He finally stopped the Colonel and said, 'Why do I have to know that?' The Colonel did not know what to say, so General Brown said, 'Look I know your name, I'll remember that, it is all I need to know. You know the numbers.'" <sup>7</sup>

O'Malley also told about a session he observed between General Brown and then-Secretary Brown. Harold Brown had been a director of the Livermore Laboratory, an agency that was responsible for nuclear weapon design in 1960.

The Chairman was having a meeting with Dr. Brown regarding a nuclear warhead and it developed into an argument. Dr. Harold Brown, of course, knew more about nuclear warheads than just about anybody and he started into the details of this warhead. George Brown knew Harold Brown for years previous and called him Harold. Finally, George Brown said, "Look [Captain] Carter back there is a nuclear weapons expert," somebody that was sitting in the background, "Why don't I call him up here and you and he can argue all you want. You as Director of Livermore Lab and he as a nuclear weapons expert. When you are ready to talk to me as the Secretary of Defense to the Chairman, call me, and I'll come back."<sup>8</sup>

In the same interview, O'Malley recounted an incident early in the Carter administration when Chairman Brown was fed up with the leaks of classified information all over town. Secretary Brown held a meeting with the four chiefs and Chairman Brown and passed out one copy of a document to each of them. He

explained the need for secrecy and that he would collect the copies when they finished their discussion. He looked over at the chairman who left his copy faced down and asked, "Well aren't you going to read it?" George Brown said, "No, I think I will wait until tomorrow and read it in Evans and Novak" [*Washington Post* columnists].<sup>9</sup>

Another lesson O'Malley took from General Brown was to demand responsiveness from the functional staff. He never took the easy way out of setting up ad hoc groups to make up for slow staff work. He wanted the responsible officers to get the job done when it was needed. To rely on back channels and separate groups who had no long-term accountability was simply not the way to build confidence and respect up and down the chain of command.<sup>10</sup> Jerry said that if Chairman Brown asked for something at 10 in the morning, he wanted an answer by 11 and the final report that afternoon.<sup>11</sup> He made the functional staff work, and he never needed an ad hoc group. This reliance on the chain of command created mutual respect; the chiefs trusted him to speak for them with honesty and candor.

When it came to an order to move an aircraft carrier, army unit, or tactical aircraft, George Brown insisted that an expert in those arms draft the movement message. He certainly did not challenge the authority of the secretary of defense as the direct line to the commander, but he also did not think it proper for a person lacking current operational knowledge to write such communications. He respected the secretary's authority to direct military actions, but he wanted these critical orders to be feasible, practical, and executable. He also would not accept the signature of any other defense official acting for another; the secretary and his designated deputy were the only sources of operational direction.<sup>12</sup>

Early during O'Malley's tour with the joint chiefs, he reviewed a study by an academician on five top Air Force generals who had the purpose of examining their performances at West Point for indications of future promotion to general officer. The following excerpt from his letter of review gives some insight to O'Malley's thoughts:

After my second reading of your entertaining and well researched drafts on our five Air Force Generals, I attempted to infer some conclusions which might be helpful to you as you press on. I would like to say I came

up with something profound but am afraid I did not. . . . The strongest common thought that seemed to pervade the cadet days of all five was that they were all very likable men. They seemed to go out of their way to get along with their classmates, and even after many years had passed, their classmates remembered them that way. One could make the case that none were egocentric- or at least that they all had control of their egos. They did not feel that the world revolved around them.

They withstood pressure well. Early West Point life had inherent pressures and daily associations with classmates probably reflects, as well as anything else, a cadet's ability to handle it.

For the most part, they were naturally gregarious. They seemed to like people, or at least people thought they did.

They were not boors, nor zealots. Even Tommy White, who seemed to exhibit the most ambition as a cadet, found ample time for myriad activities and had most amiable relationships [sic] with his classmates.<sup>13</sup>

Jerry went on to say that he thought the real difference between the first and last man in the class (aside from good preparation) was motivation. He went on to lament that despite his efforts at motivation, he was not certain that he was getting that message across to his own boys.<sup>14</sup>

It was troubling to O'Malley that he saw a turn back to the grim days of Secretary of Defense McNamara in the Carter administration with Dr. Brown as secretary of defense. He felt that during the Ford administration, the services finally had taken hold of their programming authorities as they recovered from the Vietnam era and were beginning to rebuild the forces. However, that authority was greatly eroded under Carter. He particularly noted that this authority was fully restored when Reagan came into power.<sup>15</sup>

Despite these concerns, O'Malley felt good about working in the organization of the JCS. He valued the critical nature of the Pentagon decisions and the breadth of the resulting effects. His interest in how the four services should work together and the thinking he had invested in joint operations came into play in his new job as vice director of Operations (J-3) for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He quickly established a reputation for being energetic, objective, and effective.<sup>16</sup>

In June 1978, General Brown retired and was succeeded by Gen David C. Jones. Gen Lew Allen Jr. replaced General Jones as chief of the Air Force. Allen was a surprise choice as indi-

cated by his own words: "I never had an overseas assignment; I never had a combat assignment; had had most of my assignments in highly specialized activities, not in the basic line of the Air Force since I had been in SAC [30 years earlier] and therefore considered myself a very unlikely choice as Chief of Staff."<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, Allen had done a masterful job as National Security Agency (the complex signals intelligence organization) head in the trying days of the mid-1970s when the CIA and other intelligence agencies experienced painful scrutiny after the Nixon resignation. He had moved to the Air Force systems commander and, Harold Brown and President Carter selected him to replace General Jones from this position.

When Allen took over, the Air Force was making a great leap forward with the acquisition of the F-15 and F-16 fighters, as well as, the A-10 ground support aircraft. The cost of these new acquisitions was being bourned by cutting spares and other support that ultimately led to having some aircraft without engines and other signs of a hollow force. He mounted a strong effort and was joined by the other service chiefs to convince Harold Brown that the defense budget needed higher priority. The deputy to Harold Brown for Research and Engineering, Dr. William Perry, aided them in convincing President Carter as the evidence mounted, that the Soviet Union was pressing ahead with a massive intercontinental ballistic missile force. As General Allen put it, "President Carter was born again during his term as President, and during the later half of his term recognized the problems which the defense of the country was facing and of course was a strong advocate for a growing defense budget during the later part of his presidency."<sup>18</sup> O'Malley observed this development while serving in the JCS and later would become a key representative for the important programs to rebuild the Air Force while Allen was still the chief and later under General Gabriel.

In December 1978, two Electronic Data Systems (EDS) executives, Paul Chiapparone and Bill Gaylord, were jailed in Tehran on false charges of defrauding the government of Iran.<sup>19</sup> The chairman and chief executive officer, Ross Perot, who had established a company with an unusual dedication to excellent

performance and unit cohesion similar to that of the most outstanding military units, led EDS.<sup>20</sup>

Perot and his team exercised every possible means of securing the release of their associates, including pressure on the US State Department and invoking the good offices of Dr. Henry Kissinger. Normal official channels rapidly eroded as Iran drifted into revolution with the exit of the shah and the return of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Perot decided that direct action was needed to extricate his men and set up a rescue operation headed by Col Arthur "Bull" Simons, US Army, retired. Simons is renowned in the American military as a rescue expert. He led the famous Son Tay rescue near Hanoi, North Vietnam, that was marked by daring and precision, although faulty intelligence failed to reveal that the American prisoners had been moved before Simons' team arrived. When Simons had been inadvertently set down in an incorrect site next to a North Vietnamese barracks, he calmly smoked a cigar, shot 17 enemy soldiers as they rushed from the building, and moved to the planned location.

As the EDS rescue proceeded with players around the globe, Perot leased an aircraft to extricate the team from Turkey where they were headed from the northwest corner of Iran. On Sunday, 11 February 1979, he landed in Washington, DC, to arrange what assistance he could muster and prepare for the flight to Turkey. At Page Terminal (business jet area) in Washington national airport, he ran into Bill Clements, governor of Texas and former deputy secretary of defense. After Perot gave him a brief summary of the project, Clements said, "You need to contact Jerry O'Malley at the Pentagon." (O'Malley was vice director of Operations on the JCS.) Perot said, "How am I going to get him on a Sunday afternoon?" Clements went to a pay phone and through the Pentagon switchboard, he called O'Malley at home. He said "I've got Ross Perot from Texas who is a good friend of mine and a good friend to the military and I want you to help him." Everyone in the military knew of the extraordinary efforts Ross Perot had made in behalf of the US prisoners of war in Vietnam. Jerry O'Malley had long known who Ross Perot was since he had followed Perot's remarkable career after graduation from the Naval Academy in 1953, the same year Jerry graduated from West Point. In particular,

O'Malley appreciated the efforts Perot had made to help prisoners of war O'Malley had known as fellow aviators.<sup>21</sup>

Thirty minutes later, Perot was in the Pentagon with several general officers to solicit their help. They were not able to fly the rescue team out of Tehran since the US air operations at Doshen Toppeh airfield had been taken over by the revolutionaries. Air Force general Phil Gast was in a bunker beneath the Military Airlift Assistance Group Headquarters surrounded by a mob.<sup>22</sup>

Perot outlined his plans to get his team out. One general opined, "It is on the other side of the world, there is a revolution going on. It won't be easy." Perot smiled and said "I have 'Bull' Simons over there." At that O'Malley said, "[expletive deleted] Perot! You aren't giving the Iranians an even chance!" "Right," said Perot as he smiled at their confidence in Simons. They proceeded to lay out every area of support they could offer, including detailed maps, airfield data, and Iranian radar capability. The rescue mission played out to a successful conclusion over the next week with intense high drama as described in Ken Follett's book, *On Wings of Eagles*.<sup>23</sup>

The turmoil in Iran ratcheted up with the return of the Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1979 after the shah had fled the country in January.<sup>24</sup> Anti-Western demonstrations increased until, on 4 November 1979, a crowd of about 500 Islamic revolutionaries seized the American embassy in Tehran and captured 66 personnel. President Carter used every economic lever and diplomatic initiative he could muster, but although 14 of the captives were released, 52 Americans were still held captive.<sup>25</sup>

An ill-fated rescue attempt was made in April 1980, but the 52 captives were held for 444 days until the day Ronald Reagan was sworn in as president. The Iran-Iraq War and the election of Reagan in the fall of 1979 marked the beginning of serious negotiations for the release of the hostages through Algerian contacts. On 20 January 1981, the day of President Reagan's inauguration, the United States released \$8 billion in Iranian assets, and the hostages were released. The agreement gave Iran immunity from lawsuits arising from the incident.<sup>26</sup>

O'Malley had moved back to the Air Force in May 1979 before these events played out, but he was stung by the lack of broad planning that was supervised by the Operations office he had

left a year earlier. The formal investigation report filed in August 1980 found deficiencies in operations security, independent review of plans, organization, command and control, comprehensive readiness evaluation, size of the helicopter force, overall coordination of joint training, centralized and integrated intelligence support external to the joint task force, alternatives to the Desert One Site, handling the dust phenomenon, and the C-130 pathfinders.<sup>27</sup> Although details of the input from the Reagan transition team were not made public, O'Malley later remarked that the Iranians had been informed that their holy city of Qom was at risk if the release was not made.<sup>28</sup>

The record shows that O'Malley carried on enormous correspondence with people he had known throughout the country during his years at the Pentagon. Most of his letters were written in response to requests for help, recommendations for jobs, or support for applications. He always responded, usually with the strongest support he could deliver. Many times his letters were hand-written; despite his excellent secretarial support.

For example, Capt Don Anderson wrote to Jerry in November 1977 for an endorsement to become an English instructor at the Air Force Academy. O'Malley responded with a strong letter citing the quality of his work as O'Malley's executive officer. In January 1980, Anderson replied, saying, "I've just begun my second semester of teaching English here at the Academy, and I have never been happier. Your letter of recommendation was one of the major reasons I got a shot at coming to this place. Thank you very much."<sup>29</sup>

O'Malley's handwritten response stated that he was "delighted to hear from you and to learn that your tour is everything you expected. I wish I could say that I found the Pentagon equally palatable—but I can say that the work has its challenges. Warmest good wishes for a most rewarding New Year."<sup>30</sup>

He received many requests to write letters of recommendation for young men aspiring to one of the service academies for which he was usually quite accommodating. An unusual one stands out. Briggs Bralliar, the son of the surgeon general of the Strategic Air Command and a former neighbor to O'Malley, wrote to O'Malley. Briggs presented a lively rationale for seeking an appointment to the Air Force Academy but included a curious paragraph that he was not disclosing his wishes to his

parents. The reason for keeping such a secret is not declared, but O'Malley obliged with a "To whom it may concern" letter outlining his strong support.<sup>31</sup>

During his service at the Pentagon, O'Malley also wrote letters for Angela Amadeo for a direct commission in the Medical Service Corps;<sup>32</sup> Robert Brailiar for entry into Officer Training School;<sup>33</sup> Major Buermeyer for admission to U-2 pilot duty; Staff Sergeant Cleveland for the Airman Education and Commissioning Program;<sup>34</sup> Lt Col Dan Bowen for a fighter assignment after completing a tour in the war zone of El Salvador;<sup>35</sup> Maj Bob Salewski for assignment to the Joint Chiefs of Staff;<sup>36</sup> 2d Lt Ken Collins for pilot training;<sup>37</sup> Patrick Casey for the Air Force Academy;<sup>38</sup> William Cosby, for appointment to West Point;<sup>39</sup> and Lt Col Jim Sullivan, for the Air Force Thunderbirds acrobatic flying team.<sup>40</sup> A great many other such O'Malley letters can be found in the official history file at Maxwell Air Force Base. The point is clear that O'Malley considered it a duty to use his power and influence to help those willing to work to attain a fresh goal in life.

More complex were requests to support challenges to the promotion system for perceived errors by passed-over officers. For these, he felt obliged to dig deep and support only those he determined to have merit. Thus, he wrote to the Air Force Military Personnel Center to remove an evaluation for Major Keim (August 1979),<sup>41</sup> but he could only partially support a request by Major Deady (December 1979)<sup>42</sup> and did not support an effort by Lt Col John P. Frederick in March 1978.<sup>43</sup> In each case, he sought the advice of the evaluating and endorsing officials and leaned toward the individual where the regulations were flexible.

The Iron Gate Chapter of the Air Force Association asked O'Malley to speak to its annual luncheon at the 21 Club in New York City on 23 May 1978. His talk was warmly received, but the highlight for Jerry was the opportunity to meet the famous aviator, Gen James H. Doolittle. General Doolittle was one of the early military pilots serving as a flying cadet in the Signal Corps in October 1917.<sup>44</sup> He was also one of the first to achieve a Doctor of Science degree in Aeronautics, but his real fame came from the daring raid he led on Japan (Tokyo, Kobe, Osaka, and Nagoya) on 18 April 1942.<sup>45</sup> Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt presented him with the Medal of Honor at the White House "For

conspicuous leadership above and beyond the call of duty, involving personal valor and intrepidity at an extreme hazard to life. With the apparent certainty of being forced to land in enemy territory or to perish at sea.”<sup>46</sup> General Doolittle was the first president of the Air Force Association. O’Malley had an opportunity to greet Doolittle at the New York luncheon in the Hunt Room of the 21 Club (fig. 49) and to chat with Hunter Harris at the same meeting (fig. 50).



**Figure 49.** The inscription on this photo reads “To General Jerry O’Malley from his friend and admirer, J. H. Doolittle.” (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O’Malley Burg.)



**Figure 50. O'Malley chats with retired general Hunter Harris at the Air Force Association meeting.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

Even as a general officer, O'Malley maintained his flying proficiency. In April 1977, Gen George Brown signed a memorandum from the chairman of the JCS to the director of Operations of the Air Force authorizing O'Malley to perform "temporary operational flying" up to 24 missions per year.<sup>47</sup> O'Malley's career records show he had flown 40 different aircraft models and had logged primary pilot time in 36 of them.<sup>48</sup>

The American Broadcasting Company featured a series on the rebuilding of the US military called *Second to None*. It was presented by Ted Koppel in the spring of 1979. O'Malley sent the following hand-written note to Koppel:

I've just finished watching the complete series of *Second to None* that we taped in the National Military Command Center. I had missed a few segments along the way. I believe it is an absolutely superior piece of work. I have not seen more responsible and more balanced reporting. It's something you can be proud of in your old age. I just hope the country paid attention. Congratulations on a super job.<sup>49</sup>

Two instances illustrated how he liked to visit with Air Force people he had known from earlier assignments. First, a comment from Jack Kennedy who had been an enlisted crew chief

on the SR-71 when O'Malley was a major. Kennedy had retired from the Air Force and was a technical representative of Lockheed working on a National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA) project with the U-2 aircraft. Kennedy wrote:

Years later in 1978-1979 I was working on a NASA project using the U-2s to get high altitude air samples over the islands. At dinner at [sic] he Officer's Club a somewhat officious young Major announced that General O'Malley was coming in for dinner. I said "Jerry O'Malley;" and the Major corrected me that it was "General Jerome F. O'Malley!" In a few moments O'Malley arrived and he spotted me right away, came over to shake my hand and share memories of the SR-71 Program. Of the 32 General Officers I have known over many years, O'Malley was the best. He was friendly, smart and very genuine in every thing he did or said. He had enormous respect from the enlisted force.<sup>50</sup>

The second incident came from Don Brooks who had been in the first class at the Air Force Academy when O'Malley was an air training officer there. He wrote that "While I was stationed at Osan AB, Korea, Jerry was a two-star general on a visit to Korea. Another classmate, Larry Cotton, was also at Osan at the time. Jerry took the time to call and invite both of us to join him for a drink at the club. I'll never forget that he, with his busy schedule, took the time out and made the effort to spend some time with a couple of his 'underclassmen.'"<sup>51</sup>

One Saturday morning in 1978, O'Malley was playing tennis near the family quarters at Bolling AFB. His partner in a doubles match was Dick Henry who saw O'Malley hit the ground as he chased a ball. After visiting the Bolling clinic where they applied an ice pack to his leg, Dick insisted they go to the Andrews AFB hospital where the diagnosis showed a separated Achilles tendon. He had surgery the next morning and then spent several months on crutches, while the tendon healed.<sup>52</sup>

### Notes

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2. Gen Lew Allen Jr., *US Air Force Oral History Program Report*, book 13, 10 January 1986, 105.
3. Lt Gen Kelly Burke, *US Air Force Oral History Program Report*, book 18, 23 April 1991, 150.
4. Allen, *US Air Force Oral History Program Report*, 66-67.

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5. Lt Gen Jerome F. O'Malley, interview by Dr. Edgar F. Puryear Jr., historian, 10 August 1981.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., 4.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 16.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 12.
12. Ibid., 10 June 1977.
13. Jerome F. O'Malley to Aloysius G. Casey, letter, 12 July 1977.
14. Ibid., 10 June 1977.
15. O'Malley, interview.
16. Gen Lew Allen Jr. (USAF, Ret.), to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 12 May 1998.
17. Ibid.
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19. H. Ross Perot, telephone interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 22 February 1998.
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28. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
29. Capt Don Anderson to Maj Gen Jerome F. O'Malley, letter, 16 January 1980.
30. O'Malley to Capt Don Anderson, letter, 22 January 1980.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 10 November 1980.
33. Ibid., 9 September 1997.
34. Ibid., 19 January 1978.
35. Ibid., 28 August 1980; and Lt Col Dan Bowen to Jerome F. O'Malley, letter, 20 March 1980.
36. O'Malley to Lt Col Don Bowen, letter, 4 April 1977.
37. Ibid., 5 July 1978.
38. Ibid., to Cong. Joe McDade, 8 July 1979; O'Malley to Col Al Casey, note, 8 July 1979.
39. O'Malley, letter, 13 November 1979.
40. Ibid., to Maj Gen Billy J. Ellis, director of operations at Headquarters Tactical Air Command, letter, n.d.
41. Ibid., to Air Force Military Personnel Center (Randolph Air Force Base, TX), letter, 6 August 1979.
42. Ibid., to Major Deady, letter, 31 December 1979.
43. Ibid., to Lt Col John P. Frederick, letter, 14 March 1978.

44. *Biography of Gen James H. Doolittle* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, n.d.). General Doolittle, retired 10 May 1946 and died 27 September 1993.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Joint Chiefs of Staff, CM-1369-77, memorandum, 4 April 1977.
48. O'Malley's flying time record was extracted from the accident report.
49. O'Malley to Ted Koppel, ABC News, letter, 2 May 1979.
50. Jack Kennedy, telephone interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 16 April 2002.
51. Don Brooks to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 26 January 2002.
52. Lt Gen Dick Henry to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 25 November 1997.

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## Chapter 14

### **Air Staff Plans and Operations**

May 1979–July 1980 <b>Two star</b>	Assistant deputy chief of staff, operations, plans, and readiness <b>AF/XOO</b>
July 1980–June 1982 <b>Three star</b>	Deputy chief of staff, plans and operations Headquarters US Air Force <b>AF/XO</b>

In the spring of 1979, O'Malley moved back into Headquarters Air Force as the assistant deputy chief of staff for operations, plans, and readiness.<sup>1</sup> His office symbol, AF/XOO, designated him as assistant to Lt Gen Charles A. Gabriel, AF/XO, the same Charlie Gabriel for whom he had worked as wing vice-commander on his combat tour in the F-4 in Thailand. This was the third time the pair had worked together. They were young officers at the Air Force Academy, combat leaders in Thailand, and finally, leaders on the Air Staff. Intense activity surrounded the Air Staff since the acquisition of the F-15, F-16, and A-10 were all under way while the Air Force was pushing to upgrade the B-52 avionics in the wake of the B-1 cancellation and to re-engine their fleet of KC-135 tanker aircraft. Undercover and in so-called black programs, the development of an advanced technology bomber—later known as the B-2 Stealth bomber—and a Stealth fighter (F-117) was in its early stages.

In 1977, when O'Malley served as the chief planner for SAC, his deputy was Kelly Burke, a bright brigadier general who succeeded O'Malley. Burke moved to the Air Staff in the research and development area and was promoted to two star about 18 months after O'Malley had achieved that rank. To that point, O'Malley was a fast burner in the 1953-year group because he made major general so early. O'Malley also noticed when Burke was selected to head up the research and development office and was promoted to three star in November 1979. In the Air

Force, the lieutenant general rank and the full general rank are not like the promotions given to a person on some annual list like all other promotions to that point. These promotions were based on the position to which the formerly two-star officer was moved, and the rank was assumed with congressional approval. Burke became deputy chief of staff for research, development, and acquisition on 1 November 1979, and that made him a lieutenant general.

Besides his former deputy outpacing him, O'Malley also felt somewhat pressured by the turf battle between these two major Air Staff functions. For example, Burke had his staff prepare a paper on unresolved strategic issues to address the planned upgrade of B-52 avionics and the residual B-1 development work.<sup>2</sup> He claimed that he had worked closely with O'Malley, but most of the operational community thought the operational planners, not the development community, should have done that job. Burke himself said, "It caused great consternation in the Air Staff and is still referred to as the 'Burke Bomber Plan.'"<sup>3</sup> Another general officer was overheard referring to "Kelly Burke's Air Force" as he complained about his own lack of influence on a given program.<sup>4</sup>

Kelly Burke and Jerry O'Malley were immensely talented officers. General Slay held the research and development job before Burke and was renowned for his total command of program details whenever he defended the programs to the Congress. Kelly Burke was equally as effective on Capitol Hill, although his approach was more subtle and understated. He had served in the legislative liaison, the office on the Air Staff assigned to work with Congress, as a young officer and knew how to approach the members. He made it a point to visit key players and was a real student of their constituent districts and the Air Force-related jobs therein. For instance, he turned the contentious Senator William Proxmire into an advocate for the KC-135 new engine program. He quietly visited the senator one day and suggested that "despite your frequent criticisms there must be something in the \$200-million defense budget that you like." Proxmire said that may be true, but he did not know what it might be. Burke outlined the advantages of the new engines in military terms and said they were much quieter. He won over the recalcitrant senator when he pointed out how much the

National Guard unit in Proxmire's home state would like to have the clean, quiet engines.<sup>5</sup>

O'Malley and Burke were good friends, but it was evident that along with deep respect, they were also fiercely competitive. General Gabriel was promoted to four star in July 1980. He moved to Europe to be the commander of the US Air Forces. O'Malley became the deputy chief of staff for plans and operations, which was his three-star billet. For the next two years, Burke and O'Malley were key leaders on the Air Council, the three-star board that manages the Air Force. They formed the strongest possible program with the increased funding available in the late Carter years. They virtually structured the enhanced program that became available to the Air Force after Reagan was inaugurated in January 1981. Air Force chief Gen Lew Allen depended on these two superstars to help him take on the most difficult issues. These issues included the rebirth of the B-1, the basing mode for the MX missile, the stealth fighter (later the F-117), the stealth bomber (later the B-2), the acquisition of more cargo-transport capability, and operations issues related to the other services. They each were capable of wide overlap in the relations with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Congress, the administration executives, the State Department, and with foreign officials. However, Burke was the lead with the Congress, and O'Malley took the brunt of the arguments in the tank that determined the posture of the Air Force among the other services in the department.<sup>6</sup> In some sense, Burke was the politician, while O'Malley was the warrior.

O'Malley's thank-you notes to all correspondents who congratulated him on his promotion to the three-star rank and chief of the Air Force plans stressed three main points: the importance of the operations, his dependence on the quality support of all Air Force units, and his full realization that it would be a very demanding assignment (fig. 51). An example was his response to a letter of congratulations from General Slay when O'Malley made his three-star rank (lieutenant general) and Gabriel made his four-star rank (general). O'Malley wrote: "Many thanks for your very kind note of congratulations and your thoughtful words of encouragement. I am well aware that the DCS/OP&R is one of the more challenging jobs on the



**Figure 51. Air Force chief Gen Lew Allen and Diane O'Malley pin on O'Malley's three-star rank as a lieutenant general of the US Air Force.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

Air Staff and will require everything I have to do it well, plus all the help I can get.”

It is interesting to note that O'Malley was fully aware of congressional scrutiny stemming from the “Lavelle affair.” In the same note, he said: “It’s been a long time and many miles since Udorn [Thailand] days. This is the first time that Charlie and I have been on the same list and not been in trouble.”<sup>7</sup> (Reference to congressional questions).

In the same vein, he wrote to Gen Bryce Poe, who was the four-star commander of the Air Force Logistics Command, as follows:<sup>8</sup> “I am both humbled and honored by the three stars and particularly by the job of DCS/Operations, Plans and Readiness—which I know will keep me off the streets.”<sup>9</sup>

In response to Gen Wilbur L. Creech, who was at the time commander of Tactical Air Command, he struck the same tone: “Many thanks for your kind note of congratulations. I am both honored and humbled at the prospects of taking over Air Force XO but I’ll give it my best shot. One thing for sure, I’ll need all the help I can get from you and the TAC Staff. . . .”

He responded to Col Art Ruppert, who had noted that since O'Malley was a three star, he would no longer be required to wear a nametag in accordance with Air Force uniform regulations. O'Malley said: “I don’t think I’ll give up wearing my name-tag. I know that there will be some days when I’ll have to look down to see who I am! . . .”

Newly minted brigadier general Bob Beckel, himself an Air Force Academy cadet in 1955 when O'Malley served there, sent his congratulations. O'Malley responded: "Its been a long time and a lot of miles since Denver in '55. At that time I thought anybody who was a lieutenant general would need help walking (maybe I was right)." <sup>10</sup>

Another congratulatory note that came from Army general John Wickham, with whom he had served in the Joint Chiefs' office, must have included a note of good-humored irony, as O'Malley responded with the following:

Many thanks for your message of congratulations. I don't know what you meant by "officially swaggering into the tank and dominating the table" because when you were at the helm, I was rarely invited in and then only if I marched straight and sat quietly. I know you must think you are on top of a powder keg [Wickham was the senior commander in Korea] and if there is anything I can do to make your job easier, please let me know. Diane joins me in warmest regards to you and Ann. <sup>11</sup>

Other items that appeared in O'Malley's thank-you notes included mention of Diane's delight in getting a full-time aide and recognition that Jim was a senior in high school and John, a junior. Another note detailed Sharon's departure to take a job in Los Angeles as a junior executive with Gallo Wines and highlighted Peggy's husband's decision to accept a surgical residency in Texas. Still another note mentioned that Peggy was to deliver their first grandchild in June 1982. He also commented that the commander of the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was his favorite career job (SR-71 unit) and acknowledged to retired general Alvan C. Gillem II that he had the most impact on O'Malley's decision to make the Air Force his career. <sup>12</sup>

In his role as deputy chief of staff of the Air Force for operations, O'Malley was a key advisor to the chief—at that time, General Allen. <sup>13</sup> Jerry formulated the operational plans for the Air Force and led the discussions and arguments on how to integrate Air Force elements into Department of Defense planning through the JCS in support of war-fighting commanders. <sup>14</sup> General Allen enjoyed a well-deserved reputation as a brilliant officer with an extensive background in nuclear weapons, space systems, and national intelligence methods and equipment. His appointment as chief surprised many in the Air Force since he seemed a bit remote from the "fly and fight" motto that

prevailed in the force. In July 1978, with the recommendation of Secretary of Defense Dr. Harold Brown, President Carter chose him—over many other senior officers who had deeper operational experience—to head the Air Force.<sup>15</sup>

Although he had served as a bomber pilot in B-29s and B-36s after graduating from West Point in 1946, Allen soon attended the University of Illinois, where his exceptional academic prowess in science propelled him all the way to a doctorate degree in physics in 1954. Later, he was active in the testing done to characterize the effects of nuclear weapons and held key positions in Air Force activities in space, including serving as director of special projects (which developed the United States' spy satellite constellations).<sup>16</sup> His tour as director of the National Security Agency that handled worldwide communications interceptions for the United States further enhanced his broad knowledge of intelligence gathering.

This wide and deep experience of General Allen was a major factor in the dynamic that played out between O'Malley and Allen on one of O'Malley's favorite initiatives for organizing the Air Force. In accord with O'Malley's long-held view that the services must do a better job of getting available intelligence to the commander in combat, he also thought that the highly classified space assets and products were often quickly passed to top government leaders but not so to the combat commanders. In fact, because of the carefully guarded need to know, service commanders in the field often did not know about the existence of intelligence capabilities that had bearing upon their area of responsibility. O'Malley led a group of young officers who saw the formation of a space command both within the Air Force and at the unified command level for all services as a long-term remedy.

The first hurdle was to seek the support of the Air Force Council, the assembly of three-star leaders of the Air Force who reviewed major investments for the Air Force. It was a considerable decision since the initial estimate was a \$7 billion increase in the space operations budget line. O'Malley delivered an impassioned speech that encouraged leaders to look above their in-boxes and take control of the future. They voted yes for the funding.<sup>17</sup>

General Allen, on the other hand, knew the current organizational structure in detail and experienced delight in seeing it

produce some truly revolutionary photo-intelligence products as well as communications and navigation satellites. He was concerned that in the fog of reorganization some real capability might be lost. He believed that a space command was ultimately going to be required but that the time had not yet arrived. O'Malley persisted in polishing the argument for the move while respecting the views of his chief.

Later, when O'Malley was promoted to four-star rank and became the vice-chief of the Air Force, he presented General Allen with the argument that carried the day. Jerry argued that after General Allen retired, which was only months away, the Air Force was sure to go ahead with a separate space command and that it would be far better for the Air Force if it were done under the leadership of a chief with such a substantial space background. It would marshal the support of the operational advocates and the more technically oriented space experts who greatly admired the judgment of their scientist who had risen to the top position in the Air Force.<sup>18</sup>

By this time, the Reagan administration had taken control of the government. Both Secretary Verne Orr and his undersecretary, Edward C. "Pete" Aldrich, supported a separate space command and helped push the idea through the Pentagon bureaucracy.<sup>19</sup>

The Space Command established in 1982 at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, progressively enlarged in its area of responsibility. Initially, the command was charged with operating the ground facilities for space systems; later it took over the bases in Florida and California for launching satellites, and in 2001, by the direction of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, it assumed control of the acquisition and development of space and ground systems. By this juncture, Pete Aldrich, who helped create the Space Command, was serving as an undersecretary to Rumsfeld with the responsibility for acquisition for the Department of Defense.<sup>20</sup> Aldrich assisted in forming the plan to put Space Command in charge of the cradle-to-grave management of space systems.

While some still argue that the original, more technically trained structure was preferable to the current, more operationally oriented Space Command, it is clear that O'Malley's primary goal was met. Space assets were far more integrated into the combat forces, and combat commanders had a lot more influence

in setting the requirements. The Space Command at both the Air Force level and at the unified, all-services level represents a long-term legacy of the ideas that O'Malley advanced through the Pentagon. It will take considerable time and the longer view of history to determine if the new organizational structure is successful in creating new capabilities in space and if it can do so with greater efficiency than the prior structure.

While O'Malley was in charge of the plans shop and General Gabriel had taken over from General Allen as chief, Maj Gen Jack Chain served as O'Malley's deputy. All three were deeply involved in putting together the Air Force budget in the fall of 1980. It was a heady time as the service anticipated the increases the Reagan administration asked of Congress. These three leaders decided to include in the guidance, to each of the major field commanders, directions for a constrained budget in case Congress did not appropriate the requested increases. They received considerable resistance, as the commanders did not want to give the impression they could live without additional funds. In fact, General Creech, Tactical Air Force commander, called Chain and gave him a long, detailed lecture that the three (Gabriel, O'Malley, and Chain) were so absorbed in their own counsel that they were not listening to the best advice from the field. It was laid out in the clear, forceful logic for which General Creech was well known. Nonetheless, the data was acquired in accord with the guidance as the Air Staff made clear it would execute the responsibilities of their offices.<sup>21</sup> As the events unfolded, Reagan was elected and inaugurated in January 1981. His secretary of defense, Caspar W. Weinberger, supported the full increase in funding requested by the Pentagon (fig. 52).

Another major defense issue that transcended the Carter and Reagan administrations was the upgrade of the land-based intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) force or the so-called missile experimental (MX) program. It became clear in the late 1970s that the Soviet Union was fielding SS-18 and SS-19 rocket forces that had improved accuracy, hard silo basing (hardened to US attack), and large numbers of warheads. The United States had held steady (since 1970) with the fielded Minuteman III system and restricted ICBM work to research on MX while the arms reduction talks continued. Both Burke and O'Malley were key advocates for this new ICBM, although they



**Figure 52. O'Malley argues Air Force requirements with the secretary of defense.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

came at it from quite different points of view. Burke's view aligned with the sophisticated concept of trying to make the nuclear balance more stable; thus, he focused on finding a basing mode invulnerable to Soviet attack. O'Malley thought deterrence would be served best by the offensive capability the new missile represented with its startling accuracy and 10 warheads for each missile. O'Malley was a warrior at heart, as evidenced at many key points in his career.

Kelly Burke saw the prime feature of the new system to be its basing mode. The argument was that the United States had to base the MX so that the Soviets found it disadvantageous to

attack with a preemptive strike; otherwise, the improved missile of the Air Force would only become a high-value target and tend to make the strategic balance less stable. O'Malley agreed the United States should seek a basing mode more resilient than the current Minuteman silos, but his prime interest focused on the offensive capability of the new missile. Studies had shown that the advanced guidance for the MX would provide the capability to deliver nuclear warheads with the same accuracy as daylight bombing would achieve (before precision weapons) and to do so from *5,000 miles* away (emphasis in original). O'Malley felt the United States could not allow the obvious attack advantage that the new Soviet missiles presented to go unaddressed.

Kelly Burke and the chief, Lew Allen, worked for years with Secretary Brown and Dr. William Perry, the director of research and engineering in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, to convince President Carter of the need for the MX.<sup>22</sup> Extensive reviews by national experts and many alternative basing schemes contributed to a general feeling that the Air Force did not know where to hide its new missile, resulting in some rather effective cartoons being featured in the press. Carter had long argued for fewer nuclear weapons, and he had not been impressed with the basing concepts. The pressure was building on President Carter as the MX had two-thirds support in both Houses of Congress.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the failed hostage rescue and the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan changed Carter's view of his ability to contain Soviet actions through persuasion. Ultimately, near the end of the Carter years, the president headed to Geneva for the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II), and his advisors convinced him that he must build the new missile that was allowed under the current treaty or he would weaken his position to limit further Soviet expansion.<sup>24</sup> Typical of Jimmy Carter, he studied the details of the missile and the basing mode to the extent that he even made engineering suggestions on the basing concept.

Carter and his White House staff inserted such curious concepts as having the missiles constantly in transit that only added to the public criticism of the missile racetrack. Finally, after months of additional studies, Allen and Burke thought they had solved the problem by defining the MX multiple

protective structure (MPS) system, which simply built many hardened structures for each missile and denied knowledge of which structure housed which missile. Burke argued that it made the system not only hard to attack but also decreased the marginal cost of the structures to less than the cost of reentry warheads, which vitiated Soviet incentives to build more weapons. O'Malley carried the offensive arguments. He knew well the targeting equation that showed that accuracy was far more important than yield (or size) of the warhead. He wanted to hold the hard silos of the Soviet SS-18s and SS-19s at risk.

Allen and Burke were both upset when the Reagan administration labeled the basing mode a democratic solution and quickly appointed a committee to recommend cancellation of the basing mode while continuing the missile.<sup>25</sup> In fact, the basing would have taken considerable land in Utah and Nevada—both were Reagan states with strong White House connections. The issue oscillated through several more cycles until 1983 when a committee headed by Brent Scowcroft forged a compromise by reducing the number of MX missiles to be built and basing this smaller number in revised Minuteman silos in Wyoming. O'Malley was satisfied with this solution since it provided the new, more accurate missile albeit in fewer numbers.

As the chief planner for Air Force operations, O'Malley was deeply involved in the high-interest areas for the Reagan administration in Latin America.<sup>26</sup> The chief, General Allen, was not as interested in military-political affairs; thus, O'Malley led the Air Force presentations to the JCS on issues related to Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, and Columbia. Although details remain classified, records showed the newly installed secretary of state, Alexander Haig, was pushing a hard-line policy, including blockading Cuba and Nicaragua. O'Malley crafted the Air Force position against such action, and his argument carried.<sup>27</sup>

The cogency of O'Malley's arguments in the Joint Chiefs' conference room, "the tank," was so successful that action officers from all the services started calling him the leprechaun because he could broker an agreement among the services when all efforts appeared futile. Due to O'Malley's effectiveness, action officers from the other services began to approach Air Staff action officers to get O'Malley to weigh in on their critical

issues. The Air Staff became the power broker among the services when the Reagan administration was supporting a major buildup of the forces.<sup>28</sup> Such Air Force programs in the Reagan defense policy as the Peacekeeper (MX missile), the B-1, and the ground launched cruise missile deployed in Europe, and the upgrades to the fighter force that ultimately helped destroy the Soviet Union.

In February 1982, O'Malley testified before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee in support of the Reagan buildup:

The Air Force is confronted with a formidable Soviet challenge. We face the foreboding prospect of significant strategic inferiority unless we promptly undertake the necessary actions to strengthen our nuclear forces and restore the strategic balance. Correcting the strategic balance is fundamental to our security. We must proceed with an overall strategic modernization program that improves the survivability of our strategic forces, restores our strength relative to that of the Soviet Union, and assures the Kremlin is denied any prospect of success in nuclear conflict. The broad strategic improvement program set forth by President Reagan last fall is designed to fulfill these objectives. We must proceed with it quickly; we must proceed with it resolutely.<sup>29</sup>

Aligned with his support for these new systems, O'Malley effectively argued for closing older systems that were no longer cost-effective elements of US defense. He advocated closing the mid-Canada radar line, which was unable to see targets approaching below 9,000-foot altitude. He also pushed for disposing of B-52D bombers (despite objections of the CINCSAC) even before delivery of the newer B-1 aircraft.<sup>30</sup>

O'Malley's vital interest in these programs showed through not only within the Pentagon but also in his public speeches. Even back in his home area of northeast Pennsylvania with the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick on 17 March 1982, he warmed up with some Irish stories, but his key points pushed the Reagan defense policy.<sup>31</sup>

Despite this insight into the top level of the service, O'Malley often lamented in his many personal letters that he had been deskbound in the Pentagon for so long. He missed the association with people and the action of leading a flying unit. He still managed to update his high-altitude training and get out to Edwards AFB, California, for demonstration rides in F-16s with the latest modifications (figs. 53 and 54).<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 53. O'Malley receives an orientation ride in the latest version of the F-16 fighter at Edwards Air Force Base.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)



**Figure 54. O'Malley, an unidentified officer, and an F-16 post flight.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

In early 1982, O'Malley received a note from Sister Charles (IHM), one of the nuns who taught at Saint Rose High School in the late 1940s.<sup>33</sup> She asked if he would pen some thoughts to support Catholic Education Week in the Scranton diocese. He was quick to write a handwritten letter to Sister Charles to salute the lasting positive impact of Catholic education on his life. He obliged her request with an article to the editor of the *Scranton Tribune* from which the following was excerpted:<sup>34</sup>

Although I graduated from St. Rose over thirty years ago, I still vividly remember nearly all of my teachers. Sister M. Charles, Sister M. Lois, and Sister M. Edmund probably had the most impact on my life. Even today I wholeheartedly applaud their dedication, selflessness, enthusiasm, integrity and teaching skills. Although I later graduated from West Point, it was at St. Rose where I acquired the self-discipline, which was to prove so indispensable to my long career in military aviation.

During my career I have been stationed in many states. I searched for a school like St. Rose for my children, and did not find one until I arrived in Washington, DC, and I discovered St. Thomas More in Arlington, Virginia—another extraordinary learning center, also run by the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.<sup>35</sup>

As noted earlier in this story, back in 1977, O'Malley aided Don Anderson, who had served him as an executive officer, to secure a position as a professor at the Air Force Academy. Over the years, O'Malley returned to the academy often because he had been part of its founding and because he considered it vital to the long-term future of the Air Force. In April 1982 O'Malley apparently had made such a visit and received the following whimsical letter of thanks from Captain Anderson.

23 April 1982

Dear General O'Malley

What a pleasure to see you, gray lacing your eyebrows and head, three stars set comfortably on your shoulders. Your limp was also (noticeably) gone. Some miracle? or just a better heel lift? In short, you looked terrific: just like a 3-star general. Was delighted by your speech—no, chat—with us in Lectionary L-5. It was good for those cadets (and Captains) to see and hear a Lt Gen speak of fears, uncertainties, errors, as well (and as easily) as of successes, to see and hear you laugh and be fearful as well as hopeful and willingly responsible for the future. (You stunned me just a bit. We are closer to 2000 AD than we are to the Korean War and my grade school bomb drills in Butte, Montana. And the beat goes on . . .

Well, just wanted to say thanks. You reassure me now as you did (Jesus, nearly ten Years ago) when I was a new kid on your block and if you think I didn't work hard on this charming letter, you're nuts.

Sincerely

DONALD C. ANDERSON, Capt, USAF

Executive Officer and Assistant Professor of English.<sup>36</sup>

Anderson represented the ease junior officers felt around O'Malley, but he also noted the effectiveness O'Malley had in communicating with academy cadets who were beginning an Air Force career. The reference to a limp was because of an injury O'Malley suffered to an Achilles tendon playing tennis.

O'Malley and Kelly Burke continued to lead the Air Force implementation of the expanded budget that came with the first year of Reagan's presidency. In the summer of 1982, as time expired for Air Force chief Lew Allen, the new direction of the Air Force became clear; O'Malley's promoted to the four-star rank in the position as vice-chief of the Air Force (fig. 55). In a coordinated, parallel move, the Air Force announced that Gen Charles Gabriel would succeed Allen.



**Figure 55. New Air Force Leadership—O'Malley and Gabriel.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

Once again, the Generals Gabriel and O'Malley team was about to take over leadership of the Air Force. In June 1982 O'Malley is promoted, and Lt Gen Kelly Burke retired within one month. Many suspected that Burke aspired to become chief with a shot at chairman of the Joint Chiefs. However, when O'Malley moved in as vice-chief, it became clear that Burke's window of opportunity for those jobs had narrowed, and he decided to retire. In his own words in his oral history, Burke said he thought that retiring at age 54 was better than age 59 (plus), if one planned a post-retirement career. He also said that Allen wanted him to stay and virtually assured him of a four-star job, but Burke thought the four-star positions he saw coming open were less challenging and less interesting than a position as head of research and development for the Air Force.<sup>37</sup>

As it worked out, with the retirement of Kelly Burke and Jerry O'Malley's death on 20 April 1985, the Air Force lost both of its fastest-moving general officers.

#### Notes

1. *Biography of Jerome F. O'Malley* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, January 1985).
2. Lt Kelly Burke, *USAF Oral History Report*, 23 April 1991, 194.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Col Ken Van Dillen (USAF, Ret.), to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 15 March 2003.
5. Burke, *USAF Oral History Report*, 210.
6. *Ibid.*, 271.
7. Jerome F. O'Malley, to Gen Alton D. Slay, letter, 18 June 1980.
8. *Ibid.*, to Gen Alton D. Slay, letter, 18 June 1980.
9. *Ibid.*, to Gen Wilbur L. Creech, letter, 12 June 1980.
10. *Ibid.*, to Brig Gen Bob Breckel, letter, 18 July 1980.
11. Jerome F. O'Malley, to Gen John A. Wickham, letter, 11 June 1980.
12. *Ibid.*, to Gen Alvan C. Gillem II, letter, 19 July 1980.
13. Gen Lew Allen Jr. to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 12 May 1998.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Biography of Gen Lew Allen Jr.* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1 July 1982).
16. *Ibid.*
17. Maj Gen Perry Smith, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Smith, 2 December 1973.
18. Allen to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 12 May 1998.
19. Edward C. "Pete" Aldrich to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 28 July 2000.

20. Ibid.
21. Gen Jack Chain, telecom interview with Aloysius G. Casey, 30 December 1997.
22. Burke, *USAF Oral History Report*, 23 April 1991, 260-62.
23. Ibid., 261.
24. Ibid., 262.
25. Gen Lew Allen Jr., *USAF Oral History Report*, 23 April 1991, 153-54.
26. Col Al Caldwell (USAF, Ret.), to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 12 September 2000.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Senate, *Armed Services Committee on Manpower, and Personnel*, "Testimony of Jerome F. O'Malley," 26 February 1982.
30. Smith, interview.
31. *Scranton Tribune*, 18 March 1982.
32. O'Malley to Maj Gen Phillip J. Conley Jr., letter, July 1981.
33. Ibid., to Sister Charles, letter, 26 January 1982.
34. Ibid., to *Scranton Tribune*, letter, 26 January 1982.
35. Ibid.
36. Capt Donald C. Anderson to Jerry O'Malley, letter, 23 April 1982.
37. Burk, *USAF Oral History Report*, 381.

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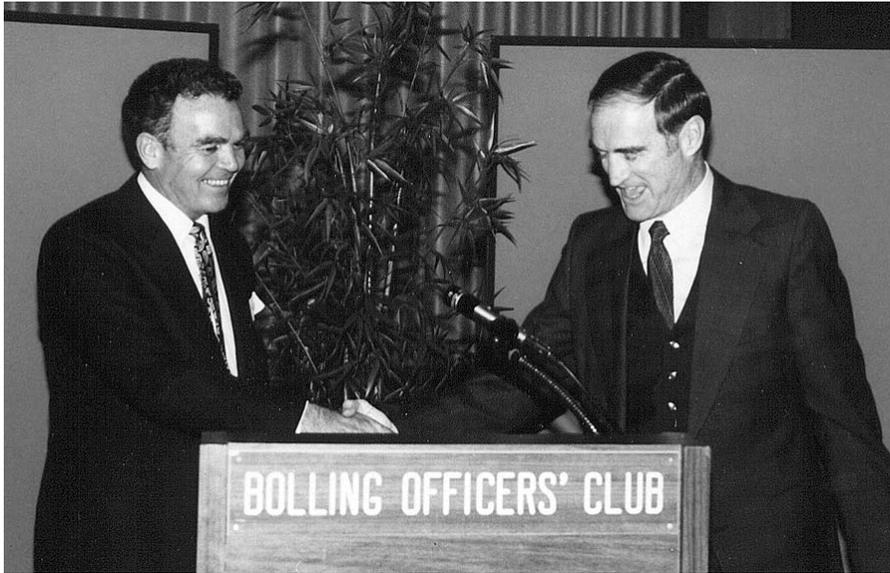
## Chapter 15

### **Vice-Chief of the US Air Force**

June 1982–September 1983 <b>Four star</b>	Vice-chief of staff, US Air Force <b>AF/VC</b>
Promotion to four-star rank (full general) came in June 1982 when O'Malley was selected as chief of staff of the US Air Force.	

At age 50, O'Malley was the youngest four-star general in the US Air Force. His promotion was doubtlessly a clear sign that he was marked for even greater responsibility. Once again, the Gabriel-O'Malley team took charge, for shortly after O'Malley became vice-chief, Gabriel succeeded Allen as chief. O'Malley continued to be the strong voice for the Air Force, particularly in the tank since Gabriel was more the strong, silent (Gary Cooper-like) type of leader (fig. 56). O'Malley also became an effective Air Force spokesperson with top officials in the Reagan administration (fig. 57). Still, O'Malley found the time to socialize with Diane (fig. 58) and to visit with his sister, Jane (fig. 59).

By the time O'Malley put on his four stars and took over as vice-chief of the Air Force, he had spent five and one-half years at the Pentagon. He had a clear idea about how the complex building worked; having personally observed the staff action of the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, and the JCS organizations. He wanted to secure a talented executive officer to help him do the most effective job. He received recommendations from several sources, but Kelly Burke suggested Col Ken Van Dillen who was about to graduate from the National War College.<sup>1</sup> Van Dillen had served for six years on the Air Staff before going to the War College and had established a reputation for intelligent, fast staff action. He knew the organizations and the attitudes of the key leaders. He would not try to bludgeon organizations with the power of his principle but rather lay out the best logic and supplement it with a short brief, if required,



**Figure 56. Generals Jerome F. O'Malley and Charles A. Gabriel.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)



**Figure 57. O'Malley chats with Vice President George Bush at a Pentagon ceremony.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)



**Figure 58. Diane and Jerry celebrate at a formal dinner dance.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)



**Figure 59. Jerry escorts his sister, Jane O'Malley Quinn, in the corridors of the Pentagon.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

to secure a key signature. O'Malley had seen Van Dillen operate on the controversial MX missile program and decided to interview him for the job. The process was illustrative of O'Malley's direct approach, as revealed in this quote from Van Dillen in a 1998 letter:

From my perspective I thought the interview with General O'Malley went well, but later that day Mac (his acting Exec) called me at my home and told me the interview didn't go well at all. General O'Malley's questions during the interview were typical and straightforward: Did I feel qualified for the job? (yes); What were my long-term career aspirations? (Missile Wing Commander and hopefully a fair shot at promotion to BG); When did I want to move to a wing position? (Whenever he was finished with me as his Exec—I would stay as long as he wanted me); and so forth. Well, as it turned out, something I said gave him the im-

pression that I thought becoming his Exec would interfere with my becoming a Wing Commander and thus I really didn't want the job. . . . I began to believe that I had blown what could have become the best career move I could have made up to that time. Soon thereafter, however, I was called out of class to a phone call from O'Malley, which was short, sweet, and very typical for him. After a brief exchange of pleasantries, O'Malley asked one question: "Do you, or do you not, want the [expletive deleted] job of being my Exec?" I gave him an unqualified yes and he said, "OK, it's yours. Work out the details with Mac." We then thanked each other and that was that. I went to work for him about one month later.<sup>2</sup>

Van Dillen offered two other anecdotes that characterize O'Malley's approach:

General O'Malley was naturally very warm and friendly. Some would say gregarious as well. But his basic honesty would always show through, and to some that probably came across as being blunt and brusque. An example of this occurred immediately after General Gabriel took over as chief in the summer of 1982. General Allen had remained as chief for several weeks after General O'Malley became vice-chief, and the mutual respect between these two officers was very obvious. So, soon after Gabriel arrived, several of the major command [MAJCOM] commanders came to town to pay their respects to both Gabriel and O'Malley. In the process of doing this, a couple of them commented to O'Malley that it was sure great to have a fighter pilot as chief rather than someone who came out of the R&D [research and development] community, making it very clear that they didn't hold the previous chief in too high regard. On the two occasions when I saw this happen, General O'Malley very directly told both commanders that as far as he and General Gabriel were concerned, they agreed with the previous chief about 99% of the time and therefore don't expect any significant policy changes anytime soon. It was a clear and blunt rebuke to both of them and really set the tone for General O'Malley's tenure as vice-chief.<sup>3</sup>

The same thing happened some time later when one of the major air commanders kept asking General O'Malley for advice on running the command, which very much sounded to O'Malley that the officer in question was less than competent. General O'Malley finally told the officer very bluntly to either run the command and make the decisions himself, or tell O'Malley that he couldn't and O'Malley would then run the command from the Pentagon until a replacement could be found. The morning phone calls seeking advice miraculously ceased at that point.<sup>4</sup>

In 1982 the Catholic bishops in the United States worked on a pastoral letter on war, armaments, and peace. It became a matter of great significance when draft versions of the letter seemed to imply that the national policy of nuclear deterrence

might be immoral. While the draft letter supported the existence of a strong military capability for the country, the text branded as immoral any intention or threat to use nuclear weapons.<sup>5</sup> It appeared to limit the use of this force to the extent that the US policy of deterring attacks by the Soviet Union was undermined. President Reagan's national security advisor, Judge William P. Clark, led a strong response from the Reagan administration; like O'Malley, Clark was a Catholic layman.

Air Force vice-chief, Gen Jerry O'Malley, was moved to write a two-page letter to Archbishop Cardinal Terrance Cooke, the military vicar for the church.<sup>6</sup> O'Malley argued that while seeking a mutual, equitable, and verifiable reduction in nuclear arms, the United States had to deal with the Soviet Union in the real world. He noted that the Soviets would not be affected by the bishop's letter as our policies, and that the concepts of "no first use" and freezing the nuclear arsenal may well undermine the principles of deterrence. He further lamented that the draft letter implied that military service was a morally ambivalent profession.<sup>7</sup> O'Malley wrote, "I am worried that the pastoral letter in its present form would dissuade from service the morally conscientious people we must have in the military."<sup>8</sup> He closed by writing that "our men and women in uniform deserve nothing less than full recognition of their total dedication, moral commitment, and personal sacrifices to keep our nation secure and free. Like you, we are men of peace."<sup>9</sup> In November 1982, O'Malley met with Cardinal Cooke and other bishops during a session related to this topic in Washington, DC.

The bishop's letter went through many more drafts; ultimately published, it had only a moderate affect on the dynamics of Cold War politics. Later history showed that the actions of the Polish pope in Rome had much more far-reaching affect than the bishop's writings on the final dissolution of the Soviet Union.

A recurring argument among the JCS occurred between the development of the MX missile (Air Force ICBM) and the Navy submarine Trident D-5 system. The key issue was the accuracy of warhead delivery that determined effectiveness against the hardest targets. Both missiles were projected to have good accuracy, but O'Malley felt that the Navy chief was overstating the capability of the Trident D-5 in his advocacy; taking away the support for the MX. After hearing Navy comments in more

than one tank session, O'Malley immersed himself in the details of guidance accuracy for land-based systems and submarine-launched missiles. He studied the details with both the Air Force Program Office engineers and the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory people who were building the Trident D-5 guidance system.

The next time the chief of naval operations (CNO) made his usual pronouncement regarding the superiority of the Trident D-5, O'Malley asked him several questions. The responses laid bare that the CNO did not have knowledge beyond his daily ration of smart cards and that there were fundamental reasons the land-based ICBM was consistently more accurate.<sup>10</sup> The JCS ultimately supported both systems because of the unique attributes each missile offered: the MX (later named Peacekeeper by President Reagan) for its accuracy and immediate response time, and the Trident D-5 for its innate survivability below the ocean surface as well as its superb accuracy.

To influence his peers from the other services, O'Malley also engaged them in racquetball games at the Pentagon athletic facility. Since he had suffered a separated Achilles tendon in 1978, doctors advised him to play doubles to avoid having to cover the full court as in a singles game. His aide, Bryant Dougherty, had arranged for Nancy Cantwell to team up with O'Malley, and he was delighted to find that she covered the court so well that they could beat most of the all-male teams. Thereafter, he would have Bryant set up a session with key senior officers on the JCS so he could mildly push an issue while he and Nancy beat them up on the court.<sup>11</sup> At one point, O'Malley pulled Maj Tim Cantwell, Nancy's husband, aside and with a wry smile said, "Now don't you go getting my racquetball partner pregnant just when we are doing so well!" Figure 60 shows O'Malley shaking hands with Gen Russell E. Dougherty as Major Dougherty looks on.

In dealing with his peers in the tank, O'Malley knew when he should not overplay his hand or argue needlessly. Such an occasion arose when the Air Force nominated a two-star general for a joint position that required broad knowledge of operating forces. Although the nominee was a bright individual, he had spent his entire career in research and laboratory work. When the nomination was challenged within the tank, O'Malley was



**Figure 60. Maj Bryant Dougherty looks on as O'Malley greets his old boss, Gen Russell E. Dougherty, former commander of the Strategic Air Command.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

the senior Air Force officer present and was expected to make the arguments in support. He simply said, "The paperwork spells out this officer's career and the only additional information I want to offer is that he has a very good looking wife!" To no one's surprise, the nomination was turned down.<sup>12</sup>

As vice-chief, O'Malley chaired the Air Force council that was made up of the Air Staff's three-star generals from each of the functional organizations: operations, research and development, logistics, and the comptroller. The council reviewed each major program being conducted by the Air Force before the quarterly reports were forwarded to the Air Force secretary, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and finally, the Congress. The council meetings were notorious for running overtime, principally because program managers from the field organizations loaded their briefings with multiple slides and details. The conventional wisdom for the program managers was that one could not be blamed later for something having gone awry if it were briefed at that level. O'Malley ordered that all such briefers use 20 slides or fewer. He was convinced

that accurate summarization and proper prioritization of details improved the total flow of information. The result was a far more comprehensive picture of each program.<sup>13</sup> Close adherence to schedule allowed adequate time for questions and staff follow-up action.

Ross Perot's son, H. Ross Perot Jr., proposed a helicopter flight around the world and was trying to line up emergency support services (if needed) from the Navy; he was getting nowhere. Finally, he asked the Air Force to help him in an emergency (particularly if one occurred during one of those long, remote overwater legs). An internal debate ensued with the preponderance of opinion running against getting involved. When the decision was raised to O'Malley, he looked at the issue pragmatically, asking the question Why would we not want to be involved? No one had a good answer, so he committed to support Perot. Perot's flight was successful, and no support was ever actually required. But, in appreciation for the willingness to participate, Perot Sr. established an education scholarship fund for the children of any US Air Force parachute rescue jumper killed in the line of duty (fig. 61). O'Malley's farsightedness and willingness to think and act outside the box paid dividends for the Air Force.<sup>14</sup>

One bright, young lieutenant colonel, Al Caldwell, who had worked for both O'Malley and Jack Chain in the plans shop, was assigned to the Brookings Institute to participate on special studies and work with governmental interagency groups. By the time Caldwell finished that tour, Chain had made three stars and was assigned to the US State Department. Caldwell was dictated to work at the State Department for Chain, but he was not happy with another desk assignment and wanted to return to flying. He reported the following exchange with O'Malley when he asked for help:

I went to see O'Malley and asked him to get me back to flying. We talked for over an hour. Throughout the conversation, he was adamant that the needs of the Air Force dictated that I should go to State Department. He also thought the assignment would be a boost for my career. As I got up to leave, I said "I never thought I would see the day when an Air Force pilot who wanted to fly would be denied that opportunity regardless of the impact it would have on his career." He looked up, gave me a "you got me" look and said that was the only persuasive argument I had made



**Figure 61. Diane enjoys a moment with Nancy Reagan with H. Ross Perot in the background.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

during our conversation. He went on to say that he would “fix it,” but that I was going to [displease] a three star. The next week, my wife and I attended his farewell party from the Pentagon. At the party, he told me that I was going back to flying and that I was going to Carswell AFB. He also jokingly said, “As I promised, you did [displease] the three star.” Later in the evening, he pulled my wife aside to tell her not to be concerned about that comment—which showed a great deal of sensitivity on his part.<sup>15</sup>

Even as a four-star vice-chief of the Air Force, O'Malley was still concerned about his old boss from the 1960s, Gen Hunter Harris, USAF, retired, who continually battled alcoholism. O'Malley exchanged several letters with Butch Harris, the general's son, as they both tried to get help for his problem. They even tried tough love as described in a 1982 handwritten letter from O'Malley wherein they engineered a harsh letter from the chief, General Gabriel, as they arranged to get him into Tripler Army Hospital in Hawaii. Despite repeated efforts and some high hopes, no lasting progress was achieved. Figure 62 shows O'Malley speaking with Senator Barry Goldwater.



**Figure 62. Jerry talks with the chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, Senator Barry Goldwater.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

Another insight provided by Col Van Dillen involved President Reagan and his interest in the military buildup.

O'Malley's ability to think and act on his feet was typified when he was asked to support President Reagan at a nuclear deterrence briefing in the White House for about 75 Congressmen. Bud McFarlane (National Security Advisor) told me later that sometime during the briefing, the president got off on the wrong end of a limb and things were going south in a hurry. McFarlane said that just before the president sawed the limb completely off, O'Malley, very calmly and without any hint of disagreeing with what the president was saying, interrupted and got the whole discussion back on track. It apparently was very clear to the president what had happened, and several times thereafter, O'Malley was invited back to "assist" with the president's presentations. Moreover, I believe these contacts solidified O'Malley's reputation and stature with the Reagan administration, and would have paved the way for subsequent assignments as Air Force chief of staff and JCS chairman.<sup>16</sup>

While O'Malley was vice-chief, the Air Staff discovered that a long-retired general officer had skimmed some money from the interest on a secret bank account in Switzerland. This account had been set up to handle CIA operations in Laos. Some advised

that the amount was small; it could uncover a classified operation and could discredit the Air Force. O'Malley decided that the Air Force had to fully disclose the breach of moral responsibility. Any temporary loss to its public reputation was far outweighed by holding to the highest ethical standard.<sup>17</sup>

Many years later in a letter written in 1998, Van Dillen gave the following assessment of O'Malley and his leadership:

General O'Malley was, in my judgment, the finest military officer I have ever come in contact with in my over 35 years of association with the Air Force. He was highly intelligent, a quality complemented by remarkable common and intuitive sense. He always kept his ego suppressed and immediately lost respect for those who didn't. He was loyal, friendly, warm, and had a great sense of humor. He was the consummate Air Force leader and everyone who came in close contact with him felt his special presence. There was no question that during his tenure as vice-chief of staff, he was in fact the dominant Air Force leader and ran the Air Force from that position (General Gabriel notwithstanding). I wish I could have been half as good an Air Force officer as he was.<sup>18</sup>

Van Dillen's comment about Jerry O'Malley "running the Air Force" from his no. 2 position as vice-chief was biased, since he was Jerry's executive officer. However, many observers believed that O'Malley provided the imagination and leadership that drove the Air Force at that time. General Gabriel certainly had a very high opinion of O'Malley and his capability as evidenced not only by making him his vice but also by formulating plans for O'Malley to indeed become his successor as chief of the Air Force. He knew O'Malley's stock was very high within the civilian leadership not only in the Air Force but also in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the administration, and the Congress. However, the more than six years of Pentagon duty had left a void in Jerry's resume in terms of running a major command. Thus, a plan was structured to move him to a MAJCOM slot for about two years to ensure he had all the right credentials when time came for Gabriel to retire. In the beginning, the logical command seemed to be the Strategic Air Command, where O'Malley had served as wing commander in both bomber and reconnaissance units.

Then it was decided to make O'Malley commander of the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF). He would be responsible to the US Air Force chief of staff in matters related to organization, training,

and equipage and to the commander of Pacific Command (CINCPAC), Adm William J. Crowe Jr., for operational missions. The Pacific Command structure had been pushed aside during the long years of the Vietnam War. The ambassador to Vietnam and Military Assistance Command Vietnam had been provided massive resources and always had direct contact with Washington to do their job. The more direct contact, the less influence exerted by the CINCPAC or his air component commander of PACAF. There was a new emphasis on the Pacific Command, and the administration was pleased to send Admiral Crowe as CINCPAC commander and O'Malley as PACAF commander to oversee that change. Part of the new emphasis was to upgrade the PACAF commander position to a four-star billet in lieu of the three-star rank it currently was rated. This took some months to accomplish as congressional action was required, but it gained approval with the support led by Senator Goldwater. General O'Malley was sent to Hawaii to assume his command in October 1983.

#### Notes

1. Col Ken Van Dillen to Aloysius G. Casey, letter, 24 February 1998.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Howard Silber, *Omaha World Herald*, November 1982.
6. Jerome F. O'Malley to Cardinal Cooke, letter, 8 December 1982.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Dillen, letter.
11. Tim Cantwell to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 24 June 2002.
12. Primary source experience of Aloysius G. Casey.
13. Gen Jack Chain, telecom interview by Aloysius G. Casey, 30 December 1997.
14. Dillen, letter.
15. Caldwell to Aloysius G. Casey, e-mail, 12 September 2000.
16. Dillen, letter.
17. Smith, interview.
18. Ibid.

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## Chapter 16

### **Pacific Air Force Commander**

October 1983–September 1984

When O'Malley reported in to his command, he found the situation between the Soviet Union and the United States in the Pacific still edgy. On 1 September 1983, the Soviets shot down Korean Airlines (KAL) flight 007, a Boeing 747 with 269 people onboard. Four days later, President Reagan denounced the Soviet's action, calling the "Korean airline massacre a crime against humanity."<sup>1</sup>

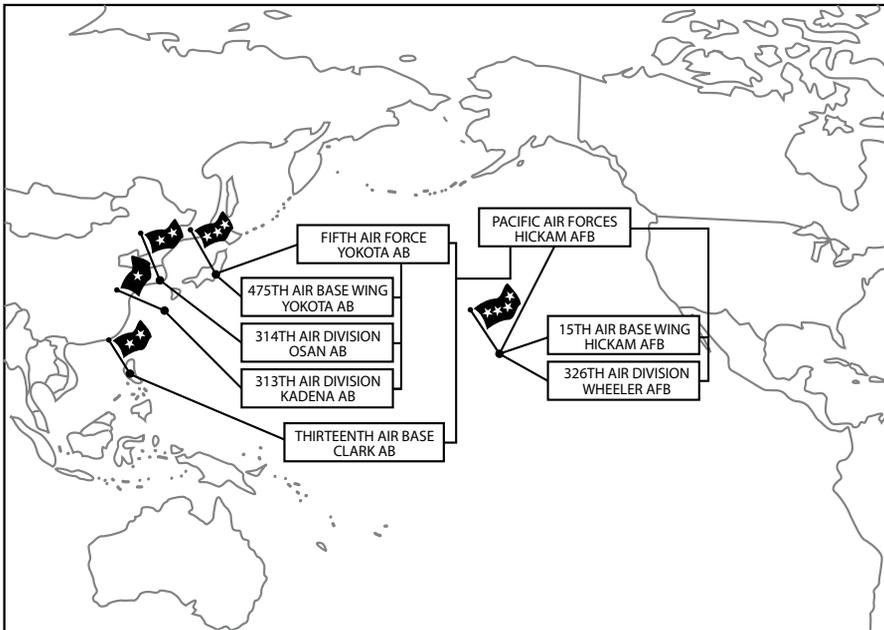
The International Civil Airline Organization (ICAO) quickly convened an accident investigation board and concluded that the KAL flight had deviated from its intended track and penetrated Soviet airspace over Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin Island. The Soviet SU-15 interceptor aircraft fired two air-to-air missiles, one of which caused loss of control and ultimate crash into the ocean of the giant airliner. The Soviet Air Defense Command had apparently confused KAL 007 with a US RC-135 intelligence aircraft that had been in proximity to KAL 007 hours earlier but had already landed at its base in Alaska.<sup>2</sup> Despite the Soviet interceptor's claim of "flashing his lights" and "shots across the bow" of KAL 007, the ultimate return of the black boxes from the ocean floor showed that the KAL 007 crew was totally unaware of the impending attack until they were hit. The ICAO found the Soviet procedure not in compliance with standards and recommended practices for interception of civil aircraft.<sup>3</sup>

Stories of survivors being held in the Soviet Union, stemming from the lack of Soviet candor about the facts of the shootdown, continued for years. Finally, in 1992, Pres. Boris Yeltsin's handing over the black boxes convinced the US government that there were no survivors.<sup>4</sup>

With this backdrop of recent events, O'Malley took an active part in planning and executing a host of normal flights and

special exercises. He answered to two bosses: the chief of the Air Force for training, readiness, and equiptage of PACAF (fig. 63) and the CINCPAC commander, Admiral Crowe, for operational orders to carry out combat roles in support of US national objectives and to assist in the defense of friendly nations. O'Malley and Crowe knew each other well from prior service in the Pentagon and shared a high personal regard. The photo is of a hobo party the Crowes sponsored for the O'Malleys (fig. 64).

As soon as Jerry and Diane had settled into their quarters in Honolulu, they were off on a trip to Japan and Korea to visit major units of his command.<sup>5</sup> Jerry was anxious to follow up on key initiatives for the Pacific area that he had helped formulate while he served in the Pentagon. In Japan, Jerry and Diane were met by Lt Gen Charles Donnelly who was his subordinate commander of the Fifth Air Force with units in Japan and Korea. He also met with the minister of defense, Kazuo Tanikawa,<sup>6</sup> and Gen Tsutomu Mori, chief of staff of the Japan Air Self-Defense



**Figure 63. PACAF Command.** (Reprinted from History, Pacific Air Forces Command, September–December 1983.)



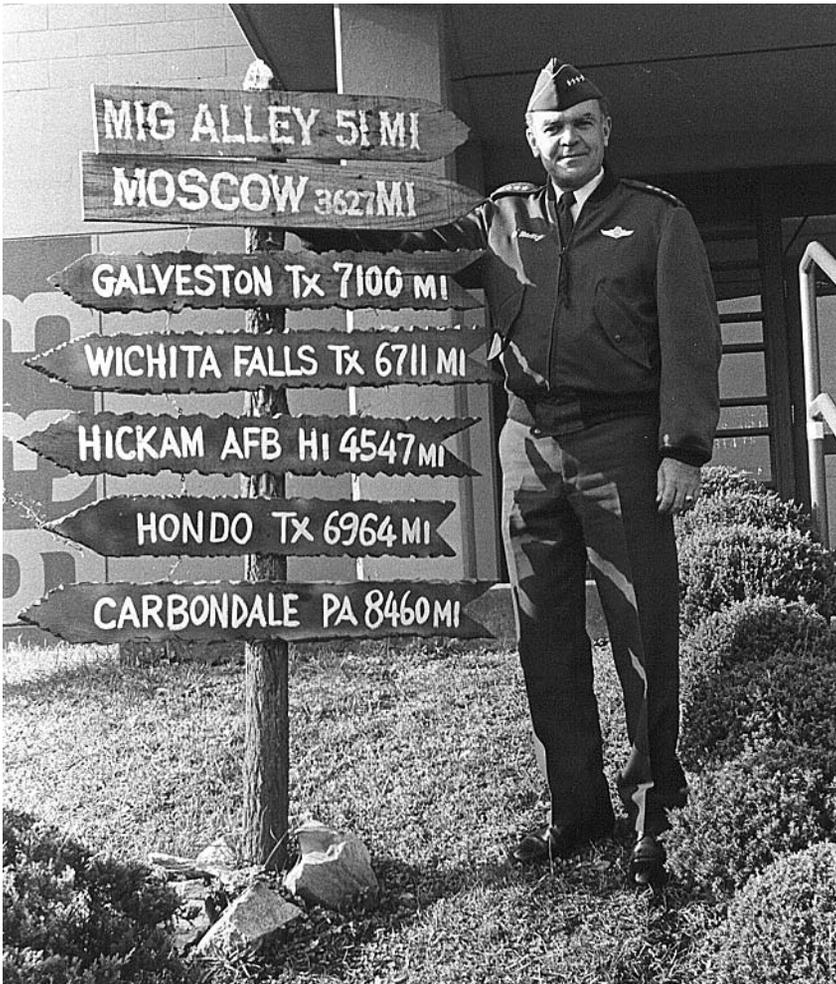
**Figure 64. William J. and Mrs. Crowe and Jerry and Mrs. O'Malley.** (Reprinted with permission from Margaret O'Malley Neal.)

Force.<sup>7</sup> He was pleased to get the details of the plans approved by the Japanese diet for the beddown of the modern F-16 fighters at Misawa.<sup>8</sup> The 432d Tactical Fighter Wing was scheduled to be reactivated with F-16s at Misawa to help protect US interests in the Pacific and to strengthen the defense of Japan.<sup>9</sup> The 432d would be a part of Fifth Air Force headquartered at Yokota, Japan, which also included an air division with two fighter wings in Korea and another at Kadena in Okinawa.

Maj Gen Craven "Buck" Rodgers, commander of the 314th Air Division, was his host in Korea. He visited with the American ambassador to Korea, Richard Walker,<sup>10</sup> and chief of staff of the Korean Air Force, Gen Sang Tae Kim.<sup>11</sup> The discussions in Korea capped the detailed plans that had been made to show vigilance, with restraint in the wake of the shutdown of KAL 007. Shortly after O'Malley's trip to Korea, President Reagan made a state visit there to reassure that critical Pacific ally. Figure 65 shows that O'Malley always remembered the distance to home.

The stack of thank-you notes O'Malley sent out on 25 October 1983 after this trip also included a letter to the bishop of Scranton, John J. O'Connor (later Cardinal O'Connor of New York), with special thanks for his help on the pastoral letter regarding nuclear forces.<sup>12</sup> O'Connor had served as a Navy chaplain, rising to the rank of admiral, before his assignment to Jerry's old home diocese.

Within a week, O'Malley was again traveling to Colorado and Virginia. He visited the new Air Force Space Command at



**Figure 65. The PACAF commander is reminded how far he is from his roots on this Far Eastern visit.** (Reprinted from History, 432d Tactical Fighter Wing, January–March 1972.)

Colorado Springs to coordinate its interface with PACAF. Having lobbied for the establishment of this new space command, he wanted to be certain, as a user of its space surveillance products, that his command was firmly locked into access to the information. His area of responsibility also included some critical ground stations used to process satellite data.

At Langley AFB in Virginia, he was hosted by Gen William Creech, Tactical Air Force commander, who regularly managed a conference of the various deployed tactical air forces, to whom he was responsible to provide aircraft and trained crews. As was typical of events managed by General Creech, O'Malley noted, "No detail was overlooked."<sup>13</sup> Great improvements had been made in every aspect of the Tactical Air Forces, initially under the leadership of Gen Robert J. Dixon and then followed up by General Creech. Very high quality standards were set and met for aircraft, training, maintenance, base facilities, and support functions. Evidence of this capability did not become clear to the outside world until years later in combat action in the Gulf War, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. However, Air Force professionals knew the tactical forces structured around the F-15, F-16, and the A-10 were being prepared to exploit these modern fighters with armaments capable of dominance in air-to-air combat and precision strike against ground targets. O'Malley felt strongly that, with proper intelligence support and competent leadership, the forces in his command could handle any mission.

In early December, O'Malley visited other elements of his command at Okinawa and the Philippines. He enjoyed pinning on a second star for Maj Gen Mike Nelson, who commanded the 313th Air Division at Kadena. Jerry and Diane then traveled to the Philippines, where Maj Gen Ken Burns led his tour of the Thirteenth Air Force headquartered at Clark AFB. Before the Christmas break, they were also able to make a short visit to Guam and the 3d Air Division commanded by Maj Gen Clarence "Reuben" Autery. Jerry knew all these officers from earlier contacts and was pleased to see them leading the units that made up the Pacific Air Forces.

The Christmas holidays provided some break from this hectic travel schedule. He and Diane got a kick out of having their two boys, Jim and John, visit Hawaii from college at Southwest Texas State (fig. 66).

Retired general Russ Dougherty opted to take a vacation in Honolulu at the time that Jerry O'Malley was serving as PACAF commander. As the senior Air Force commander in the Pacific, Jerry had special quarters at Hickam AFB, Hawaii (fig. 67). Diane O'Malley invited the Doughertys to a leisurely morning break-



**Figure 66. Jerry and Diane were delighted to have their two boys and daughter Sharon in Hawaii for a holiday visit.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

fast on their patio, which overlooked the Navy base. During the breakfast, a major US carrier was getting under way and engaged in a turning maneuver to line up for departure from the harbor. As the enormous bow swung over land, quite close to the O'Malley's patio, there was a loud blast on the ship's horn followed by a *Top of the Day Greeting to Mrs. O'Malley!* from the admiral directing the operation (emphasis in original).<sup>14</sup>

Having completed the trips to his command units, O'Malley began to see the Pacific situation become more normal and gradually worked on visits to all of the key allies in the region. The record showed visits to Singapore, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.<sup>15</sup> These allies were generally impressed with the strength of relations with the United States and showed great appreciation for US efforts to support their defense. O'Malley also observed the burgeoning economy of the Pacific nations that was in the early stages of the boom that happened in the 1990s.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 67. Diane with a bemused smile in their Hawaii quarters.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

In January 1984 O'Malley was prescient in his keynote address to an Air Force symposium on tactical air operations, held in Orlando. He said, "The wars of the past have been fought over a continuum of time-pauses and advances that take months and even years to culminate in victory. Tomorrow's war may well be fought in a matter of days. The outcome will be determined, not by firepower, sustainability, or sheer numbers alone, but rather on the basis of a coordinated, effective joint war-fighting effort that blends together the very best of our component forces."<sup>17</sup>

This emphasis on the importance of joint operations that are truly blended, in lieu of simply fighting alongside, in a theatre, has been the most important characteristic of US operations in both Gulf Wars in the Middle East. In February O'Malley was pleased to have the secretary of the Air Force announce the selection of the F-15E as the new Air Force dual-role fighter. This was the result of an initiative by General Creech and

strongly supported by O'Malley to make the first-line fighter, the F-15, an effective strike aircraft as well as the world's best air-to-air combat fighter.

In the midst of all this activity, O'Malley wrote a longhand letter to retired Air Force master sergeant, Jack Gilhooley, whom he had known since high school days in Carbondale.<sup>18</sup> Gilhooley had asked for some biographical data on O'Malley to use in the high school class he was teaching in Pennsylvania. In closing, O'Malley noted how he would like to visit Carbondale and "drink a beer with Buster," a reference to their mutual friend who operated their favorite tavern in Carbondale.

They also had many high-ranking visitors as indicated by another handwritten letter he penned to Senator Barry Goldwater of the Armed Services Committee (and Republican candidate for president in 1964) for his visit to PACAF. O'Malley gently chided him that he looks so healthy it might be time to plan another campaign.<sup>19</sup>

In early May, O'Malley had an opportunity to fly the simulator of the supersecret B-2 (Stealth) bomber McDonnell-Douglas in Saint Louis.<sup>20</sup> He also participated in working on the memo of understanding that General Gabriel, Air Force chief of staff, signed with the US Army chief of staff regarding the cooperation between their forces regarding firepower and maneuvers.

PACAF participated in a major operational exercise in the Pacific area in June 1984. Sixty-five ships and 250 aircraft from the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand were involved.<sup>21</sup>

By early summer, O'Malley's letters indicated that he already knew he was destined to leave the Pacific and take over the Tactical Air Command at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia.<sup>22</sup> The consensus of the knowledgeable observers was that O'Malley would return to take over TAC until General Gabriel was ready to retire, and then O'Malley would become chief of staff of the Air Force.<sup>23</sup> Gabriel was destined to retire from his four-year tour as chief in the summer of 1986.<sup>24</sup> In these letters, O'Malley displayed his great respect for the excellent condition that General Creech will leave as his legacy at the Tactical Air Command. He repeatedly said, "TAC is in the best shape ever."<sup>25</sup> However, there was also a hint in his letters that he believed that TAC had so dominated the Air Force (in promotions and

procurement of equipment) that the rest of the Air Force had suffered. His words do not spell out this concern, but he did say in a letter that “TAC will be a challenge. It’s better off than I’ve ever seen it. But, as SAC [Strategic Air Command] was in the late ’50s it has to join the Air Force.”<sup>26</sup> In late July as he prepared to move back to the mainland, O’Malley wrote to General Kim, chief of staff of the Republic of Korea Air Force, that “our country is now turning with renewed vitality and interest to Asia. . . . We look with assurance to the Republic of Korea for their steadfast stand in the face of North Korean belligerence and Soviet aggression. . . . I pledge my continued support from my new vantage point.”<sup>27</sup>

The deployed Tactical Air Forces of the United States, such as those in the Pacific and Europe, were known as the Tactical Air Forces (TAF). Their role was to fight as required by the specified commander for that region. The command he was moving to was known as Tactical Air Command (TAC), the major air command in the United States, which was charged to train and equip the TAF. O’Malley left PACAF with the feeling that he had gained some insight as a TAF commander, which would be valuable in the job to train and equip the fighters.

### Notes

1. Ronald W. Reagan, “Address to the Nation on the Soviet Attack on a Korean Airliner (KAL 007),” 15 September 1983, [www.rescue007.org](http://www.rescue007.org).
2. International Civil Airline Organization (ICAO), “Conclusions,” 27 December 2002, <http://aviation-safety.net/specials/kal007/>.
3. *Ibid.*
4. “Chronology of Events,” [www.rescue007.org](http://www.rescue007.org).
5. Jerome F. O’Malley to Lt Gen Carl Cathey, letter, 13 October 1983.
6. *Ibid.*, to the Japanese minister of defense (JADF), letter, 25 October 1983.
7. *Ibid.*, to chief of staff, JADF.
8. History of the PACAF, 1 January–31 December 1984, n.p.
9. *Ibid.*
10. O’Malley to Amb. Richard Walker, letter, 25 October 1983.
11. *Ibid.*, to Gen Sang Tae Kim, letter, 25 October 1983.
12. *Ibid.*, to Bishop John J. O’Connor, letter, 25 October 1983.
13. *Ibid.*, Gen Wilbur L. Creech, 11 April 1983.
14. Gen Russell E Dougherty (USAF, Ret.), telephone interview by the author, 11 March 1998.
15. Series of O’Malley letters thanking hosts for his visits.

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16. O'Malley to Antonio H. Chayes, letter, 5 September 1984.
17. Jerome F. O'Malley, keynote address to Air Force National Symposium, Orlando, FL, 17 January 1984.
18. Ibid. to Jack Gilhooley, letter, 23 January 1984.
19. Ibid. Senator Barry Goldwater, letter, 18 May 1984.
20. Ibid. to Mac Air, letter, 7 May 1984.
21. History of PACAF, 31 December 1984, xviii.
22. O'Malley, letters, 26 July 1984.
23. Gen David C. Jones, retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs, to Aloysius G. Casey, letter, 10 November 1997.
24. *Biography of General Charles A. Gabriel*, retired 1 July 1986.
25. O'Malley to Lt Gen Whitey Driesnack, letter, 19 July 1984.
26. Ibid., to Col Donald Walbrecht, letter, 5 September 1984.
27. Ibid., to General Kim, n.d.

## Chapter 17

# **Tactical Air Force Commander and the Conclusion**

TAC commander: 29 September 1984–20 April 1985

As early as June 1984, Jerry O'Malley knew that he was to depart Hawaii and return stateside to take control of the Tactical Air Command (TAC) at Langley AFB, Virginia. Thanks largely to his two predecessors, TAC had become the superlative flying force in the world. Gen Robert J. Dixon had exercised an iron discipline to eliminate all elements of carelessness and feckless behavior within TAC. He instituted rigorous aerial combat training in Nevada and insisted on professional air discipline in lieu of the looser attitude famous in earlier days of the command. He was followed by the brilliant leader, Gen Wilbur "Bill" Creech. Many years of careful planning and resolute advocacy by TAC headquarters had developed the F-15, F-16, and A-10 equipment to high performance. Not only were the airframes and engines superb, but also the munitions and ancillary equipment had been nurtured and developed for precision and reliability.

The great strength of General Creech lay in his ability to lead, manage, and direct people. From his most senior officer to the lowest-ranking Airman, they knew that he expected them to be the best in the world. They also knew he would do everything in his power to see that they had the resources to deliver that level of performance. No detail was too small, nor any task too difficult, if its proper execution contributed to his standard of excellence. As a result, the aircraft were well maintained, their sortie rate was high, and morale was excellent. The bases occupied by TAC personnel looked good, and the facilities were the best in the Air Force.

In 1984, the command directed the activities of two numbered air forces, three centers, and seven air divisions. Over 111,000 military and civilian personnel were assigned to 32 TAC bases in the United States and overseas. In addition, TAC

would gain up to 60,000 personnel from the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve if these units were activated.<sup>1</sup> The mission of the Air Force in peacetime was to train and equip the force to turn over a dominant war-fighting capability (in the case of war) to the designated theatre commanders. Creech was so focused on that mission for the Tactical Air Forces that it created some envy and concern within other Air Force units. Having just left the post of Pacific Air Force commander, which was a part of the Tactical Air Forces (TAF) that was supported by TAC with trained forces and top-level equipment, O'Malley knew he had a hard act to follow in replacing General Creech. O'Malley answered most personal letters in his own handwriting, despite having excellent secretarial service at hand (hundreds of these letters were in his records). His letters to all who congratulated him on his new job reflected his conviction that TAC was stronger than it had ever been and was operating efficiently. He also shared the concern (by some on the Air Staff, perhaps including the chief) that TAC's strong budgetary support may have hurt other Air Force missions. In one private note to a contemporary, he said "TAC will be a challenge. It's better off than I have ever seen it. But as SAC was in the late fifties, I believe it has to join the Air Force."<sup>2</sup>

He was well aware of the struggle with General Creech, as described earlier, when Creech resisted the direction of the chief, General Gabriel (O'Malley was vice-chief) and did not even want to prepare a plan for lower appropriations than he had requested. O'Malley's goal seemed to be to hold the quality at the standard Creech had set but approach the budget with some recognition of the more general Air Force requirements. He was vocal about the former but tacit regarding the latter.

For his part, General Creech was no doubt a bit skeptical about O'Malley being selected to take over his beloved command. After all, he knew the plan was to season O'Malley at TAC for his eventual promotion to chief of staff of the Air Force to succeed General Gabriel. Thus, TAC would not have the long-term stability he had been able to provide in his six and one-half years at the helm. He never said so (in available records), but he resented his magnificent organization being used as a stepping stone to another position. He also considered O'Malley more of a SAC and reconnaissance officer than a

fighter pilot.<sup>3</sup> O'Malley's experience in SAC bombers and his SR-71 years left Creech with this view despite O'Malley's having flown over 100 combat missions in the F-4, with 40 of them in the strike, as opposed to the reconnaissance version with bombs and missiles instead of cameras.

Whatever reservations Creech had about the continuance of the Gabriel-O'Malley dominance of Air force leadership, he also knew that he had personally trained and groomed many young general officers who would surely ascend to top leadership roles. This prediction, as well as the quality of the tactical air forces he had developed, was clearly demonstrated over several combat actions and two wars after Creech had retired.

By the end of September 1984, O'Malley was in place at Langley AFB and took on a rigorous schedule to meet his objectives. His end-of-the-year letter to his TAC subordinate commanders outlined his objective to sustain high TAC standards and pointed only at improving the safety of operations and taking a little more time to relax and enjoy family activities.<sup>4</sup>

To the latter point, O'Malley cancelled the Creech policy of requiring deputy chiefs, or their assistants, to work half days on Saturdays. He left it to their discretion to get their work done in the regular workweek. He told his staff, "You have three priorities, (1) to yourself, (2) to your family, and (3) to the Air Force. Unless you have the first two in order, the third one can't be."<sup>5</sup> While visiting his subordinate commanders, he stressed the importance of taking care of "our people—with emphasis *always* on the dignity of the individual" (emphasis in original). He even surprised some commanders when they seemed to miss his point about consideration of people by asking, "Why aren't people in your command having fun?"<sup>6</sup>

He also continued his practice from his Air Staff days of forcing the action officers to be brief and get to the point. He encountered one young officer carrying a large stack of charts down the hall. The eager officer said, "These charts are to brief you, Sir." O'Malley replied, "No they are not. Come back when you have five or six pertinent charts."<sup>7</sup> He told one briefer that one could cover the bible in 20 well-planned charts.

O'Malley kept up the pressure Creech had established to complete the research and get on to production for two important innovative improvements to the TAC equipment. One was

a new radar missile for advanced medium-range air-to-air missiles (AMRAAM) that allowed TAC fighters to kill enemy aircraft at medium range without having long-sustained aim time. The missile was smart enough to chase the target even after the attacking aircraft turned away. The other was called LANTIRN, the Air Force acronym for low-altitude navigation and targeting infrared night. This was an external pod device to enable TAC fighters to identify targets and attack them in difficult night or weather conditions. He felt both programs would enhance the US ability to offset the large numbers of Soviet aircraft currently deployed on the European theater. Both had been in development for some time; so, O'Malley aimed his effort at the development team and the industrial suppliers to press on with getting them qualified for use.

Ironically, one of his strongest initiatives was to lower the TAC accident rate. He noted that great progress had been made. In 1954, the TAF rate was 60 accidents for 100,000 flying hours; in 1984, it set a record at 32 accidents for 100,000 hours. He noted, "If we could eliminate those 'dumb' ones, our rate in TAF would be around 2/100,000."<sup>8</sup> He went on to note that the TAF accident rate was actually good when one considers that "we are often flying the planes to the edge of the performance envelope."<sup>9</sup>

O'Malley was at the top of his game when he assumed leadership of the tactical forces. He was 53 years old, in rigorous good health, and doing a job he loved—one for which he had trained throughout his life. He was highly regarded by senior leaders in Washington, both military and civilian. He was universally respected by all the officers, Airmen, and civilians who served in his command (fig. 68). He summarized his leadership principles to a National War College class in the spring of 1985 in the following three elements:

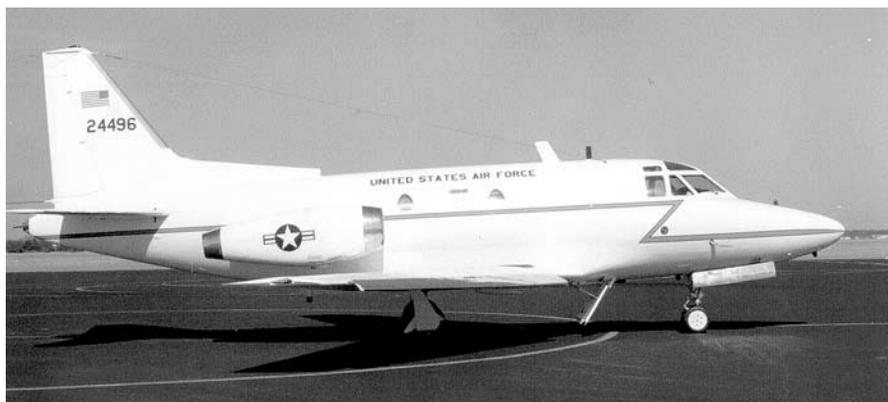
1. Integrity, most important, first, last, and always.
2. Being sensitive to the needs and expectations of your people.
3. Know your job. The people you are trying to lead, whether at the very senior level or the squadron, will forgive you for almost anything except ignorance. You won't lead them well if you do not know where you are leading them.



**Figure 68. Four star podium.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

Among all the legacies O'Malley received from General Creech, one of the most visible was the CT-39 executive jet aircraft that was at the TAC commander's disposal. This aircraft (Serial #62) was known as the best-maintained plane in the Air Force. The CT-39 is a low-wing, twinjet, swept-wing transport, flown by a crew of two pilots with four passenger seats (fig. 69).

General Creech had selected TSgt Robert A. Eberfus as the crew chief for his CT-39 aircraft, delegating him all the resources



**Figure 69. The general's airplane.** (Reprinted with permission from March AFB museum.)

and authority to keep it in top condition. Virtually instant support was extended to Eberfus for replacement parts or for the service of special technicians for every discrepancy noted. Externally, the plane was immaculate; cleaned almost daily, and often flitzed, as Eberfus logged his polish job. A decision already had been made by the Air Force to replace the CT-39s with new Lear jets. As the serial number indicated for this one, it was part of a 1962 procurement contract; so, it had been in service for almost 22 years. Significantly, Eberfus kept an informal log with the note of discrepancies, steps taken to repair, and other service to the plane. However, he did not maintain the standard Air Force record, form 781A, in accordance with standing Air Force technical orders. This failure never became an issue because of the wide deference shown to Eberfus as he kept the general's aircraft in virtual constant fully mission capable condition. Only after the crash, and the record of the accident investigation board, did it become clear that the standard Air Force quality assurance inspections were not effective for this plane since the discrepancies never were entered in the form available to the inspectors. As we shall see, this may have contributed to the fatal crash on 20 April 1985.

In January 1985, CT-39A 62, or call sign TAC-01, was due for a major maintenance inspection, called an isochronal (time-phased) inspection, and it was performed at Andrews AFB, Maryland. Part of that process included replacing many time-

phased parts. It was returned to Langley AFB, Virginia, on 11 January, and from then until the fatal crash, there was an indication of a persistent problem with the braking system that never was resolved.

These excerpts from the maintenance log kept by Sergeant Eberfus showed the following entries:

- 14 January – Aircraft returned to Langley AFB after Isochronal at Andrews AFB (notably major work was done on the brake system including change-out of both normal and auxiliary hydraulic accumulators).
- 18 January – Aircraft pulled to the left on landing.
- 30 January – AntiSkid kicked off. (General O'Malley was in the pilot's seat and had trouble holding the aircraft as he applied power prior to take off.)
- 1 February – Still having problems with AntiSkid.
- 15 February – Changed "O" ring on power brake control valve.
- 1 March – Replaced "O" Ring on power brake control valve fitting; it has been leaking again.
- 12 March – Pilot's brake pedals failed to stop aircraft on touchdown, major caution light illuminated (Copilot was able to get effective braking action).<sup>10</sup>

Along with each of these entries, actions were noted in the log that were assumed to have corrected the discrepancy. However, none of these potentially safety-of-flight entries was made in the official aircraft form 781A. Normally, such discrepancies would be noted and cause a red X to be entered (signifying not safe to fly) that could only be cleared by a senior supervisor. This old version of the CT-39A did not have thrust reverse devices, as did some Navy planes and the commercial version called Sabreliner.

On at least two occasions, O'Malley had complained about the brakes not feeling right or spongy, and he also noted the antiskid failures. This sequence of problems with the braking system apparently was not noticed by anyone other than Sergeant Eberfus. If he were concerned that the entries indicated a trend that may be tied to a root cause, not fixed by his maintenance, he had not mentioned it to anyone. He noted them in his log, but he seemed to assume each problem was properly cleared at the time. The aircraft had flown 34 flights after completing

the isochronal inspection on 14 January and prior to the crash on 20 April 1985. However, none of these discrepancies were included in the Standard Form 781A (Maintenance Discrepancy and Work Document) that was kept for CT-39A (S/N 62-4496).<sup>11</sup> Thus, the quality assurance process and the potential identification of abnormal trends were thwarted.

General O'Malley was not spending his thoughts and energy on the maintenance of his CT-39 in the spring of 1985. He and his staff were busy preparing for a major conference of all the TAC commanders on 20 March at Homestead AFB. For the first time in TAC, the wives of the participants were invited to attend in accord with O'Malley's drive to better integrate the military and family life of his people. They also invited the secretary of the Air Force, Verne Orr, and his wife, to join them for the activities.<sup>12</sup> After completing a successful conference, he continued with a visit on 10 April to the TAC unit at Myrtle Beach AFB.

Soon after, Jerry and Diane accepted the invitation to attend a dinner meeting of the Snake River Air Force Association on 19 April 1985 (fig. 70). Jerry agreed to make the main address after a day of visiting aircrew members, enlisted personnel, and touring the Noncommissioned Officers' Leadership School at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.<sup>13</sup> He had served as director of operations of the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing at Mountain Home in 1970 and still had many friends and acquaintances there in both the military and civilian communities. Although this travel was no doubt tiring for both Jerry and Diane, he had also committed to a speaking engagement at a Boy Scout banquet in Scranton on Sunday, 21 April. It was a Distinguished Citizen Award dinner for Cong. Joseph McDade presented by the Forest Lakes Council of the Boy Scouts in northeast Pennsylvania.<sup>14</sup> This Joey McDade played basketball for Scranton Prep against O'Malley and the Carbondale Saint Rose team 36 years earlier.

Jerry and Diane made an early morning departure from Idaho so that they could get back to Langley for a planned 5:00 PM takeoff to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport at Avoca, Pennsylvania. O'Malley was concerned about the time his aide, Capt Ed Whalen, was away from his family due to their travel schedule; so, he told him to skip the Pennsylvania trip.<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 70. One more flight for Diane and Jerry.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

O'Malley was about to visit his original home area where the people and places were familiar to him. He felt comfortable that he would not need any extra assistance in the northeast region of Pennsylvania. Lt Col Lester F. Newton came along on the flight to fill out the crew on the return flight after Jerry and Diane deplaned in Pennsylvania. Capt Harry Lon Haugh was assigned as pilot in command in accord with Air Force procedure.<sup>16</sup>

For the most part, general officers were not allowed to pilot aircraft in view of their demanding duties that militated against logging the requisite training to stay current. However, a short list of selected general officers who were authorized by the chief to fly was available because their experience and current position made it desirable for them to stay close to cockpit operations. O'Malley was one of those select general officers. The rules required an instructor pilot in the other seat when the general occupied the pilot position. Captain Haugh was in the right seat (copilot position), although he was listed as pilot in command in

accord with Air Force policy. Haugh was a flight examiner in the CT-39, a step above instructor pilot status.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, the crew chief, TSgt Robert A. Eberfus, was along to see to the maintenance of the aircraft. Thus, with O'Malley in the left seat, Haugh in the right seat, and Diane O'Malley, Lieutenant Colonel Newton and Technical Sergeant Eberfus as passengers, TAC-01 departed Langley AFB on 20 April 1985 at 4:56 EST with an estimated en route time of 52 minutes (fig. 71).<sup>18</sup>

Weather at Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Airport was excellent, just as forecast: 5,000 feet scattered clouds, 12 miles visibility, and very light wind from the north at about 4 knots. All the navigational aids and airport facilities were fully operational. TAC-01 was cleared for a visual approach to runway 004 (south to north). The prelanding checklist was completed, and the aircraft lined up for landing. O'Malley elected not to use the speed brakes as allowed by the flight manual.

A normal landing was made 53 minutes after departure from Langley AFB at 1,000 to 1,200 feet down the runway. For its gross



**Figure 71. Inside Haugh's CT-39.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

weight, the flight handbook charts forecast a touchdown point of approximately 1,200 feet down the runway with an ensuing ground roll of 2,180 feet to a complete stop. Thus, the aircraft should have used about half of the runway available.<sup>19</sup>

No braking action resulted from pedal pressure. On the overhead panel between the pilots, the main hydraulic pump switch was set to off, and the auxiliary hydraulic system was selected. The flight handbook stated, "An auxiliary accumulator supplies pressure for nose wheel steering, wheel brakes, and speed brake if normal hydraulic pressure is lost."<sup>20</sup> To the dismay of the crew, the continued depression of the pedals again resulted in no braking action.

The aircraft continued to roll at high speed toward the end of the runway. Having landed at about 130 miles per hour in 14 seconds, it would have used half of the available runway, and at 30 seconds, it would be off the end of the runway at about 100 miles per hour.<sup>21</sup>

The last resort was the Emergency Braking system, which required pulling the "T" Handle located on the pedestal between the pilots and pumping the brake pedals. This procedure bypassed the normal brake system. Unfortunately, this system was designed such that only one pilot may pump the pedals; hold-down of the brake pedals in one crew position will prevent any pumping action to obtain braking action. "When emergency brakes are being used, only one pilot will activate the brake pedals."<sup>22</sup>

The T handle was pulled; apparently, both pilots attempted to pump the pressure up to no avail. This last statement is speculative based on analysis after the crash; there is no way to be certain of what occurred in the cockpit.

By the time they sorted out who would pump the pedals and fully activated the emergency braking system, only 750 feet of runway remained at which point skid marks defined the beginning of effective braking.<sup>23</sup> The aircraft was 17 feet left of center-line and entered a shallow curve to the right. It left the runway 34 feet right of center, traveled over some turf, where braking action ceased, and the aircraft became airborne at about 63 miles per hour as the terrain sloped sharply downward. Ground impact resulted in aircraft breakup, and it was quickly engulfed in flames. Rescue of the occupants was not possible.<sup>24</sup>

The horrific crash shocked the assembled crowd, and word quickly spread throughout the Air Force and the country. The most devastating effect was, of course, on the families of those killed. The O'Malley children were Margaret Ann (O'Malley) Neal, 29; Sharon, 27; James "Jimmie," 21; and John, 20 (fig. 72).

Lieutenant Colonel Newton, 39, was survived by his wife and two children; Captain Haugh, 28, by his wife; and Technical Sergeant Eberfus, 35, by his wife and two children.

The O'Malley family received a rich outpouring of sympathy from thousands of correspondents, both military and civilian (fig. 73). Notable was a letter signed personally by Pres. Ronald Reagan. As listed in the *Congressional Record*, Senator Goldwater observed that "Jerry O'Malley was one of the rising stars in all of the military. At 53 years of age, and already a four-star general, he was, I am certain, destined to command our Air Force and, one day, likely even to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. My heartfelt condolences to the families of General O'Malley



**Figure 72. O'Malley children attend services for their parents.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)



**Figure 73. Admiral Crowe and General Gabriel pay their last respects to the O'Malleys.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

and Mrs. O'Malley and to the families of the crewmembers who also lost their lives in the accident.”

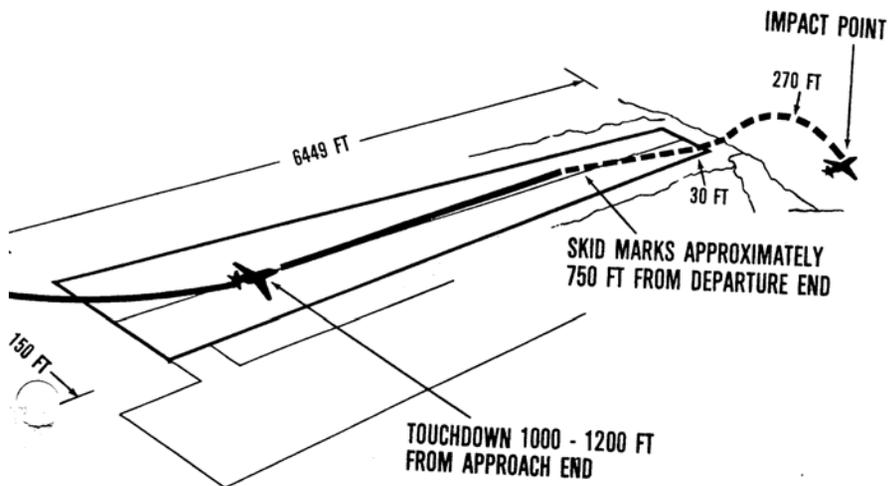
A series of memorial services provided a lasting tribute to the O'Malleys. One of the most impressive tributes took place at Arlington National Cemetery, where the O'Malleys are buried. At the mass, Father Hank Meade, himself a retired major general and a former chief of Air Force chaplains, told the following story that captured the feelings so many had about this sparkling couple: “Five years ago a holiday party of friends was rather quiet until a sudden burst of gaiety filled a side room. When she heard the laughter, I can remember the hostess exclaim, The O'Malleys are here! Now heaven is a peaceful place, and last Saturday night we can imagine laughter moving throughout heaven and Christ asking his mother what was happening. Her reply, ‘Why, the O'Malleys are here!’”<sup>25</sup>

Almost instantly after the crash, the Air Force began its well-established process to answer the question posed in the opening

chapter of this story: How could one of the Air Force's best pilots, who had flown the SR-71 at three times the speed of sound and 116 combat missions in tactical fighter and reconnaissance aircraft, come to a tragic death with his wife and three other Air Force personnel in an executive jet on a routine landing?

Brig Gen Richard J. Trzaskoma was appointed to conduct a formal investigation of the accident (figs. 74, 75). His two-month investigation sifted through every possible detail that could have possibly caused the accident. This process quickly eliminated factors related to weather, qualifications of the crew, condition of the airport, and services available at the airport. The report was available by July 1985, and a public briefing was provided. The cause was quickly narrowed down to failure to achieve braking action on the runway after a perfectly normal touchdown.

The Air Force report was structured to present the facts and did not draw conclusions about the significance of the relevant



5 8875 23AF

**Figure 74. Touchdown, no braking, braking too late, crash.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)



**Figure 75. Final skidding before departing the runway.** (Reprinted with permission from Sharon O'Malley Burg.)

factors. Internally, the Air Force did conduct some analyses to determine the factors and their importance, but that information was not released to the public. Therefore, likely conclusions must be drawn from the reported facts.

One conclusion was that the normal braking system failed because the right antiskid control valve was improperly assembled such that a pole met the armature, which caused a loss of hydraulic pressure.<sup>26</sup> Post-crash teardown showed this condi-

tion of the actual valve, and testing verified that no brake pressure could be achieved in this condition. The improper installation was probably made during the isochronal inspection at the Andrews AFB servicing facility on 11 January 1985. Records showed an undeniable trace of intermittent problems with the brakes stemming from that maintenance activity. In addition, evidence also revealed that this work was done poorly as the normal hydraulic accumulator had an improperly installed backup ring. The auxiliary accumulator also had a damaged piston that was attributed by the teardown technician as possibly having occurred at the overhaul.<sup>27</sup> However, the accumulators were functional at the time of the crash; the right antiskid condition noted above was probably *the primary cause of the accident* (emphasis in original). The intermittent nature of the braking problem helped mask the serious problem in the system. The lack of recording actual discrepancies and their fixes in the Standard Form 781A also precluded the normal review process from working to uncover an insidious failure.

Given the faulty system, the crew faced a critical problem on landing. They did turn off the main hydraulic pump and turned on the auxiliary pump, which should have provided pressure to the brakes. However, the nature of the anomaly, the antiskid valve's improper adjustment, did not allow any pressure buildup from the auxiliary system. If they had concurrently turned off the antiskid system, the auxiliary system would have operated the brakes, but in the few seconds they had to respond, it was not likely that any crew could have envisioned this set of interactions and taken the associated switch actions.

Finally, activation of the emergency system could have saved the aircraft and all aboard had it been properly activated early enough. The delay in pumping up the emergency system probably was due to both pilots attempting to do so at the same time. The flight manual included a warning note to the effect that only one pilot should pump the brakes after pulling the T handle. One can understand the possibility of some crew coordination errors in this situation. Unfortunately, this feature of the design was not recognized and permanently removed from the planes years earlier in lieu of placing a warning that depended on joint action and could be missed at a critical moment.

Our summary then is that the primary cause was material failure due to maintenance. The brakes did not function. There was a clear trace in Technical Sergeant Eberfus' personal log that the hydraulic system, and particularly the brake system, was improperly serviced at Andrews AFB in January 1985. In addition, the wide deference given to Eberfus in his role as crew chief for the general's aircraft caused the normal quality control procedures to be ignored.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the safeguard of tracking adverse maintenance trends for this aircraft (CT-39 #62-4496) failed. The secondary cause was probably crew error. It would have been possible to stop the aircraft if the emergency brake handle had been pulled earlier, *and*, if only one crew member had pumped the brake pedals (emphasis in original). The Air Force lost its most promising leader in the fatal crash of 20 April 1985. Also lost were Diane, Lieutenant Colonel Newton, Captain Haugh, and Technical Sergeant Eberfus.

In conclusion, a distinct parallel exists between the military career of Jerry O'Malley and the Cold War. O'Malley appeared at the end of his plebe year at West Point in June 1950 when the Korean War began and the stark warning from Sir Winston Churchill's iron curtain speech became a reality. He was active in many of the key weapons systems that formed the edge the United States fielded to reinforce the policy of containment and strategic deterrence. He flew in the massive B-47 force that dominated the 1950s; he initiated the SR-71 operational flights that opened denied areas to US inspection; and he fought bravely in combat fighters in the Vietnam War. Despite the loss of South Vietnam, that war demonstrated the United States' willingness to fight for the containment of the Communist system's forced expansion. He served at the highest levels of the Air Force when the B-1 bomber, the ground mobile and air-to-ground cruise missiles systems, the MX strategic missile, classified stealth fighter and bomber aircraft, and key space systems were developed and fielded. These weapons were all factors in the final decision by the Soviet Union that they simply could not compete with a determined and well-equipped US military.

O'Malley was a man who was in a hurry; he pushed hard for advanced promotions and proved his ability to merit the confidence of his superiors. He willingly challenged himself to take on the hardest tasks by competing with aviators who had far

more background and flying hours in difficult weapons systems like the B-47, SR-71, RF, and the F-4C. He knew a top leader should go where the action was and not be content to stay in the comfort zone of a job he had mastered. The broadly gauged leader must be flexible and able to lead in all aspects of military conflict. His work with the Joint Chiefs demonstrated his firm belief that success for the United States would be protected best by cooperation among the services and that narrow service rivalries worked against that goal.

Notably, Jerry O'Malley left a strong legacy with his intelligent leadership and potent focus on integrity. The bright, amiable young athlete from the coal mining area of northeast Pennsylvania is still recognized in the annual O'Malley Award given to the commander who sets the best example for fostering strong family life in the Air Force each year. Many icons of O'Malley are spread throughout the Air Force; perhaps, the most striking is the bronze statue of him at the Air Force Academy (fig. 76).



**Figure 76. Bronze bust of General O'Malley with the academy chapel in the background.** (Reprinted with permission from Col Charlie Emmons.)

**Notes**

1. *Biography of Gen Wilbur L. Creech* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1984).
2. Jerome F. O'Malley to unidentified contemporary, letter, 5 September 1984.
3. Wilbur L. Creech and Aloysius G. Casey, conversation, 1996.
4. O'Malley to TAC commanders, letter, 31 December 1984.
5. Quote from an early TAC staff meeting after O'Malley took command.
6. Lt Col Sandra A. Gregory, "Man's Flight through Life: A Leadership Profile of General Jerome F. O'Malley" (Fort McNair, Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1994), 20.
7. *Ibid.*, 25.
8. Jerome F. O'Malley speech to National War College, spring 1985, 2.
9. *Ibid.*
10. "Technical Report, Hydraulic Shop Analysis," Air Force Safety Center Accident Report, Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico, n.d.
11. *Ibid.*
12. O'Malley to secretary of the Air Force Verne Orr, letter, 17 January 1985.
13. *Wing Spread*, Mountain Home AFB newspaper, 18 April 1985.
14. Gregory, "Man's Flight through Life," 21.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Briefing, Gen Trzaskoma, subject: completion of the accident investigation, 13 May 1998.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. Tech Order (TO) IT39-A-1, Hydraulic system, I-44,
21. Briefing, General Trzaskoma, 6.
22. TO IT39-A-1, Warning Note, I-43.
23. Briefing, General Trzaskoma, 7.
24. *Ibid.*, 8, 9.
25. Primary source experience by Aloysius G. Casey.
26. "Technical Report, Hydraulic Shop Analysis."
27. Briefing, General Trzaskoma, n.p.
28. SSgt Raymond R. Marshall, "Accident Report from Air Force Safety Center, Testimony of SSgt Raymond R. Marshall," Air Force Safety Center, Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico, n.d.

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## Appendix

### War Messages

This appendix contains an image of each of the War Messages referenced in the endnotes of chapter 10. These messages were all classified Top Secret (or above) but were declassified before being copied from records found at the National Archives. For ease of access, the index below provides the date of the message and the page number of this appendix where the message begins (many are multipage). Next are the originating headquarters and the principal recipient headquarters.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Page of message</i>	<i>Sent by</i>	<i>Received by</i>
8 October 1971	264	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain	Commander MACV
20 October 1971	266	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain	Chairman JCS, Admiral Moorer
8 November 1971	267	Chairman JCS, Admiral Moorer	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain
21 November 1971	268	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain	Chairman JCS, Admiral Moorer
28 November 1971	269	Chairman JCS, Admiral Moorer	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain
26 December 1971	270	Chairman JCS, Admiral Moorer	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain
7 January 1972	272	Chairman JCS, Admiral Moorer	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain
7 February 1972	274	Chairman JCS, Admiral Moorer	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain
21 March 1972	276	Chairman JCS, Admiral Moorer	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain
1 April 1972	278	Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Admiral McCain	Chairman JCS, Admiral Moorer



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~~TOP SECRET~~

84809

4. (S) TO OFFSET THIS THREAT I KNOW THAT YOU WILL TAKE ALL  
POSSIBLE MEASURES TO PROTECT OUR AIRCREWS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME  
NOT ALLOWING THE ENEMY TO DETER US FROM CARRYING OUT OUR VITAL  
INTERDICTION MISSION.

5. (U) WARMEST REGARDS.

GP-1

BT

#1068

ANNOTES

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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13734  
SECT 79 OF 13718

ACTION J3(GEN ZAIS)(01)1  
DISTR CJCS(ADM MOORER)(06)2-7 DJS(GEN VOGT)(01)8  
FILE(01)9  
(009)

VADV DISTR NMCC  
TRANSIT/201644Z/201716Z/000:32TOR2931711  
DE RUHHGA #2439 2931648  
ZNY AAAAA  
Z O 201644Z OCT 71 ZFF-3 ZEL  
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INFO RHMSMVA/COMUSMACV  
RUMMRSA/CMRDR 7AF

CORRECTION 13718 WHICH  
WAS NOT DISTRIBUTED

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~~TOP SECRET~~ SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR ADMIRAL MOORER INFO GENERAL  
ABRAMS AND GENERAL LAVELLE FROM ADMIRAL MCCAIN  
DELIVER UPON RECEIPT  
M THREAT (U)

FLASH

A. COMUSMACV 201126Z OCT 71 (BOM) (PASEP)

1. (U) REF A DISCUSSES AN IMMEDIATE THREAT POSED TO U.S. FORCES BY MIG AIRCRAFT PRESENTLY STATIONED SOUTH OF 20 DEGREES NORTH IN NV AND REQUESTS THAT IMMEDIATE STRIKES BE AUTHORIZED TO DESTROY ENEMY MIGS AT BAI THUONG, QUAN LANG, AND VINH. FULLY SUPPORT AND STRONGLY RECOMMEND GENERAL ABRAMS' REQUEST TO DESTROY THE MIG THREAT AND RECOMMEND THAT IMMEDIATE AUTHORITY BE GRANTED TO CONDUCT STRIKES AGAINST BAI THUONG QUAN LANG AND VINH AIRFIELDS.
2. (U) VERY RESPECTFULLY. WARM REGARDS.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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TRANSIT/080005Z/080042Z/000:37TOR3120040  
DE RHMSMVA #9739 3120008  
ZNY AIAAA  
C 080005Z NOV 71 ZFF-6  
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TO RUHHQA/CINCPAC  
INFO RUEKJCS/JCS  
RHCOAIA/CINCSAC  
RHMSMVA/COMUSMACV  
RUHHRRA/CINCPACFLT  
RUHHA8A/CINCPACAF  
RUMMRSA/CDR 7AF  
RUHGOIA/COMSEVENTHFLT  
RUMFRBA/CTF 77  
RUHGOSA/CTG 77.0

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~~TOP SECRET~~ SPECIAL EXCLUSIVE FOR ADMIRAL MCCAIN INFO GEN  
WESTMORLAND, GENERAL HOLLOWAY, GENERAL ABRAMS, ADMIRAL CLAREY, GENERAL C  
GENERAL LAVELLE, VADM MACK, RADM COOPER, RADM RAMAGE, LTGS VOGT  
AND KNOWLES FROM ADMIRAL MOORER, BRAVO SEVEN,  
DELIVER FIRST WAKING HOURS  
REF: A, SAC 061030Z NOV 71

- B. CINCPAC 070111Z NOV 71
- 1. SHARE THE CONCERN EXPRESSED IN REFERENCES A, AND B, REGARDING THE MIG THREAT. HOWEVER, IN MY JUDGMENT, APPROVAL OF THE REQUESTED STRIKES ... REQUIRE ADDITIONAL INTELLIGENCE. THE COVERAGE OF 7 NOVEMBER DID NOT CONFIRM MIG PRESENCE AT DONG HOI, ACCORDINGLY, BELIEVE OUR NEXT MOVE SHOULD BE TO CONDUCT RECCE OPERATIONS AGAINST VINH AIRFIELD EMPLOYING SAME TYPE FORCES INCLUDING SUPPORT FORCES, AS UTILIZED AGAINST DONG HOI, REQUEST YOU COORDINATE WITH MACV AND CINCPACFLT.
- 2. WARM REGARDS.

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Ref (A) 42057  
(B) Not identified

Authority: *[Signature]*

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1929

ACTION J3(GEN ZAIS)(01)1  
DISTR CJCS(ADM MOORER)(06)2-7 DJS(GEN VOGT)(02)8-9 SECDEF(MR LAIRD)  
(01)10 ASD:ISA(MR NUTTER)(01)11 CSA(GEN WESTMORELAND)(01)12  
CNO(ADM ZUMWALT)(01)13 CSAF(GEN RYAN)(01)14 CMC(GEN CHAPMAN)  
(01)15 FILE(01)16

TRANSIT/28 01 31 Z / 28 01 47 Z / 00 0:16GRP0160

DE RUEKAA #2002 3620147

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TO RUHHQA/C INCPAC

INFO RHSMVA/COMUSMACV

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FOR ADM MCCAIN INFO FOR GEN ABRAMS FROM ADM MOORER

CJCS SENDS

LIVER DURING WAKING HOURS ONLY.

SUBJ: SOUTHEAST ASIA OPERATING AUTHORITIES (U)

REF: JCS 7120/131600Z NOV 71

1. ~~(S)~~ REFERENCE EXTENDED CURRENT SEA OPERATING AUTHORITIES

UNTIL 1 DECEMBER 1971,

2. ~~(S)~~ CURRENT SEA OPERATING AUTHORITIES ARE FURTHER EXTENDED

UNTIL 1 JANUARY 1972, THIS INCLUDES CURRENT AUTHORITY FOR USE OF  
HERBICIDES IN SVN,

3. (U) WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED. WARM REGARDS. GP-1.

BT

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## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER~~TOP SECRET~~

3591

TERMINATE.

3. APPRECIATE WEATHER MAY NOT PERMIT ALL PLANNED STRIKES BY ALL FORCES. ACCORDINGLY, YOU ARE AUTHORIZED INTERMITTANT AND OR SELECTIVE STRIKES AS CONDITIONS DICTATE DURING THE AUTHORIZED PERIOD. OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM REPEAT MAXIMUM RESULTS PERMITTED BY OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS.

4. CONTINUE TO REPORT ALL STRIKE RESULTS ASAP.

WARM REGARDS

GP-1

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#4006

VANNOTES

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## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER~~TOP SECRET~~

4073

RECOGNIZED AND WE WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN THE NEEDED AUTHORITIES. IN THE MEANTIME, HOWEVER, WE ARE CONSTRAINED BY THE SPECIFIC OPERATING AUTHORITIES AS WRITTEN; E.G.,

A. ENEMY EW/GCI SITES LOCATED IN NVN ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO BE ATTACKED AT ANY TIME, UNLESS INCLUDED AS APPROVED TARGETS IN OPERATIONS SUCH AS PROUD DEEP.

B. SAM/AAA SITES AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT IN NVN MAY BE STRUCK IN IMMEDIATE PROTECTIVE REACTION ONLY WHEN SOUTH OF 20 DEGREES NORTH.

C. INCURSIONS OF NVN AIRSPACE NORTH OF 20 DEGREES NORTH ARE NOT AUTHORIZED WITHOUT JCS APPROVAL EXCEPT WHEN IN IMMEDIATE PURSUIT OF STILE ENEMY AIRCRAFT AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE BASIC RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA. IMMEDIATE PROTECTIVE REACTION AGAINST SAM/AAA ACTIVITY DURING SUCH AUTHORIZED FLIGHTS NORTH OF 20 DEGREES NORTH IS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE PRUDENTIAL RULE.

4. (✓) REQUEST YOU CONTINUE TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE ACTIONS WITHIN THE CURRENT RULES AND AUTHORITIES TO MINIMIZE THE RISK TO FRIENDLY FORCES. I WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED OF ANY PROGRESS WE MAY MAKE IN THE AREA OF ADDITIONAL AUTHORITIES.

WARM REGARDS

GP-1

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5084

ACTION: CJCS(ADM MOORER)(06)1-6  
DISTR: OPR DJS J3(GEN ZIAS)(01)7 CSA CSAF CNO CMC TERMSVC FILE(01)8  
(008)

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DE RUEKJCS #1957 0382205  
ZNY: AAAAA  
C 072153Z FEB 72 ZFF6  
FM JCS  
TO RUHHQA/CINCPAC  
INFO RHMSMVA/COMUSMACV  
BT

IMMEDIATE  
~~SPECAT EXCLUSIVE~~ ASD/PA X

~~TOP SECRET~~ SPECAT EXCLUSIVE 5084

FOR ADMIRAL MCCAIN, INFO FOR GENERAL ABRAM: RQM ADMIRAL MOORER

CJCS SENDS

DELIVER DURING WAKING HOURS ONLY

UJBJ: OPERATING AUTHORITY, DMZ (S)

1. ~~(S)~~ TO HELP MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE BUILD A MILITARY CAPABILITY WITHIN THE DMZ FOR SUDDEN STRIKES ACROSS THE PMDL, YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO CONDUCT TACTICAL AIR STRIKES INTO THE NORTHERN PORTION OF THE DMZ WHENEVER COMUSMACV DETERMINES THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE USING THE AREA IN PREPARATION FOR AN ATTACK SOUTHWARD. THE AUTHORITY WILL EXPIRE ON 1 MAY 1972.

2. (U) PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE. NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANY KIND WILL BE MADE WITH REGARD TO THESE ACTIONS. IF THERE ARE

PAGE 1

~~TOP SECRET~~

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DECLASSIFIED BY JOINT STAFF  
DATE: MAR 0 1 2000

009719

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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5084

QUERIES, THE QUERIES SHOULD BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT COMMENT AND SHOULD BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE ASD(PA) THROUGH THE NMCC. THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTED RESPONSE UNDER THESE PROCEDURES IS PROVIDED FOR ANY COMMENTS YOU MAY WISH TO MAKE. AS PLANNED NOW, THE INITIAL COMMENT IN ANY CASE WOULD COME FROM MACV. QUOTE THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REPEATEDLY ANNOUNCED DETERMINATION TO PROTECT AMERICAN LIVES AS THOUSANDS OF ADDITIONAL US FORCES ARE BEING WITHDRAWN FROM VIETNAM, WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE APPROPRIATE AND NECESSARY ACTIONS AGAINST THE ENEMY BUILDUP. THIS ACTION IS A REAFFIRMATION OF THE POLICY TO PROTECT OUR DIMINISHING FORCES, WHICH WILL REACH A LEVEL OF 69,000 BY MAY 1972. UNQUOTE.

WARM REGARDS

P-1

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 #1957  
 ANNOTES  
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~~TOP SECRET~~  
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2980

VZCZCMLT 194  
 MJLT  
 ACTION J3(LTG ZATS)(01)1  
 DISTR CJCS(ADM MOORER)(06)2-7 OPR DJS  
 CONF DJS  
 TERMSVC FILE(01)8  
 (008)

ADV DISTR OPR  
 TRANSIT/212257Z/212301Z/200:24GRP0453  
 DE RUEKJCS #5413 2812257  
 ZNY AAAAA  
 O 212257Z MAR 72 ZFF6  
 FM JCS  
 TO RUHHOAJ/CINCPAC  
 RHNSMVA/COMUSMACV  
 INFO RUMMRSA/7AF TAN SON NHUT AFLD RVN  
 RUMFRBA/CIF 77  
 BT

~~SPECIAL EXCLUSIVE~~ 2980

FOR ADM MCCAIN, GEN ABRAMS, INFO GEN LAVELLE, RADM COOPER  
 ADM MOORER  
 CJCS SENDS  
 DELIVER UPON RECEIPT  
 SUBJ: PROTECTIVE REACTION AUTHORITY (U)  
 REFS: A. JCS 4649/010150Z NOV 68. B. JCS 6254/  
 232139Z NOV 68. C. JCS 5220/051452Z NOV 70. D. JCS 3130/300049Z  
 APR 71. E. JCS 7048/281900Z FEB 72. F. JCS 2002/260032Z JAN 72.

1. REF A PROVIDED INITIAL AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF ARMED ESCORT  
 TO PROTECT UNMANNED TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT WHICH RECEIVE  
 HOSTILE FIRE OVER NVN. REF B RECONFIRMED THE AUTHORITY FOR ESCORT  
 AIRCRAFT TO PROVIDE SUPPRESSIVE FIRE AGAINST HOSTILE GROUND/AIR

PAGE 1

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~T-O-P-S-E-C-R-E-T~~

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01B ✓	01H
01C	05
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SPECIAL EXCLUSIVE

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## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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T O S E C R E T

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2980

ATTACKS AGAINST OUR RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT. REFS C THROUGH E ESTABLISH, MODIFY AND EXTEND CURRENT AIR OPERATING AUTHORITIES THROUGH 31 MARCH 1972. REF F GRANTED CERTAIN STANDBY AUTHORITIES AND, INTER ALIA, AUTHORIZED INCREASED RECONNAISSANCE ACTIVITY OVER NVN AIRFIELDS SOUTH OF 19 DEGREES NORTH WITH PROVISIONS FOR APPROPRIATE PROTECTIVE REACTION WHEN SUCH AIRCRAFT WERE FIRED UPON.

2. THE INCREASED NUMBER OF PROTECTIVE REACTION STRIKES SINCE 1 JANUARY 1972 HAS ATTRACTED A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF HIGH LEVEL INTEREST HERE AND IS RECEIVING INCREASING ATTENTION FROM THE PRESS. ALTHOUGH IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT THESE STRIKES ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE INCREASING TEMPO OF ENEMY AIR DEFENSE ACTIVITY IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT SUCH PROTECTIVE REACTIONS BE CONDUCTED STRICTLY ACCORDING TO CURRENT AIR OPERATING AUTHORITIES.

3. IN VIEW OF THE EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF THIS SUBJECT AND THE ATTENTION IT IS RECEIVING, REQUEST YOU INSURE THAT ALL CREWS ARE THOROUGHLY BRIEFED THAT CURRENT AUTHORITY PERMITS PROTECTIVE REACTION TO BE TAKEN ONLY REPEAT ONLY WHEN ENEMY AIR DEFENSES EITHER FIRE AT OR ARE ACTIVATED AGAINST FRIENDLY FORCES.  
WARM REGARDS.

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PAGE 2

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T O S E C R E T

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## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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MESSAGE CENTER

- H. CINCPAC 031350Z MAR 72
- I. COMUSMACV 081155Z MAR 72
- J. CINCPAC 090230Z MAR 72

PAGE 2 RUHHQA 0185

-EXCLUSIVE

- K. COMUSMACV 230959Z MAR 72
- L. CINCPAC 240400Z MAR 72
- M. COMUSMACV 291000Z MAR 72
- N. CINCPAC 300114Z MAR 72
- O. COMUSMACV 011400Z APR 72

1. (S) REFS A THROUGH O DESCRIBE THE DEVELOPING THREAT IN SEASIA AND REQUEST/RECOMMEND VARIOUS OPERATING AUTHORITIES TO COUNTER THE ENEMY'S BUILDUP, PARTICULARLY IN MR-1 AND MR-2.

2. (S) FOR THE PAST TWO AND ONE HALF MONTHS, GENERAL ABRAMS AND I HAVE CONSISTENTLY REQUESTED THE AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT THOSE OPERATIONS DEEMED NECESSARY TO PRECLUDE GENERATION OF THE CRITICAL ENEMY THREAT WHICH WAS PREDICTED AND NOW HAS DEVELOPED. MANY OF THESE REQUESTS EITHER HAVE BEEN DENIED, OR APPROVED WITH SERIOUSLY LIMITING PROVISIONS. THE EFFECT OF THE CURRENT CONSTRAINTS ON THE FIELD COMMANDER ARE CLEARLY EVIDENCED BY THE SERIOUS BATTLEFIELD SITUATION NOW EXISTING IN NORTH BN RVN MR-1.

009882

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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TO THE FREEDOM OF ACTION ALLOWED OUR TACTICAL COMMANDER ON  
THE BATTLEFIELD IS IMPERATIVE, HE HAS THE OVERALL MISSION

PAGE 3 RUHHHQA0185 ~~TOP SECRET~~ SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

OF TAKING THOSE ACTIONS NECESSARY TO HELP ENSURE SUCCESS OF  
THE VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM. FORCES ARE AVAILABLE WHICH ARE  
CAPABLE OF FAR MORE EFFECTIVE EMPLOYMENT IN SUPPORT OF THAT  
MISSION, THE MISSING ELEMENT IS THE AUTHORITY TO USE THOSE  
FORCES AS REQUIRED BY THE ENEMY THREAT, OPERATIONS AND THE  
CHANGING SITUATION. THIS MEANS THE AUTHORITY TO TAKE THE RIGHT ACTION  
AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

4. ~~(S)~~ I AGAIN URGENTLY RECOMMEND THAT FULL AUTHORITY BE PROVIDED  
SO THAT FIELD COMMANDERS WILL BE ABLE TO USE ALL THE FORCES WHICH  
HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO DO WHAT NEEDS DOING. SPECIFICALLY,  
THE AUTHORITIES REQUESTED IN REFS I AND J, AND REEMPHASIZED  
IN REF O, REGARDING TACAIR STRIKES AND NAVAL GUNFIRE ATTACKS  
AGAINST SAM SITES, MIG'S, GCI SITES, AAA, LONG RANGE  
ARTILLERY, TANKS AND LOGISTICS FACILITIES, SHOULD BE GRANTED  
IMMEDIATELY. IN ADDITION, AUTHORITY TO EMPLOY B-52'S  
AGAINST TARGETS IN THE DMZ SHOULD BE GRANTED, IF CIRCUMSTANCES  
SO WARRANT IN THE OPINION OF COMUSMACV, THE EMPLOYMENT OF  
THIS ALL-WEATHER SYSTEM PROVIDES A VALUABLE OPTION,  
PARTICULARLY WHEN WEATHER CONDITIONS IN AND AROUND THE DMZ

009883

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PAGE 4 RUHHQA0185 T O R S E S T E T S P E C A T EXCLUSIVE  
PREVENT THE EMPLOYMENT OF TACAIR, FAILURE TO PROVIDE  
RECOMMENDED AUTHORITIES WILL PLACE AT UNACCEPTABLE RISK  
THE ACHIEVEMENT OF UNITED STATES' OBJECTIVES IN VIETNAM  
AND INVITE PHYSICAL AND EVENTUAL POLITICAL OCCUPATION OF  
A PORTION OF SOUTH VIETNAM BY NORTH VIETNAMESE  
FORCE OF ARMS.

5. ( ) IN VIEW OF THE EXTRAORDINARY IMPLICATIONS OF THE  
CURRENT SITUATION IN MR-1 AND MR-2 TO OUR TOTAL NATIONAL  
INVESTMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, I REQUEST THE FOREGOING  
VIEWS BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF HIGHEST AUTHORITY.

6. (U) VERY RESPECTFULLY, WARM REGARDS.

GP -1

BT

#0185

ANNOTES

REF A IS 76221

REF B IS 77806

REF C IS 49590

REF D IS 51099

REF E IS 55122

REF F IS 50677

009884

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