

## **ML.71.How the Crows Got Their Well-Earned Respect**

Although they wore the same type wings as Navs, Crows were not given positions of authority. It was a 'pilot mentality.' I watched this as a 2nd/Lt copilot, then as a 1/Lt, Captain, Major and Lt Col crew commander. As an A/C (1/Lt, Capt, Major, Lt Col) I was writing OERs on Lt Col EWs. I had many discussions about this, reflecting on my own experience, knowledge, and qualification (none) to evaluate an EW's performance. Any idea what an ALA-6, APR-9, APR-17, or QRC-121 might be or their operation? And the EW OERs (promotions? hmmph...) reflected this accordingly.

I assumed command of the 55th SRW in May/June of '78 and knew many of the EW's who had remained in the Wing during my absence, and whom I respected. Some of them had approached my predecessor with the proposal to form one of the two squadrons (38/343) as an all-EW squadron. It is not appropriate to share his response.

But after I assumed command of the Wing one of those gentleman, whom I had known, Lt Col McMillan, approached me with this proposal, sharing with me their previous attempts to effect this action... and the results. I shared with him my own personal experiences from earlier days and asked him to prepare a brief of their proposal for CINCSAC. He did.

We received permission to brief the CINC, who approved it: Crows in the 343rd with Crows in command positions, Crows writing OERs on Crows. Front end crews would be in the 38th,

The CINC had the SAC Staff forward the proposal to USAF for review with his approval. It came back approved... with only one major glitch. Somehow in transmission the proposal was changed... not intentionally, I'm sure... from the assignment of specific personnel to the specific squadrons. EWs would be assigned to the 38th...and front end to the 343rd (Crow squadron patch and all). WRONG!

I called SAC HQ and made an appointment with the CINC advising him of the error. He smiled, turned to this staff and said... "fix it." They did and that's how the 343rd became an all-EW squadron with Commander, Ops/O's, etc. being crows. They began receiving O-6 promotions as a result, which was unknown until then. The Crows were ecstatic... as was I, having had an opportunity to correct what I had observed as a young officer, now in a position to make a difference.

*- Reg Urschler, Brig Gen, USAF, Ret*

Rick Thompson was Reg's first choice to command the new 343rd, but Levitt (who picked ALL SAC squadron CCs) did pick Al Smith, a good man, but not a 55th'er. Rick was Ops and succeeded him. As I recall it became an O-6 maker for a lot of crows, leaders, who made it: Rudy Smart, Jim Ruane, Al Feldkamp, Mo, et al.

*- Max Moore*