

## ML.72.THE PATCH

In the RC business there were always well-protected rooms where TOP-SECRET CODEWORD stuff was kept, more secure even than the closets at Mar-a-Lago or next to the Corvette in Wilmington. To enter that inner-sanctum, we had to be vetted by secret agents who talked to anyone who ever knew us from the time we got our first tricycle.

Here are some observations by those who were there.

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Discussing the level and emphasis on security during the early days, I referred to how we identified Forbes without specifying our point of departure or main operating base when TDY. I believe we referred to Forbes as 'The Patch' or 'Home Plate.'

Tom Dawes Sr was a nav in the 343rd and his son, Tom Dawes Jr, grew up in Topeka when his dad was stationed at Forbes. He has stories about how and what his father discussed (or did not) with the family about 'where they were going,' 'how long gone' etc. Security is a very important part of the Wing's history, quite a contrast with how security is addressed now.

- *Reg Urschler*

In those days we went TDY (temporary duty) or 'on project'. We did not 'deploy.' I think that term started being applied in the 1990s when the wing went to war.

But I digress.

Cold War security was indeed intense and sacred, as Reg says. Crews could not even tell their families when and where they were going TDY. While away, Forbes was referred to early as the 'Home Patch' and later shortened to just 'The Patch,' if one discussed it at all.

While 'on project', flight suits were generic with just rank and name tapes, no unit insignia. When flying on ops sorties, crewdogs were just to have their military ID, dog tags and little else to show who they were and where they were stationed.

- *The Maxigator (my early nickname from Don Thomas.)*