

### ML.83.Command Support Airlift

Once upon a time there was a unit called Command Support Airlift (CSA). It was better known among the troops as Chicken Shit Airlines, whose motto was 'Unarmed, Unaware, and Could Not Care Less.' One of its noted leaders was the notorious Tom 'Big Bopper' Davey (so named because he would get alcohol fueled and clock someone at every base he was assigned, plus he was the image of Assad, Sr, who ruled Syria). Others were Bill Klausner, Harry Moore, Don Carter, and Perry Clark.

The 3902nd Air Base Wing at Offutt was under the direct supervision of the HQ SAC Chief of Staff. Why? Because Gen Le May wanted it that way. It had a base flight operation manned by a staff, a few crew dogs, and SAC HQ personnel getting flight time, as well. I have no idea what its nomenclature was then.

When I got to Offutt in late 1969, CSA had a small fleet of T-39s to fly courier and VIP missions, and RC-135As (with no AR capability) which flew the SAC east and west coast couriers Monday and Friday, and ferried SAC IG and MSET teams to SAC bases.

At some point in the early 70s the operations came under the 55th DO and they had an office in Bldg 497 down the hall from the 343rd. The personnel were mostly tanker pilots who had been passed over, and navs, and boomers from the 2ACCS (they became load masters but would never use the title.)



SAC HQ pilots and navs still flew part time and these missions continued with the occasional trainer for pilot proficiency.

I was in CSA from late 1974 to Jan 1978.

In early 1977 CSA changed drastically when Gen PK Carlton, who had been Ass't DO at SAC, then 15th AF CC, became CC of MAC. He knew of the SAC couriers and other activities, and insisted by force of personality that MAC and ONLY MAC should be putting butts in seats and flying them to wherever. PK worked something out with the SAC DO to do all the Big Team scheduling from HQ MAC at Scott AFB, IL. Any unit wanting airlift support had to request same thru them, **including**, wait for it, SAC IG and MSET, with no higher priority than any other request!

Talk about some pissed off GOs in Bldg 500!!! After a while, that frustration led to SAC IG and MSET commandeering tankers for the jobs. MAC wanted the missions but not the aircraft, since they had no bases to support and maintain the planes, so the business stayed at Offutt.

But now we were flying all over the country to any AF command base and some civilian airports: RONS to Vegas, San Juan, Langley, anywhere. Some groups were very interesting, especially academics going to conventions. There was booze on the aircraft if requested by the groups.

Another factor during that era: when Jimmy Carter was President he said he was going to cut down on those cushy junkets congress and other DC swampites took and ordered the 89th

Airlift Wing to reduce resources. So, the 55th got three C-135B/Cs with the fancy livery from Andrews. Now the MAC missions were being flown in really pretty aircraft.

Although Carter's idea was altruistic, it was easily circumvented. The 55th was not supposed to fly special airlift missions, but when the 89th got over-taxed – and they often did – we got tasked to fly some of the 'lower level' trips (i.e., ones the 89th could shove off.) We had missions to Beijing, Bogata, and Congo (I don't recall who The Man on each was). But I did go on one junket that took Energy Secretary Dr Schlesinger to Marrakesh, Morocco, and three stops in Saudi Arabia in January 1978. I missed the Super Bowl but it was the trip of a lifetime, an adventure at every city, and a chapter in my book if I ever write it.

This turned out to be my last flight as a crewdog, since soon after I had a short notice change of jobs as chief of scheduling DOTT.

After Carter left office, the 89th recalled their aircraft, but CSA lived on, by then manned by 55th guys 'in the twilight of mediocre careers.

- *Max Moore*