

ML.99.Incirlik, 1961

Col. 'Iron' Mike Rafferty, the 55th SRW DCO (Deputy Commander for Operations) at Forbes held the daily 'Stand up' briefings in the Wing Command Post in Wing Headquarters and they could get very interesting. 'Iron' Mike was all business, and he meant business. Sometimes we referred to it as 'Bendover' Briefing! Mike was one of the original SAC Professional IP's who went around the various SAC bases checking out pilots as the B-47 school at McConnell AFB just couldn't handle the training load, and he was one of the very best.

I recall we were at Incirlik in 1961 and he was the Det. 4 Commander. He told maintenance he wanted to fly a training mission in the 'H' model taking one of the TDY F-100 pilots along in the back seat. We said he couldn't do that. Well, he said I'm an IP and I can take any pilot I want. And he did. Don't remember who went along as the Nav but I'm sure they would have a story or two to share.



Also at Incirlik, there was a formation composed of an RB-47, two EA-3D's and four of the TDY Squadron's F-100's stationed there. The -47

led the formation with an EA-3D on each wing and four F-100's in the slot in diamond formation. There was a big discussion at the 'O' Club the previous night (with many(!) beverages) over the formation call sign; The Navy wanted NAV, SAC, TAC; we wanted SAC, NAV, TAC, and of course the TAC guys wanted TAC, SAC, NAV. They arm wrestled over the call sign and Leo Legard, who had arms like Popeye, represented us.

Unbelievably and shockingly, he lost the contest along with the call sign privilege. I have a photo of the formation at home in Bellevue. Quite impressive.

This was the same TDY when the Navy had a carrier close by in the Med and the EA-3D guys made arrangements for the RB-47 to make a low approach over the carrier. The carrier Skipper reportedly invited the AC to execute a 'touch-and-go' (or 'Roller' or 'Hump-and-Bump' as the Brits would say) and when the RB-47 made its approach to the carrier the deck was full of sailors obviating that option. Not sure the AC wouldn't have tried it had he a clear deck!

BTW, I got to fly the EA3D while we were over there in 1961 flying a Tell-Two. The EA-3D, while looking like our Air Force E/R/B-66, performed quite differently. The airplane had just one set of flight controls. The NAVY was there to support the same mission as we, telemetry collection. The crew composition was pilot, Nav/RO (right seat) with ejection seats and four operators in the rear, ASA guys (Army Security Agency) and they did NOT have ejection seats.

Their bailout procedure was very similar to our RB-47 Crows exiting from the crawlway in the front end: spoiler deployed and out you go.

Actually, the EA-3D had replaced an ancient P2V (four engines: two reciprocating and two jets) which had been doing the job, or trying to. On my flight in the EA-3D I occupied the jump seat until very shortly after take-off and "gear-up" when the pilot disconnected his seat belt and shoulder harness, got out of the seat while retaining control of the airplane by reaching around the seat and holding the control yoke with his left hand, he waved me into empty chair. We remained in those positions until prior to landing.

- Reg Urschler

