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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

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Turner, Carlton E.'s Files

Collection Name ~~MACDONALD, DONALDIAN FILES~~

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File Folder AIR FORCE 1540

FOIA

F06-059/1

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POTTER

2

ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
47274	LETTER	TO CARLTON TURNER FROM PERSON SEEKING WHITE HOUSE POSITION (W/NOTATIONS)	1	7/19/1982	B1 B3
47275	RESUME	ATTACHMENT TO DOC #47274	2	ND	B1 B3 B6

The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of processing

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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Drugs at U.S. Bases an Issue in Britain

By R. W. APPLE Jr.

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, March 24 — The use of drugs by American servicemen stationed in Britain has been thrust into the continuing debate over United States nuclear weapons based in this country.

Two articles this week in The Times of London, Britain's most prestigious newspaper, have called attention to drug abuse at United States Air Force bases including Greenham Common, where the first cruise missiles were installed late last year, and the nuclear submarine base at Holy Loch in Scotland.

One of the articles, spread across four columns on page 1, was headlined "Quarter of Europe's U.S. Troops on Drugs." It was based on a 1982 Pentagon study and on more recent developments at the 11 major American bases here.

Capt. Jerry Yaple, a spokesman for the Third Air Force at Mildenhall in East Anglia, confirmed many of the statistics but asserted that very few — perhaps none — of the convicted drug-users were involved in key nuclear-weapon duties.

'Footprints of Peace Movement'

"These stories," said a senior American officer who asked not to be identified, "have the footprints of the peace movement all over them. Someone is trying to portray us as a bunch of potheads who can't be trusted with our fingers on the trigger in order to get us out of here."

The Pentagon survey showed that 31.4 percent of American servicemen in Europe admitted using drugs including marijuana, cocaine and LSD in the preceding year. Among young enlisted men the figure exceeded 40 percent, and one in 10 admitted having been "high" at work sometime during the preceding 12 months.

According to the British Government, 14 American servicemen have been removed recently from their duties at Greenham Common, near

Newbury, west of London, but none was in a "sensitive position." Members of the Labor opposition plan to question the Defense Minister, Michael Heseltine, about the matter in the House of Commons next week.

"We are concerned about what people might do when they are high on drugs," said Kevin McNamara, an opposition spokesman on military affairs. "It means we have got to look again very carefully at the Government statement about American servicemen at Greenham Common."

Doubts Grow in Britain

The Times quoted Dr. James Thompson, a senior psychology lecturer at Middlesex Hospital, as suggesting that the use of drugs increased by at least 10 times the chance of a serious nuclear accident under crisis conditions.

Although Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has remained a firm advocate of the cruise missile program, she has been unable to prevent the growth in Britain of doubts about the trustworthiness of the United States Government with nuclear weapons.

Recent opinion polls have shown

here, as elsewhere in Europe, that many ordinary citizens are particularly wary of President Reagan, whom many regard as excessively bellicose. The Times articles may reinforce the perception that Europe could be plunged inadvertently into war.

Captain Yaple said that 455 separate charges of drug use, possession or sale had been filed in 1983 against an untabulated number of American servicemen in Britain. The number of men involved, he added, was probably about 300, roughly 1 percent of the 30,000 based here. He described that figure as "not bad at all, to our way of thinking."

Most Were Sent Home

A total of 409 of the charges were dealt with internally, the spokesman said, meaning that the men or women involved were disciplined by the American armed forces without recourse to the British courts. He said the British had agreed to this procedure because it was faster and because it reduced the potential burden on civil judges. Most of those involved were discharged and sent home.

The figures in 1982 were somewhat higher and for this year are roughly similar to those for 1983, but drug use is much less of a problem in Britain, according to Pentagon statistics, than in West Germany.

At Holy Loch, documents found on a junk heap two years ago by a local resident disclosed drug offenses by several American sailors, including a nuclear weapons guard who repeatedly failed to report for duty.

There are more than 100 American military sites in Britain, according to reports published in the British press in the last five years.

Most are thinly manned communications stations, warehouses and other small installations. More than 29,000 of the 30,000 American servicemen based here serve at nine United States Air Force bases, at Holy Loch and at the United States Army Headquarters at Burton Wood.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

file
USAF

14 JUL 1983

Dear Dr. Turner

Thanks for sending the article on Urban Drew from the South African Digest. His story is quite interesting and we enjoyed hosting him when he finally received the Air Force Cross. However, we certainly didn't expect this publicity. I appreciate your keeping me informed

Every best wish.

Sincerely



CHARLES A. GABRIEL, General, USAF
Chief of Staff

Dr. Carlton E. Turner, Ph.D.
Special Assistant to the President
for Drug Abuse Policy
Old Executive Office Building
Room 220
Washington, D.C. 20500

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 16, 1982

Dear George:

I enjoyed meeting and talking to you at the Posse Comitatus meeting on December 6th.

George, we always need new ideas on how to keep the pressure on drug dealers and smugglers. Your suggestions are always appreciated. Perhaps you can drop by for a chat.

Sincerely,



Carlton E. Turner, Ph.D.
Director
Drug Abuse Policy Office

Mr. George F. Ruestow
Special Assistant for Airlift
Directorate of Transportation
U.S. Air Force
Washington, D.C. 20330

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCES IN EUROPE
APO NEW YORK 09012

2 August 1982

9 AUG 1982

Dr Carlton E. Turner
Director, Drug Abuse Policy Office
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Dr Turner

Just received the White House news release informing us that the President had named you as the Director of the Drug Abuse Policy Office. Congratulations on your appointment. I know the difficult task you face in this arena.

We in United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) will continue to do all we can to counter drug abuse. You can be assured that you have our support. We are looking forward to a visit from you in the future.

Again, congratulations on the appointment and expanded responsibilities.

Sincerely

Anthony A. Olivito
ANTHONY A. OLIVITO, Colonel, USAF
DCS/Personnel

*Note of Thanks for Support of Drug Abuse
by AF and your personal concern
Come see me*

AIRMAN

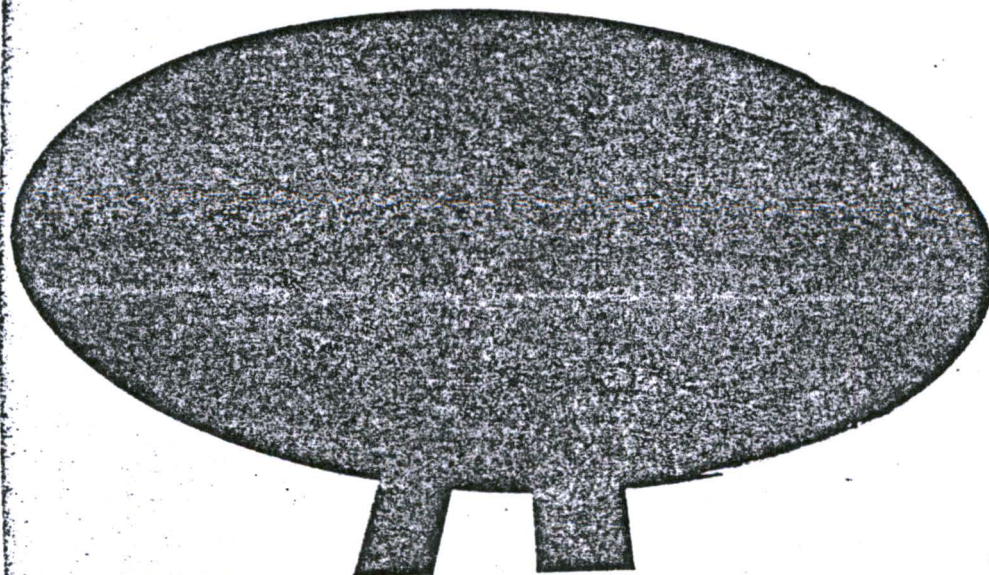
Official Magazine of the U.S. Air Force Volume XXVIII, No. 8 August 1984

file Air Force

The nation's civilian law enforcement agencies have turned to the military for help in stopping international drug smugglers.

Fighting the Drug War

by Capt. Brian Hoey
AIRMAN Associate Editor





Lunch aboard the world's most sophisticated radar plane was a welcome respite for 1st Lt. John Gowing. After a morning of orchestrating mock F-15 dogfights over the Gulf of Mexico, the E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) weapons director settled back during a lull in the action to work on a hamburger.

As he ate, his eyes roved over the radar console before him. Shimmering green flecks dotted the scope; aircraft detected for hundreds of miles in every direction as they flew through the skies, scanned by *Sentry 84*.

Suddenly, 1st Lt. Gowing tensed, focusing upon a tiny, luminescent blip. Barely suppressing the excitement in his voice, he reported the discovery over the AWACS intercom.

"I think we've got one," he said evenly.

Across the cabin, mission crew commander Capt. Mike Perkins studied his scope, then echoed the lieutenant's suspicions. Nearly six miles below them, zigzagging north just 400 feet above the whitecaps, was a small aircraft flying as if trying to escape detection by land-

based radars.

Low altitude, erratic flight path, apparent radar evasion—all signs of a probable drug smuggler.

Within seconds, Capt. Perkins was alerting the Southeast Region Operations Control Center (ROCC) at Tyndall AFB, Fla., a strategic air defense unit responsible for some 3,000 miles of coastline running from Washington, D.C., to Texas. U.S. Customs Service agents monitoring radar consoles alongside ROCC blue-suiters relayed the information to Customs agents in New Orleans.

Minutes later a Customs aircraft was scrambled from the Mardi Gras city, with 1st Lt. Gowing radioing information to the pilot that allowed him to position his aircraft out of sight behind the suspected drug smuggler. Before the two-hour surveillance ended, another E-3 AWACS aircraft and two more Customs interceptors had been used to track the suspect.

When the suspicious aircraft landed in Texas, the pilot and another man were arrested by waiting agents, capping a three-year Customs investigation. The final catch: one Cessna, two trucks, and

700 pounds of marijuana.

Vice-President George Bush, head of the country's anti-drug campaign, cabled a commendation message to the AWACS crew of the 552nd Airborne Warning and Control Division, Tinker AFB, Okla., and Tyndall AFB's ROCC and 23rd Air Division personnel.

"Without your help, this load of narcotics would have gotten through," he said. "This seizure is an excellent example of the military community's ability to perform its primary mission while supporting this nation's war on drugs."

The bust was also one more example of the Air Force's escalating involvement in a national offensive against drugs. Reconnaissance aircraft, along with fighters, bombers, transports, helicopters, and radars, are joining the fray as the Air Force aids civilian law enforcement officials in cracking down on the flood of illicit drugs pouring into the United States.

The enemy: international drug traffickers, particularly those smuggling cocaine and marijuana from South America by sea and air.

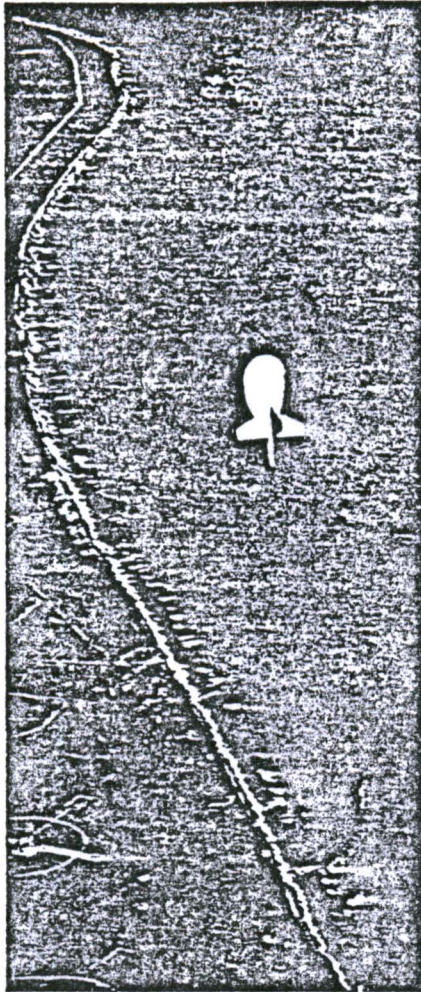
The theater of operations: the Western Hemisphere, with battle-

Riding High, Aiming Low

It looks like a fugitive from the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade—a bloated white guppy floating 10,000 feet above the beaches of eastern Florida.

Meet the Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS) alias Fat Albert, a balloon-borne radar system scouring the Florida straits for low-flying aircraft. Air defense surveillance is its main job, but it also relays information to U.S. Customs Service agents hunting for drug smugglers who try sneaking in under land-based radar coverage.

Slightly larger than a Goodyear blimp, the 250,000-cubic-foot aerodynamically shaped balloon surveys more than 70,000 square miles of the Florida peninsula and surrounding coastline. A thousand-pound radar strapped to its belly picks up targets up to 150 miles away, and transmits data to Tactical Air Command's 23rd Air Division/Southeast Region Operations Control Center



photos by TSgt Bill Thompson



LEFT: Balloon-borne radar over Cape Canaveral relays information to ground station radar operators Sgt. Marcus A. Davis and TSgt. Warren Hagan.

at Tyndall AFB, Fla.

"When it first flew in September 1983, there was a flurry of phone calls from local residents claiming they'd sighted a UFO," said Tom Gettelman, an electronics engineer in the TAC program office at adjoining Patrick AFB. "Then a local newspaper started a series about

lines drawn at the U.S. borders.

Military support for the anti-drug campaign has mushroomed since 1981, when Congress enacted legislation to clarify the types of assistance that the armed forces may provide to civil law enforcement officials. Prior to this legislation, military assistance was governed primarily by the century-old Posse Comitatus Act that made it a felony in most cases to use federal troops as a law enforcement arm.

The act stemmed from the post-Civil War era, when the Army was extensively used to enforce Reconstruction laws and suppress labor strife. It remains in effect as a limitation on direct military participation in civilian law enforcement operations. Clarification and easing of certain restrictions by the new legislation has united the Department of Defense with scores of international, federal, state, and local drug enforcement agencies.

The Air Force role is primarily one of providing information through radar coverage and aircraft reconnaissance in areas of interest to requesting agencies, such as Customs, the Coast Guard, and the

Drug Enforcement Administration.

Customs agents can now be trained to look for smugglers on available Air Force radar consoles on air bases and aboard AWACS. The agents pinpoint smugglers, then call for Customs aircraft to pursue the criminals.

Those involved with the program emphasize that virtually all assistance is provided on a non-interference basis with normal operations and training missions. Rare exceptions are made only with DOD approval.

"The law states that when military readiness is adversely affected, this kind of support cannot be rendered," said Tidal W. McCoy, assistant secretary of the Air Force for Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Installations. "When we get a request for assistance, we're always having to make a judgment about where that line might be crossed. But we hate to say no, since a lot of times there's a very good case for going after some druggers."

The heaviest Air Force commitment to the drug war is in the Bahamas. Working out of Nassau under the code name Operation

BAT, a detachment from the 20th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla., flies a pair of UH-1N Huey helicopters specially equipped with long-range fuel tanks, high frequency radios, special navigational equipment, and radar altimeters. BAT stands for Bahamas, Antilles, and Turks, three Caribbean island chains frequented by drug traffickers as shipment and fueling points.

Under an agreement between the Bahamian government and the U.S. State Department, the Air Force crews ferry a Drug Enforcement Administration liaison agent and SWAT-type teams of the Royal Bahamian Police Strike Force to remote hideaways or transfer sites. There the Bahamians descend upon the smugglers.

The Bahamas is a smuggler's paradise. With 700 islands scattered over more than 100,000 square miles, it is an ideal way station for

An E-3 Sentry searches the skies: "I think we've got one."

why folks were calling it Fat Albert. Now the interest seems to have died down."

But the balloon, an aerostat, has no trouble gaining attention from drug smugglers.

"TARS makes it much more difficult for smugglers to enter Florida," said Tidal W. McCoy, assistant secretary of the Air Force for Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Installations. "It's driving them to more sophisticated and expensive means."

The balloon looks more like an escapee from a toy store for giants than a key player in the nation's war on drugs. Formerly known as Seek Skyhook, TARS and two similar balloons based at Cudjoe Key AFS, Fla., were developed at Electronic Systems Division, Hanscom AFB, Mass.

"There are two things you have to overcome with balloons," said Gene Sheppard, chief of the TAC program office at Patrick AFB. "The first is the 'chuckle factor.' The second is the simplicity syndrome."

While a small grin may never entirely disappear at the sight of this bulbous behemoth, its technol-

ogy is anything but simple. Aboard the balloon, a 300-pound generator, fueled from a 100-gallon tank, powers the \$1.3 million radar platform for around-the-clock surveillance.

An on-board computer telemeters 40 million bits of data each second to the ROCC and to the blockhouse ground station below, where a flight controller seated before banks of meters and television screens monitors the balloon's every move.

Behind a cipher-locked door in the blockhouse, Air Force technicians peer at radar consoles inside a dimly lit den nicknamed "The Dark Room." The 14-inch scopes are surrounded by an array of multicolored lights. A glowing digital clock displays Greenwich Mean Time in 4-inch-high red numbers. Next to it is a green telephone—a hotline to the Tyndall ROCC.

"Sometimes we can see something beyond another radar site's capability," said SrA. Robert Coletta, one of the radar operators. "If it's unidentified, ROCC officials decide whether they'll scramble fighters to investigate."

Just how effective TARS can be was demonstrated in August 1983

when the Cudjoe Key balloon detected a suspicious aircraft in a circling pattern about 100 miles to the south. A searching Customs aircraft found a DC-3 orbiting at 400 feet, where it remained unseen by all other radars.

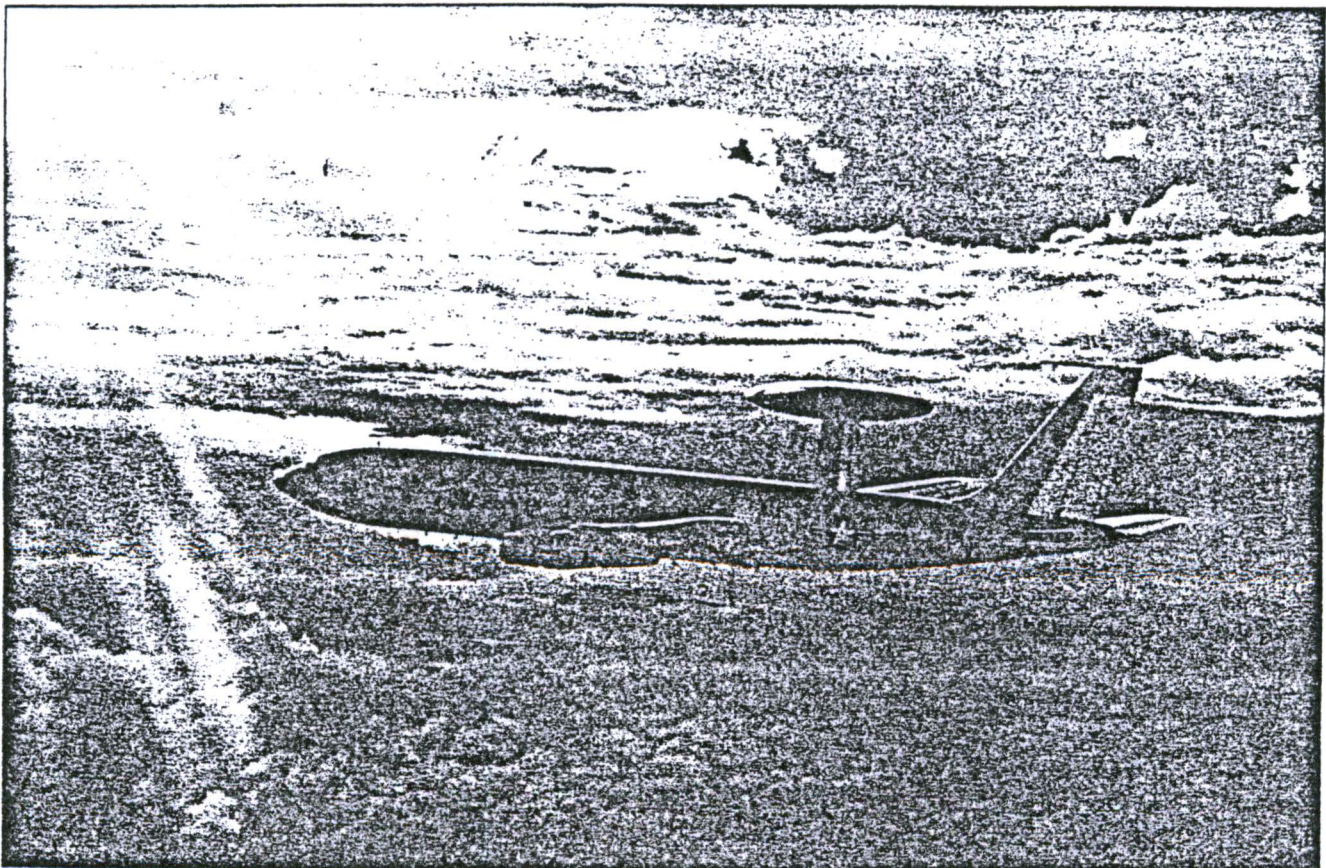
Upon landing in the Bahamas, two men from the DC-3 were arrested. Their plane was "clean," leading agents to suspect that they had airdropped drugs at sea.

Later information confirmed this. A Navy patrol hydrofoil missile ship bolted from Key West with a Coast Guard law enforcement team on board, skimming over the ocean toward the airdrop point. Also racing for the scene were boats from Customs, the Coast Guard, and the Florida Marine Patrol.

That afternoon they seized a 38-foot speedboat and more than 9,000 pounds of marijuana. While the bust was relatively small compared to others, it showed both ongoing interagency cooperation and TARS' ability to do what no other radar system can.

To the druggers, there's nothing funny about Fat Albert.

—Capt. Brian Hoey



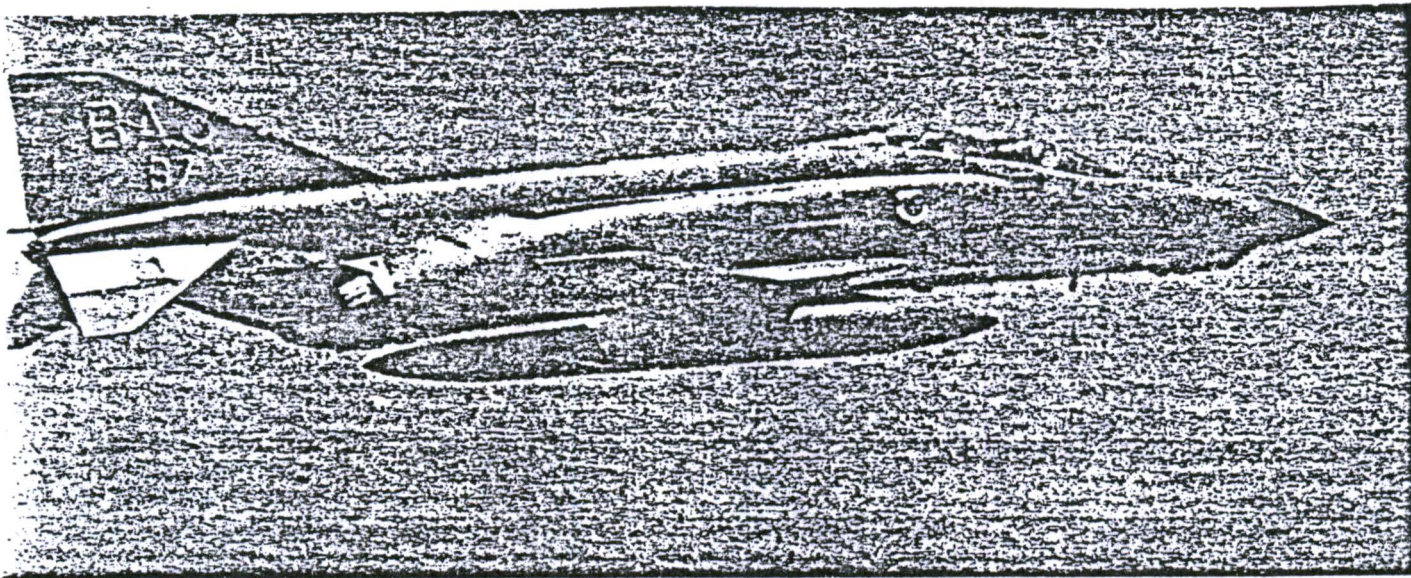
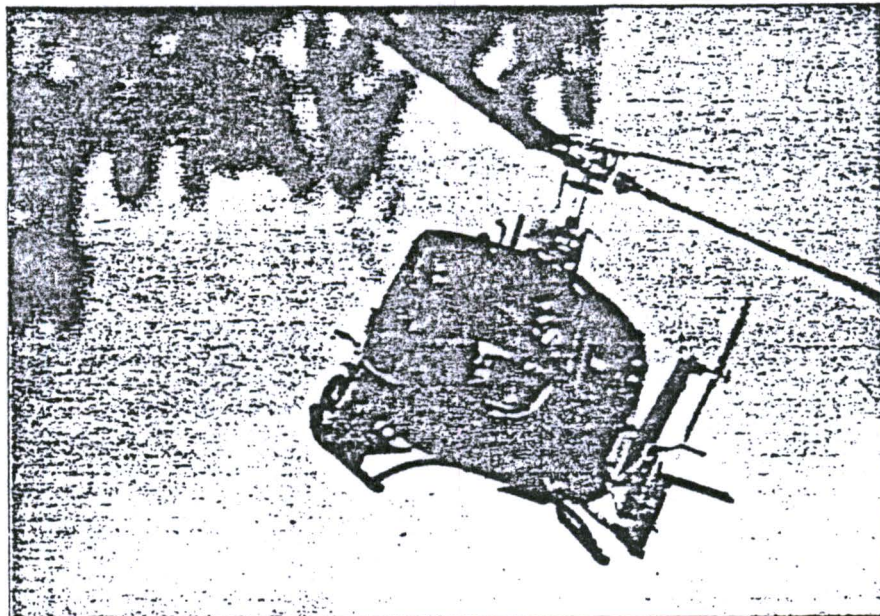


photo by 1Sgt. Bill Thompson

ABOVE: RF-4C *Phantoms* from Bergstrom AFB, Texas, snapped photos of suspected drug smuggling ships during day and night missions over the Gulf of Mexico in last year's Bold Eagle exercise.

RIGHT: The Army has provided helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft to drug enforcement agencies.

BELOW RIGHT: As the war on drug trafficking intensifies, scenes like this are becoming more commonplace.



shippers avoiding the riskier direct routes across U.S. borders. It is also the BAT triad: Federal authorities say 70 percent of the cocaine coming into the United States comes through the Bahamas.

Delivery of marijuana is usually made by airdropping waterproof bales weighing up to 100 pounds into the ocean. Sleek "cigarette" speedboats then make the pick-up, whisking the goods away at up to 80 mph. Or a pilot can elect to land at any of dozens of airstrips or on roads.

"If you're looking for the most dangerous part of the Air Force participation, Operation BAT is it," said Lt. Col. Wayne D. Corder, commander of the 20th SOS. "But it's good training. We fly every day, with many of our missions at night using night vision goggles. The mission planning has to be exact, since there's lots of water out there and helicopters don't float."

That fact was tragically illustrated last January when one helicopter crashed at sea. Three Air Force crew members, one DEA agent, and one Bahamian policeman died.

Since Operation BAT began in



photo by PA1 Paul Powers

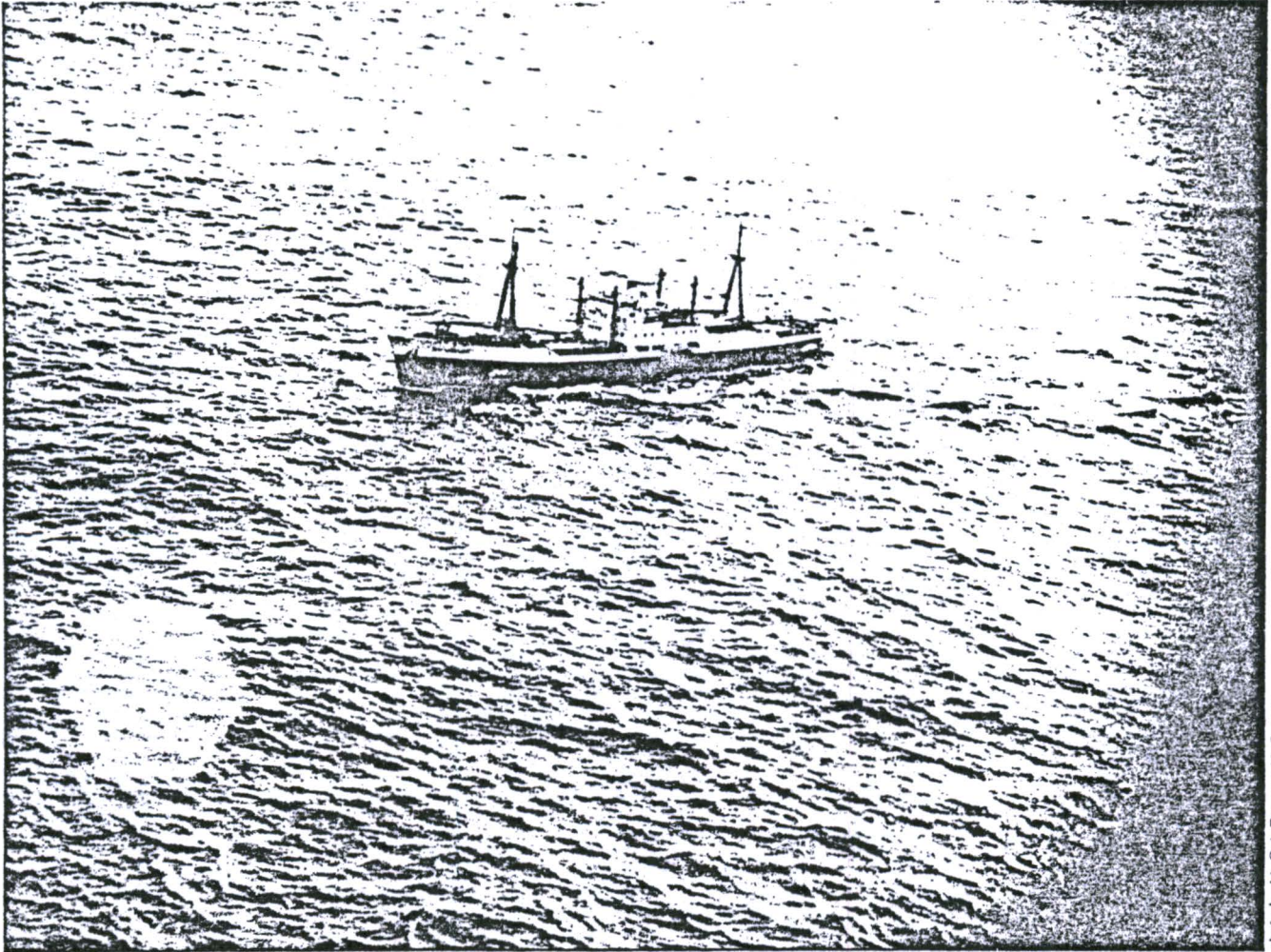


photo by Lt. Col. Thomas H. Gowdy

The Air Force Reserve made its biggest bust assist when a C-130 crew found this Honduran-registered ship carrying 43 tons of marijuana.

May 1983, 196,000 pounds of marijuana and 2,600 pounds of cocaine (as of May 3, 1984) with a street value of close to a billion dollars have been seized. Also confiscated: dozens of planes and boats, automatic weapons, night vision devices, and sophisticated radios. More than 80 persons have been arrested.

Many of the drug traffickers' aircraft are modified with long-range fuel tanks and powerful radios. Most are light, single-engine planes, but the Operation BAT crews routinely encounter larger, well-equipped multi-engine aircraft. Agents boarding one twin-engine DC-3 were astonished to find a color radar set capable of providing detailed weather and navigation information. Such radars are usually available only on much larger planes, such as commercial airliners and expensive corporate jets.

Other Air Force units are also trying to help hunt down drug traf-

fickers. Besides supporting Operation BAT, Military Airlift Command regularly uses WC-130 hurricane hunters and C-141s to look for druggers.

Tactical Air Command RF-4 aircrews pinpointed suspect ships during last year's Bold Eagle exercise, responding to a Coast Guard request for photo reconnaissance off the Florida coast.

"That's a good example of what we'll see develop in the future," said Lt. Col. Harvey Pothier, chief of the Anti-Drug Support Branch at Air Force headquarters.

"The RF-4s' prime mission was to support Bold Eagle. But they had cameras, were over water, and someone asked them to look down at certain coordinates. It didn't interfere with their mission, so why shouldn't they?"

In addition to AWACS assistance, TAC's four tactical air defense Regional Operations Control Centers furnish around-the-clock information to drug enforcement agencies. Balloon-borne radars providing low altitude surveillance of Florida, and 45 long-range radars throughout the United States are tied into the ROCCs. They form a

far-reaching network used both for military purposes and detecting suspected smugglers (see "Riding High, Aiming Low" on page 10).

Customs, recognizing the system's value, has assigned agents at two ROCCs to conduct surveillance and control operations alongside blue-suiters. The agents are also evaluating possible increased use of the network in their drug interdiction efforts.

Strategic Air Command B-52 "Busy Observer" maritime surveillance missions have also been used to hunt for suspected marijuana ships. Even Air Training Command, which conducts relatively few over-water flights, provided a T-43 with a cabin full of navigator students to search for two ships off the California coast.

Other services are heavily involved as well. The Navy provides both ships and aircraft, including E-2C radar planes, while the Marines have provided radars and OV-10 aircraft.

The Army has loaned fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters to Customs, including *Blackhawks*, *Cobras*, and *Hueys*. National Guard choppers, operating under state control, have



Photo by PA2 Tom Gillespie

been used extensively for transporting law enforcement officials during search and destroy missions against pot fields in California and Hawaii.

Fighting smugglers is nothing new to the Coast Guard, except that now its boarding parties can also operate from Navy ships. That cooperation proved especially effective last year, when one smuggler refused to stop his vessel. Under special rules limited to this form of naval assistance, the Navy fired 5-inch shells across his bow before Coast Guard .50-caliber machine gun rounds shut down his engine.

That there are "druggers" to catch at all is due to the enormous American appetite for illegal drugs. The demand and the dollars involved are staggering.

In the United States, the National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee's last estimate of \$79 billion generated every year by illicit drug sales is exceeded by the annual revenues of only one corporation: Exxon. Cocaine alone is a \$30 billion business, about three times as big as the recording and movie industries together. "Coke"

sells for around \$2,200 an ounce—six times the price of gold.

Marijuana use has increased 30-fold over the past two decades, according to a 1982 U.S. Public Health Service report. It added that more than a quarter of all Americans have used pot at some time, with the age for first use dropping into the junior high school years.

The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws claims that marijuana is currently the second-largest cash crop nationally, after corn and just ahead of soybeans.

Most alarming, say drug counselors, is the soaring popularity of cocaine. No longer the exotic indulgence of fast-lane *glitterati*, it is increasingly preferred as the casual drug of choice throughout middle-class America.

The number who have used this most lucrative of underworld commodities was estimated at 20 million and rising in 1983. Every day some 5,000 initiates sniff a line of coke for the first time. And its use has spawned a new corps of profoundly dependent users as numerous as heroin addicts.

Drug-related crime estimates run

as high as 60 percent. One study revealed that 243 male heroin addicts had committed nearly a half million crimes over 11 years. Billions in drug profits are also laundered to fund legitimate businesses controlled or owned by organized crime, or used to support illegal activities, including prostitution, loan sharking, and gun-running.

From the high-rises of Manhattan to the beach homes of Malibu, the race for the rush is on. And America pays through the nose. A 1977 government-sponsored study by the Research Triangle Institute examined the cost of drug abuse to the economy in terms of lost productivity, medical expenses, and crime. The 1983 national price tag, adjusted for inflation: \$25.8 billion.

Mathea Falco, former assistant secretary of state for International Narcotics Matters, wrote in the New York Times that drug trafficking is transforming whole Third World economies.

Colombia's marijuana and cocaine, she said, produce more foreign exchange than coffee and cut flowers, that nation's chief lawful exports.

In Jamaica, according to the DEA,

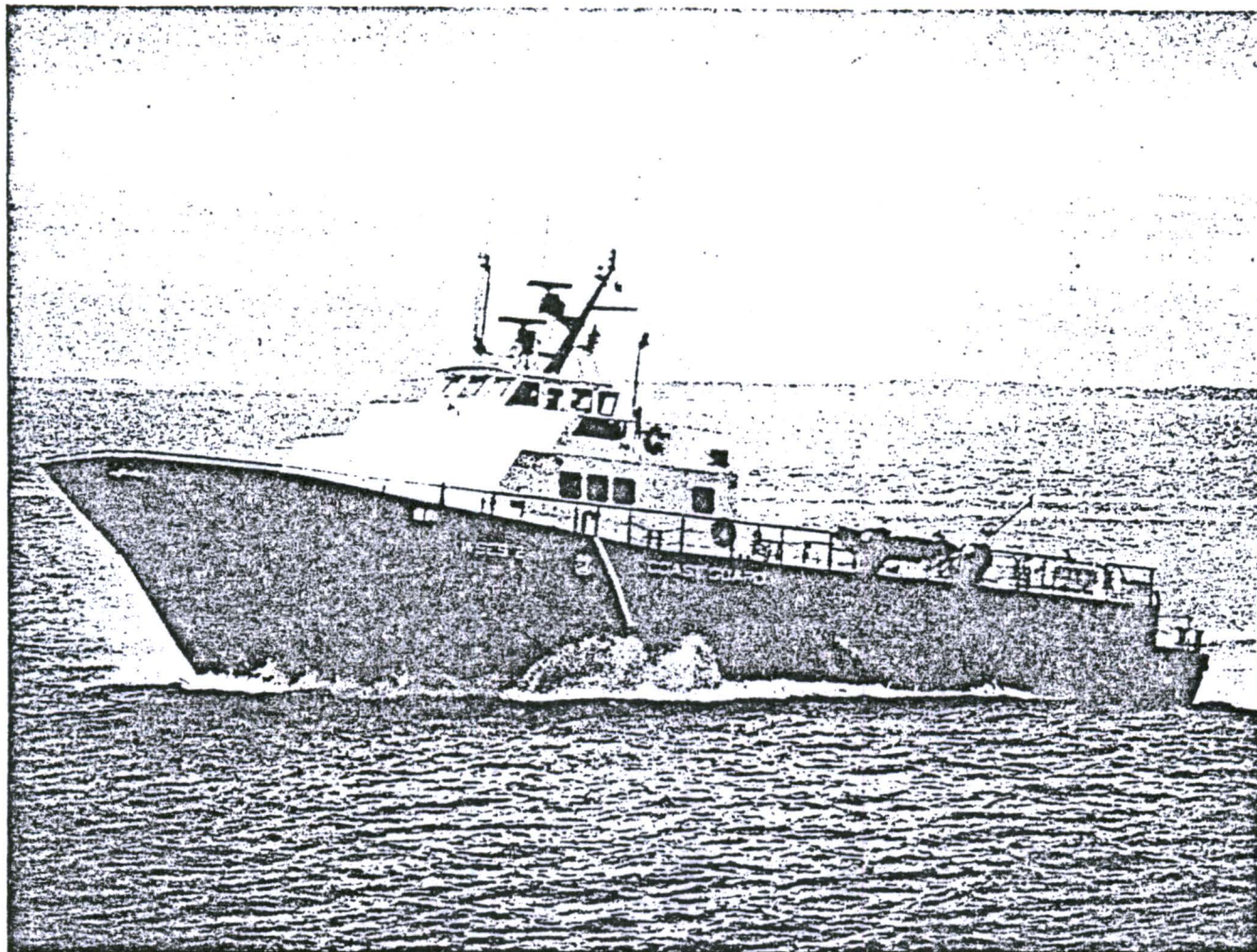


photo by PA3 Sean P. Smith

LEFT: Bales of seized marijuana are offloaded.

ABOVE: The Coast Guard's *Sea Hawk* ferries law enforcement-trained seamen to help stop drug smugglers in the Caribbean.

the annual \$1.2 billion pot trade accounts for more revenue than all other exports combined.

Who's doing the smuggling? The players in this grim game range from neophyte entrepreneurs to organized crime veterans. And the military has gained a grudging respect for their capabilities.

"They've [the druggers] hired some of the best and brightest talent we've seen in any criminal enterprise in a long time," Mr. McCoy said. "While that talent has been subverted by the drug kingpins, those people understand technology, organizations, and geopolitics, and how to weld together a tight, hardhitting, global operation."

Determined to hit back just as hard, President Reagan announced the establishment of the National Narcotics Border Interdiction Systems (NNBIS) on March 23, 1983.

"We must have a program that will relentlessly pursue the drug

smugglers wherever and however they try to bring illegal drugs into our country," the president said. "Paraphrasing Joe Louis, they can run but they will not be allowed to hide. Working together, we can drive drug smugglers out of the United States—and out of business."

The NNBIS coordinates the efforts of 31 federal agencies plus DOD in stopping the flow of narcotics into the country. Representatives from the Coast Guard, Customs, DEA, Navy, and Air Force staff regional offices in Miami, New Orleans, El Paso, Long Beach, Chicago, and New York.

"It's a real 'war' out there, not an exercise," said TSgt. Steve Krout, a command and control technician with the Long Beach NNBIS. "And I take real pride in knowing that I help stop some of those drugs."

A typical NNBIS request might come from Customs for more radar coverage in a particular area. An Air Force representative would canvass Air Force bases in his area to solicit any available support. Or, if the request was for finding a ship, nearby bases would be asked for aircraft that could survey the area

without interfering with the mission.

"We established NNBIS to make multi-agency efforts mutually supportive instead of independent," said Lt. Col. Joseph Zaderecky, special assistant to the vice-president for drug interdiction. "Rather than working harder alone, we're working smarter together by effectively using each other's resources."

Much of the NNBIS effort focuses on identifying and seizing ships; an estimated 60 percent of the marijuana coming into the United States arrives by sea. Ranging in size from 60 to 300 feet, these "mothership" freighters generally leave the north coast of Colombia heading for rendezvous off the U.S. coast.

"The mothership operates like a milkman," explains TSgt. Michael L. Sylvia Jr., an Air Force adviser at the New York NNBIS center. "It makes scheduled stops in the ocean. Smaller ships come out to load up, then the mothership moves on."

The milkman's schedule is frequently interrupted by Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard C-130 aircrews. An AFRES crew from Selfridge ANGB, Mich., made the Reserves' biggest bust assist

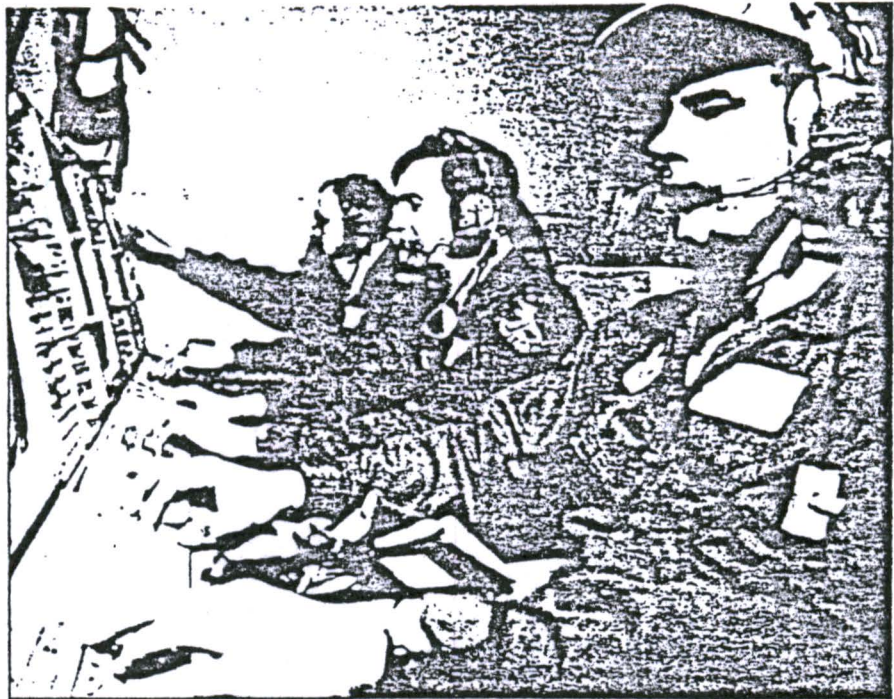
Stalking the Smuggler

Rules are few in the violent business of international drug trafficking. No quarter given; none sought; and no questions asked.

But the Air Force role in the war on drugs is tightly controlled by public law. Blue-suiters can provide information to civilian law enforcement agencies only if it doesn't interfere with normal military operations.

That assistance mostly involves monitoring the movements of ships and planes while keeping interested law enforcement agencies informed of their locations. The most common form of Air Force aid is using aircraft to search for vessels suspected of bringing drugs into the United States. Surveillance flights so far have been uneventful—safe for the aircrews. But officials don't discount the danger of attack by deadly serious drug traffickers.

"The aircrews' charter is not to fight a la Vietnam," said Lt. Col. Harvey Pothier, chief of the Anti-Drug Support Branch, headquarters USAF. "Rather than buzz a ship, for example, we want them to maintain



Hunting is safe inside an E-3, but flying low to identify ships may not be. If

druggers start shooting, says one officer, "we adios out of there."

minimum altitude, minimum separation, or even remain at medium altitude and use binoculars. We don't want anybody playing Johnny Hero."

Said Capt. Boyd Lease, who handles drug interdiction at headquarters, Military Airlift Command: "If the druggers start shooting, we adios out of there!"

Aircrews are forbidden to interdict—interrupt or impede—the pas-

sage of a vehicle, vessel, or aircraft. Nor can they perform surveillance on or pursue suspects.

"Our biggest challenge today is educating military people about what they can and cannot do under the law," Lt. Col. Pothier said. "But the indications from the field are that our people are eager to provide assistance within the ground rules. It's 'real-world' training, and it's meaningful." —Capt. Brian Hoey

when it found a Honduran mothership carrying 43 tons of pot 200 miles east of Charleston, S.C. In addition, an ANG aircrew from Westhampton Beach, N.Y., helped in a 16-ton seizure off Long Island.

Some smuggling techniques are ingenious. Traffickers have hidden coke inside cut flowers, pesticide shipments, and hollowed-out wooden cargo pallets. One fishing trawler crew made a marijuana pickup from a mothership off Boston, shoveled crushed ice on top of the bales, then covered the ice with fish caught on the way back to port.

The ruses don't always work. A plane trying to sneak through under the radar was discovered by a pair of F-106 interceptors scrambled from Tyndall AFB when the intruder couldn't be identified by the 23rd ROCC. One of the pilots reported that it began "snowing" over Florida when the panicked smuggler began dumping bags of cocaine out of the aircraft. Two Tyndall radar

experts testified against the smuggler, helping to convict him.

However clever, traffickers are equally ruthless. A smuggler's ground crew on a Georgia airstrip turned off the landing lights when they heard a Marine OV-10 following the aircraft they were awaiting. Low on fuel, the smuggler's aircraft tried to land. It exploded in a fireball.

"There's a reason drug trafficking pays well," said Brian Stickney, a DEA Latin American specialist. "To be a success, you have to kill off some people—if you're not killed yourself."

Mounting pressure in the South Florida area, at one time the site of 80 percent of all cocaine seizures in the world, has forced smugglers to change routes and tactics. In September 1983 a four-engine DC-6 loaded with 25,000 pounds of Colombian marijuana landed on a bulldozed airstrip in Utah. Waiting Customs agents were surprised to

find that 10 of the 11 people they arrested were from Florida.

"It was a one-way mission," Lt. Col. Pothier said. "They were abandoning the DC-6, loading up an 18-wheeler, and hauling the stuff to Florida, since that's still the major distribution center. That's more than twice the normal route, so we know we're making some headway."

Even with their success thus far, drug enforcement officials acknowledge that less than 15 percent of all drugs entering the country are intercepted. United Nations reports are even less encouraging, estimating that 10 percent may be an overly optimistic figure globally.

But the fighters in this war on drugs remain undaunted. Lt. Col. Corder best summed up their sentiments.

"Our guys are doing one hell of a job," he said. "Every time we get an aircraft or a ship out of the drug business, that's one load that doesn't make it into our country." —