

## SAC Bomb Comp – History Chronology and Factoids

Compiled from multiple sources by Lane Callaway, 8 AF/HO, February 2009

Historian's Note: There were small inconsistencies in data between the multiple sources used even for the same competitive year. However comparing and contrasting the available information yielded a consensus of data. When used the names of aircraft, awards and trophies are *italicized*. However, only a few major trophies are mentioned below. Notable achievements by Eighth Air Force (8 AF) units during the Bomb Comp are highlighted in blue color throughout.

### Executive Summary

**The Beginning:** The Strategic Air Command (SAC) was activated on 21 March 1946 and during its initial years of 1946 and 1947 faced multiple administrative challenges and manning and material shortages causing little time devoted to bombing practice, SAC's main mission at the time. As a consequence, bombing accuracy fell below desired standards. To motivate crews and develop a way for bomber units to improve their bombing accuracy, the then SAC Commander, General George C. Kenney and his Deputy Commander, Major General Clements McMullen, initiated a bombing tournament in 1948. The inaugural Bomb Comp in 1948 was such a success in producing a competitive spirit among crews and going towards improving bombing accuracy, the second Commander of SAC, General Curtis E. LeMay, made the competition an annual event beginning the following year in 1949.

**Names Through the Years:** For 1948 and 1949, the tournament was designated as the SAC Bombing Competition and subsequently from 1951 to 1992, changed to the SAC Bombing and Navigation Competition. The accepted shorthand name throughout the Air Force for this competition became "Bomb Comp". (Sometimes Bomb Comp was unofficially referred to as the "World Series of Bombing.")

**The Competitions:** Overtime SAC's Bomb Comp grew in its size and complexity. Through the success of Bomb Comp, SAC spawn several other competitions (i.e. navigation, aerial refueling, munitions loading to name some larger ones) to enhance readiness and proficiency of its units. Some of these spin-off competitions were based on the Bomb Comp's format but most came to be conducted independently of Bomb Comp itself. Nevertheless, the primary focus of SAC was on bombing with the other competitions initially conducted to showcase capabilities that supported bombing or later the larger SAC deterrence mission. From its earliest years through 1992, the last SAC Bomb Comp, the intention of the competition was to build morale, sharpen skills, and test crew skills and equipment under a demanding environment. During its 45-year time span from 1948 to 1992, only 34 competitions took place with the cancellation of any specific Bomb Comp noted below in the factoids. Bombing competitions hosted by the Royal Air Force (RAF) where SAC units participated are briefly noted to provide historical context. SAC's other large but non-bombing competitions like the Missile Competition/OLYMPIC ARENA (conducted 1967 through 1992) are not listed.

**Trophies:** It should be noted during this same period of 1948 to 1992, SAC aircraft crews were setting many world flying records and winning other awards like the coveted

*Mackay Trophy* for non-bombing aviation achievements (won 17 times by SAC during this time period). For Bomb Comp itself, the number of trophies grew with changes in names over the competition years. Criteria for an award or trophy also become altered due to technology change within SAC or desire by the leadership to emphasize a specific skill set. A list of trophies with winning units by year is in the Eighth Air Force History Office.

## Bomb Comp Chronology & Factoids

### 1948

20-27 June: First Bombing Competition held with three aircrews from ten B-29 bomber units from throughout SAC. The individual Bomb Groups (BG) selected its top three crews who engaged in competition at Castle AFB, CA. Each crew was scored on its accuracy in three visual and three radar bomb releases from an altitude of 25,000 feet. Eighth Air Force swept the first five places in the competition with its **43 BG** (B-50) taking the top unit honors and its **509 BG** (B-29) taking top crew honors.

### 1949

3-7 October: Second Bombing Competition conducted with 12 bomb groups (three B-36s, seven B-29s, and two B-50s) with competition headquarters at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ where B-29s and B-50s staged while the B-36s flew out of their home bases. Ground rules and bombing requirements were the same as in 1948 and the course length was approximately 1,200 miles. (During this Bomb Comp, General LeMay instituted "on-the-spot" temporary promotions and expanded this incentive in later competitions. These temporary promotions became closely associated with SAC combat crew duty and awarded to all members of a winning crew. Likewise, loss of temporary promotions by the entire crew followed if standards were not maintained.)

### 1950

No Bomb Comp held due to Korean War.

### 1951

13-18 August: Third Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition (name changed) saw an expansion. Some 45 crews representing 12 bomb wings (designation changed from groups) and three reconnaissance wings for SAC and two RAF B-29 crews competed. Stressing celestial navigation, SAC allowed reconnaissance wings to compete where navigation was included as a separate phase of Bomb Comp. Bombing competition included three visual bomb releases and four simulated bomb drops judged by radar bomb scoring (RBS). The navigation phase of Bomb Comp contained three night celestial legs composed of two distance-off problems and one control time problem. MacDill AFB, FL served as the Competition's headquarters and staging base for B-29s and B-50s while B-36s staged from Carswell AFB. The 1951 Bomb Comp was the first

to award the *Fairchild Trophy* (donated by Hughes Aircraft Company) recognizing the combined fields of bombing and navigation. Winning the first *Fairchild Trophy* was the [97 BW](#) (B-50) (8 AF). This Bomb Comp was also the first to award the *Navigation Trophy* for top score in navigation.

12-18 Dec: SAC participated in RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition. A combined SAC bomber team from both 9th Bomb Wing (BW) (B-29) and 301 BW (B-29) placed first in Visual Bombing.

## 1952

Historian's Note: 4 January, the USAF approved a unique emblem for the SAC. Winning design was submitted by the 92 BW.

July: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition with emphasis on visual bombing. SAC's [509 BW](#) (B-50) (8 AF) took second place.

13-18 October: Fourth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition involved 19 wings (10 B-29s, five B-50s, and four B-36s). Medium bombers (B-29s and B-50s) staged from Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ with heavy bombers (B-36s) from Walker AFB, AZ. RAF participated with two medium bombers and two heavy bombers. SAC modified the rules and wings were allowed only two crews instead of three like in previous years. Each crew flew three missions consisting of one visual RBS run, one visual bomb release, one night celestial navigation leg and one celestial navigation leg. Bombing was done at altitudes of 25-30,000 feet and each mission flown was approximately 2,600 nautical miles in length. For the *Fairchild Trophy*, Eighth Air Force's [97 BW](#) (B-50) and Fifteenth Air Force's 93 BW (B-50) tied resulting in VCINCSAC General Thomas S. Power flipping a coin to determine which unit would possess the trophy for the first six months – 93 BW won the flip.

24 October-1 November: First Reconnaissance, Photo, and Navigation Competition held with the [28th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing](#) (SRW), an RB-36 unit from Eighth Air Force being awarded the first *Paul T. Cullen Trophy*.

December: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition with emphasis on blind (or radar) bombing. SAC's 301 BW (B-29) won first place.

## 1953

September: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition with emphasis on visual bombing. The lone SAC participant did not place.

18-27 October: Second Reconnaissance, Photo, and Navigation Competition conducted with 14 crews representing seven wings (four RB-36s, one RB-50, one RB-29, one YRB-47). Trophy and winning unit: *Paul T. Cullen Award* – 5th SRW.

25-31 October: Fifth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition was the first time spare aircraft were prohibited placing emphasis on maintenance and the B-47 bomber made its maiden competition appearance. Two crews each from 17 bomb wings participated. Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ was the staging area for B-47s from seven wings with Walker AFB, AZ the site for the B-36s from four wings; B-50s from four wings; and B-29s from two wings. Each crew flew three missions consisting of two radar RBS runs, one visual RBS run, one visual bomb release and one celestial navigation leg. It should be noted the top places were taken by propeller-driven bombers with the B-47 best showing in ninth place.

November: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition with emphasis on blind bombing. SAC's 2 BW (B-50) won first place.

### 1954

9-14 August: Third Reconnaissance and Navigation Competition was held at Fairchild AFB, WA and included two crews from each participating wings with photo, navigation, and radar bombing as the competition's tasks. Four RB-36 wings and two RB-47 wings competed with the RB-36s sweeping the first place positions where they competed against the RB-47 jets.

23-29 August: Sixth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition observed same ground rules as in 1953 with 15 B-47 jet bomber wings staging out of Barksdale AFB, LA and six B-36 and two B-50 wings staging at Walker AFB, AZ. One RB-36 crew from the [28 SRW](#) was allowed to compete based on their outstanding performance in the earlier held Reconnaissance and Navigation Competition. The B-36 crews continued to dominate the Bomb Comp while the B-47 crews showed much improvement in their navigation although their bombing still lagged that of the B-36s. The *Fairchild Trophy* was won by [11 BW](#) (B-36) (8 AF). (Note: 8 AF's [28 SRW](#) tied for first place in the crew navigation portion of the competition.)

### 1955

Historian's Note – First B-52, #52-8711 was delivered to 93 BW at Castle AFB on 29 June 1955 and flown from the factory by Brig Gen Eubank, 93 BW's Commander.

24-30 August: Seventh Bombing and Navigation Competition had only two types of bombers participating, the propeller driven B-36 and jet-powered B-47 (B-50 bomber had been phased out of the bomber fleet). Two crews each from 23 B-47 wings staged at March AFB, CA with B-36s assembling at Fairchild AFB. This Bomb Comp was noted for the vast improvement made by B-47 crews.

24-30 September: Fourth Reconnaissance and Navigation Competition is noted for being an entirely RB-47 event with five wings sending a total of 15 crews competing at Lockbourne AFB, OH.

### 1956

Historian's Note – SAC is given responsibility to planning for the deployment of America's first land-based ballistic missile units.

24-30 August: Eighth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition is the largest Bomb Comp to date; the first competition combining navigation, bombing, and reconnaissance portions and the first including B-52 bombers participating. Two crews each represented 42 participating wings. Lockbourne AFB, OH hosted crews from 27 B-47 wings and five RB-47 wings while Loring AFB, ME staged crews from eight B/RB-36 wings and two B-52 wings. For the first time, RB-47 reconnaissance aircraft competed against bombers in bombing and navigation. Each crew flew three missions consisting of three radar RBS runs at 33,000 feet and a night celestial navigation leg. The RB-47s flew one aerial photo tri-camera IP run and large scale pinpoint photography run.

25 October-14 November: SAC conducted its first and only fighter competition under the name of Operation LEFT HOOK with five SAC F-84F fighter wings competing at Offutt AFB, NE. The 506th Strategic Fighter Wing from Tinker AFB, Oklahoma won the *Auton Trophy*. This SAC specific competition was no longer held when SAC disbanded its strategic fighter wings in 1957.

### 1957

Historian's Note – SAC institutes its one-third ground alert concept to counteract growing development of ICBMs by the Soviet Union.

30 October-5 November: Ninth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition continued combining bombing and reconnaissance competitions. Crews from 28 B-47 wings and five RB-47 wings launching from Pinecastle AFB, FL with five B-36 and five B-52 wings hosted at Carswell AFB, TX. Additionally the RAF fielded two each *Vulcan* and two *Valiant* bombers and crews for Bomb Comp. Each participating crew flew three missions consisting of three radar RBS runs, a night celestial navigation legs and an aerial pinpoint run. All bombing runs were made at 33,000 feet. The B-47 wings swept all major events except for one B-36 wing winning the crew and wing navigation contests. The *Colonel Michael N. W. McCoy Trophy* was a one-time award for the Best B-47 wing with the highest combined score in bombing and navigation.

### 1958

Historian's Note – SAC's slogan, "*Peace is Our Profession*" was adopted. Brig Gen Eubank (93 BW Commander) achieves a flight record in the new KC-135.

14-20 May: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition with SAC's 6 BW (B-52) winning Best Unit Award in Bombing & Navigation; Best Crew Award in Bombing; and Best Crew Award in Bombing & Navigation.

13-18 October: Tenth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition featured four crews each from 38 SAC wings (two B-36s, 26 B-47s, one RB-47, 10 B-52s) and eight RAF crews flying *Valiants*. The B-47s, RB-47s and *Valiants* staged at March AFB with the B-36s and B-52s at Castle AFB. Each crew flew one mission consisting of three bombing runs and a night celestial navigation leg. The 1958 Bomb Comp was dominated by B-47 crews. (Note: the *Paul T. Cullen Award* was not awarded in 1958 and discontinued until reappearing again in 1972.)

### 1959

25-30 October: Eleventh Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition is the largest ever held and the first one where air refueling squadrons were allowed to participate. Two crews each from 47 participating bomb wings and 47 tanker squadrons competed. McCoy AFB, FL was the staging site for 27 B-47s and 20 B-52s with 27 KC-97s and 20 KC-135s operating out of Homestead AFB, FL. Each crew flew one mission consisting of aerial refueling, celestial navigation leg, and three radar RBS bombing runs.

### 1960

Historian's Note – The Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff was established to create and maintain the Single Integrated Operational Plan among all the U.S. armed services. The new staff was co-located with SAC with CINCSAC as its Director. Also SAC's airborne command post began testing.

1-3 May: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition with SAC's 6 BW (B-52) winning the Best Unit Award in Combined Bombing & Navigation, Best Crew Award in Bombing, and Best Crew Award in Bombing and Navigation.

12-15 September: Twelfth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition is the first one where B-58 bombers participated and the *Saunders Trophy* (for tanker units) was first awarded. The official name of the 1960 event was called "Combat Competition" however this name never took hold. This Bomb Comp saw a change in format change. Each Numbered Air Force (NAF) under SAC held a preliminary competition to thin out the field of participants. Each NAF was represented by crews from two B-52 wings, two B-47 wings, two KC-135 squadrons, and two KC-97 squadrons. The 43 BW represented the new B-58 *Hustler* bomber with an extra KC-135 squadron allowed to enter for the Air Force's newest bomber. Bergstrom AFB, TX was the staging area for the 13 bomb wings and 13 tanker squadrons. The mission for both bombers and tankers included a scramble for alert posture. The bombers specifically conducted an aerial refueling, celestial navigation, high altitude RBS run, one EMC run, one low

altitude navigation leg termination with a low level RBS run. The *Fairchild Trophy* was won by the [4137th Strategic Wing](#) (SW) (B-52) (8 AF).

### 1961

Historian's Note – President Kennedy directs SAC to implement a 15-minute ground alert for 50 percent of its bomber and tanker fleet. SAC's airborne command post (*Looking Glass*) begins continuous operations. The XB-70 *Valkyrie* replacement bomber for the B-52 was cancelled by the Kennedy Administration.

16-22 September: Thirteenth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition followed the format used in the previous year with NAFs determining participants, however, more categories were include – alert exercise, bombing, navigation, electronic counter-measures, air refueling, pilot techniques, and munitions loading – to determine the specific winner of the *Fairchild Trophy*. Participants included 12 bomb wings (six B-52s, six B-47s) and 12 refueling squadrons (six KC-135s, six KC-97s) and hosted by Fairchild AFB with each participating wing and the KC-135 squadrons entering two crews each. The two B-58 wings did not participate due to training conflicts. The KC-97 squadrons entered four crews each and teamed as pairs.

### 1962

Historian's Note: All bomber production for the USAF ends with delivery of the last B-52 and B-58 marking the first time since 1946, there was no bomber being produced or developed for SAC.

No Bomb Comp held by SAC due to Cuban Missile Crisis.

### 1963

No competitions due to increased operational commitments and cost reductions programs. The *Fairchild* and *Saunders Trophies* were awarded respectively to the outstanding bomb wing and air refueling squadron based on their combat capability records. A special board composed of the Deputy Commander from 2 AF, 8 AF, and 15 AF examined records and made the selections.

### 1964

Historian's Note: SAC tankers are used for the first time to support combat operations in Southeast Asia (SEA). No competitions due to increased SAC tanker support to tactical aerial operations in SEA and cost reductions programs. Similar to 1963, the *Fairchild* and *Saunders Trophies* were awarded by the NAF's Deputy Commanders respectively to the outstanding bomb wing and air refueling squadron based on their combat capability records.

## 1965

Historian's Note: B-52s begin *Arc Light* combat missions in South Vietnam.

12-18 October: Fourteenth Annual Bombing Competition was held at Fairchild AFB with a modified format with one crew and aircraft from each of the 44 participating wings (two B-58s; five B-47s; 37 B-52s). This is the last year for B-47s participating and although aerial tankers did not compete, the tanker trophy was awarded. Each participating crew flew a six hour mission consisting of on-time takeoff, night celestial navigation, one low altitude navigation leg, and two bomb runs (total of four simulated radar releases).

Historian's Note: Spot promotions program begun in 1949 by General LeMay to award individuals and crews for Bomb Comp achievements was terminated.

## 1966

2-8 October: Fifteenth Annual Bombing Competition held again at Fairchild AFB with one crew and aircraft from 35 B-52 wings and two B-58 wings. Aerial tankers again did not compete. The RAF was represented by three crews flying the *Vulcan* bomber. Each completing crew flew two missions consisting of on-time takeoff, night celestial navigation, two low altitude bombing runs (four releases) and one high altitude bombing run (two releases). General David Wade, Commander of Eighth Air Force coined the motto, "Not to Win is a Very Bad Thing" – and with this encouragement 8 AF dominated the Bomb Comp capturing the first four places in the overall competition with its [19 BW](#) (B-52) (8 AF) taking the *Fairchild Trophy*.

## 1967

Historian's Note: SAC commitments of B-52s and KC-135s to the war in SEA impacted on its primary mission of deterrence resulting in only @40 percent of its bomber force contributing to the deterrence role. SAC also instituted its first annual Missile Competition/OLYMPIC ARENA modeled after the Bomb Comp format.

13-15 March: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing Competition. No trophies were won by SAC crews.

Bomb Comp: Scheduled for October, the Bomb Comp was cancelled in August due to operational commitments and training requirements. The *Fairchild* and *Saunders Trophies* were not awarded.

## 1968

No Bomb Comp held by SAC due to operational commitments in Southeast Asia and training requirements. The *Fairchild* and *Saunders Trophies* were not awarded for either year. For 1968, no missile competition was held as well.



## 1969

Historian's Note: First FB-111A (#67-7193) was delivered to SAC. Air Force requested contractors' proposal for what would become the B-1 bomber.

5-15 October: Sixteenth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition held at Fairchild AFB with one aircraft and aircrew from 22 B-52 bomb wings, two B-58 wings, and three RAF crews flying the *Vulcan* participating. Due to conventional bombing operations in SEA, three B-52 wings from 8 AF and one from 2 AF did not participate. Two missions were flown with each mission consisting of on-time take off, high altitude celestial navigation, and two each low and high altitude bomb releases.

## 1970

Historian's Note – 8 AF was deployed from Westover AFB to Andersen AFB, Guam to oversee bomber operations in SEA. B-58 bombers were retired out of the USAF. SAC revived the *Paul T. Cullen Award* for best reconnaissance unit and for the trophy to become a rotating award and presented to the reconnaissance unit that contributed most to SAC's photographic and signal intelligence efforts (but not awarded until 1972).

May 1970: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition. A SAC combined team composed of crews from three bomb wings won the *Blue Steel Trophy*, an inter-air force award for best combined scores in bombing and navigation.

15-20 November: Seventeenth Bombing and Navigation Competition saw the first appearance of FB-111s; the re-appearance of tanker squadrons; criteria for the *Fairchild* and *Saunders Trophies* was changed; and the *Mathis Trophy* (bomber crew with the best score) was awarded for the first time. One bomber with its crew each from 23 B-52 wings; two FB-111 crews from the 340 BG; and three RAF crews with their *Vulcan* bombers were hosted at McCoy AFB, FL. Tanker participants staged out of their home bases. Three missions were flown covering navigation, aerial refueling and daylight high and low altitude simulated bomb releases.

## 1971

Historian's Note: A new non-Bomb Comp trophy was introduced to recognize the outstanding wing in SAC, the first ever *Omaha Trophy* went to the 93 BW (B-52).

17-24 April 1971: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition. The 340 BG and 509 BW both sent FB-111s for demonstration only. SAC's 410 BW (B-52) won the *Blue Steel Trophy*.

12-17 December: Eighteenth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition – called for the first time GIANT VOICE – was held at McCoy AFB with one aircraft and one aircrew from 54 units (22 B-52s; 30 KC-135s, two FB-111s) participating along with three RAF

crews flying *Vulcans*. Three missions were flown covering navigation by bombers, aerial refueling by tankers, and finally bomb release at high and low altitudes.

### 1972

Historian's Note – Operation LINEBACKER II strategic air campaign against the heartland of North Vietnam involved a heavy use of B-52s and FB-111s.

Bomb Comp: Was cancelled due to the heavy commitments of B-52s in SEA.

4-20 May: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition. SAC's 28 BW (B-52) won the *Blue Steel Trophy*.

### 1973

Bomb Comp: SAC planned to resume the Bomb Comp but in June cancelled the event due to commitments in SEA. SAC's bombing operations in SEA ended August 1973.

29 April-5 May: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition. No trophies won by SAC, the poorest showing since the 1967 competition.

### 1974

Historian's Note – First B-1 flight. SAC renewed the Bomb Comp after years of cancellations. Congressman Les Aspin (D-WI) criticizes SAC for conducting its competitions citing them as a waste of taxpayer's money with no benefit the command's mission or national security.

10-16 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Nineteenth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE renewed with several firsts – first time held at Barksdale AFB, LA; first time Tactical Air Command (TAC) participated; and first time to include a munitions loading competition to recognize those who make flight operations possible with sub-categories as Best Munitions Load Crew and Best Bomber Crew Chief. (Beginning 1975, the munitions loading competition is conducted independent of the Bomb Comp.) The Bomb Comp featured 20 B-52 wings, two FB-111 wings, and 27 tanker squadrons from SAC; two F-111 aircraft and crews from TAC; and four RAF *Vulcan* bombers and crews. The *Fairchild Trophy* was taken by 380 BW (FB-111) (8 AF). The *General William J Crumm Memorial (Linebacker) Trophy* was introduced in 1974 to perpetuate the memory of B-52 crews killed in action in Southeast Asia and to recognize the B-52 unit in Bomb Comp compiling the most points. The *Crumm Trophy* was donated to SAC by Boeing Aerospace Company.

## 1975

Historian's Note: 8 AF (flag only) moves from Guam to Barksdale AFB and takes the place of the inactivating 2 AF. A new trophy was introduced to recognize the best refueling unit. The *Spatz Trophy* was donated by TAC to SAC and the first recipient was the 11 AREFS (KC-135). SAC conducted two competitions and one competition-like event in 1975.

30 September-2 October: Bomb Comp was cancelled in response to the criticism of Congressman Aspin. CINCSAC replaced it with Operation HIGH NOON, an exercise designed to test the command's capability in performing contingency operations on short notice. Participation in HIGH NOON included 21 bomb wings from SAC; six F-111s from TAC; and four RAF *Vulcans*. This exercise contained three scenarios – No-Notice Tasking; Quick Target Study; and Home Station Launch –to more closely match a unit taking to an actual contingency. The B-52s and KC-135 crews of the 92 BW took top honors. (Operation HIGH NOON only applies to the 1975 Bomb Comp.)

7-15 October: SAC Munitions Loading Competition conducted at Ellsworth AFB featured security forces participating for the first time (for Best Security Police Team) added to the original two categories from 1974. (Note: Some sources reference this competition has "Load Comp".)

## 1976

Historian's Note: SAC celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Beginning with the 1976 Bomb Comp and lasting until 1992, flying operations were flown out of the participating units' home base with the competition symposium and awards ceremony conducted at Barksdale AFB, LA. Ergo, the dates for Bomb Comp beginning in 1976 reflect the dates the Competition's symposium and awards ceremony was held at Barksdale.

5-14 April: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition. The 320 BW (B-52) won both the *Blue Steel Trophy* and the *Camrose Trophy* (for best score in bombing). The 1976 RAF bomb comp was the first time a SAC unit had won the *Camrose Trophy*.

6-7 October (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Twentieth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE was conducted under a revised format divided into three phases. First phase was conducted between July and August by each participating CONUS-based wing at its home station. This first phase was an in-unit mini-competition to select the top three aircrews plus a "wild card" crew. Next phase was a semifinal round conducted between 27 and 30 September to select the top two crews. Also four RAF *Vulcan* aircraft and crews participated during this semifinal phase staging out of Barksdale AFB. Final round was conducted between 4 and 5 October, at each wing's home station with the top two aircrews competing per wing and again the four RAF bombers flew the competition out of Barksdale. The *Fairchild Trophy* was taken by [380 BW](#) (FB-111) (8 AF). The *General John C. Meyer Memorial Trophy*

(donated by General Dynamics Corporation) was introduced to recognize the F/FB-111 unit in Bomb Comp compiling the most points.

27 September-6 October: SAC Munitions Loading Competition conducted at Ellsworth AFB introduced the *Chief Master Sergeant Wilbur R. Barrentine Memorial Munitions Loading Trophy* to denote the bomb wing with the top munitions loading score. First recipient of the *Barrentine Trophy* was 7 BW (B-52). The competition in 1976 went to a five award format that remained until the last munitions competition in 1989. The five awards included: *Barrentine Trophy*, *Best Munitions Loading Crew Trophy*, *Best Combined Load Crew Trophy*, *Best Security Police Team Trophy*, and *Best Bomber Crew Chief*. Beginning in 1976, Ellsworth AFB became the home for the Munitions Loading comp for the next 10 years with the awards ceremony held at Barksdale.

### 1977

Historian's Note: President Carter cancels contract for a new aerial refueling aircraft as well as the B-1 bomber. Nevertheless, a tanker/cargo aircraft was acquired adapting the commercial DC-10 for these roles.

9-17 May: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition. SAC units failed to win any trophies.

June-September: Twenty-first Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE was conducted in three phases. In-unit competition was held 1 June through 31 August. The second phase had four bomb and two tanker crews from each unit competing between 13 and 16 September. The final phase was held between 21 and 23 September with two crews each representing 18 bomb wings and 24 tanker units. Two crews each from TAC F-111 wings and the RAF *Vulcans* also participated. There was a two firsts for the 21<sup>st</sup> Bomb Comp, participation by three USAFR units and a new trophy was added. The *Doolittle Trophy*, donated by Rockwell International recognized the top score in low-level bombing by a B-52 unit. First recipient of the *Doolittle Trophy* was the 379 BW (B-52) (8 AF). The *Fairchild Trophy* was taken again by 380 BW (FB-111) (8 AF).

13-20 September: SAC's Munitions Loading Competition held.

### 1978

Historian's Note: Marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SAC's Bomb Comp.

26 June-3 July: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition. No trophies for SAC participants.

15-22 August: SAC's Munitions Loading Competition held.

23-25 October: Twenty-second Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE was the first one where overseas-based units could participate. Participation by 18 CONUS-based B-52 and FB-111 wings with one aircraft and crew per wing; one crew from the 43rd Strategic Wing at Anderson AFB, Guam; and one RAF Vulcan crew also participated. A total of 25 CONUS-based KC-135 units and one tanker squadron from Kadena AB, Okinawa participated. A pair of TAC's F-111s participated along with eighth Air National Guard and two USAFR KC-135s. The completion was conducted between 18 and 19 October with a competition symposium held at Barksdale between 23 and 25 October. Two new trophies were added in 1978. The *General Russell E. Dougherty Short Range Attack Missile Trophy* (donated by the Boeing Company) recognized the best score for a B-52 or FB-111 crew in a simulated short range attack missile (SRAM) launching. The second trophy added was the *Major James F. Bartsch Electronic Warfare Trophy* (donated by the Association of Old Crows) to recognize the wing compiling the highest scores in electronic countermeasures events. Also Barksdale AFB became the official headquarters for Bomb Comp since several of the competition's symposiums and award ceremonies had been hosted by the base; the base was home base for the Bomb Comp's official scoring unit (1st Combat Evaluation Group); and Barksdale normally hosted RAF participating units. The *Fairchild Trophy* was taken for fourth time in a row by the [380 BW](#) (FB-111) (8 AF).

### 1979

20-28 June: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition. No trophies for SAC participants.

27-29 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Twenty-Third Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE was conducted using the three phased format but with additional tasks. Saw a new dimension of realism with participation by the Air Defense Tactical Air Command (ADTAC) attempting to intercept penetrating bombers. Participating SAC, TAC, ANG and USAFR units respectively selected their top three crews during the first phase of the competition. The second or semifinal phase had these top crews compete against each other with winners advancing to the final phase. Performance requirements for both the semifinal and final phase included for bombers – one high altitude simulated bomb release; one ECM target defense run; one ECM missile defense run; two low altitude multiple bomb/SRAM releases; one fighter interceptor exercise (semifinal only); and one refueling exercise. For the participating tankers – one orbit exercise with a time and position score; two night celestial navigation exercises; one on-course rendezvous exercise; and one air refueling exercise. The RAF participated in this Bomb Comp but unclear if only in the third phase. This was the first Bomb Comp where three major trophies were won by non-SAC units. However, the top award, the *Fairchild Trophy* was won by the [509 BW](#) (FB-111) (8 AF).

10-19 September: SAC's Munitions Loading Competition held.

## 1980

Historian's Note: The Joint Strategic Connectivity Staff was created to oversee the strategic command, control and communications systems linking the National Command Authorities with U.S. nuclear forces. CINCSAC is the director. SAC also creates the Strategic Projection Force composed of conventional weapon bombers, tankers, reconnaissance and C<sup>3</sup> aircraft as the contribution to President Carter's forming the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force.

21-29 July: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition – GIANT STRIKE V. No trophies for SAC participants.

8-17 September: SAC's Munitions Loading Competition/GIANT SWORD held.  
Historian's Note: First time the Load Comp was officially connected to the name GIANT SWORD although this exercise name seemed to have been used in previous Load Comps.

18-20 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Twenty-fourth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE marked the first year of participation by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and a new trophy was introduced. CONUS-based units from SAC (B-52s, FB-111s, KC-135s), TAC (F-111s), ANG and USAFR (KC-135s), RAF (*Vulcan* bombers), and RAAF (F-111s). (The RAAF decided to participate every other year.) SAC bomber and tanker units overseas were excluded. Awarded for the first time was the *General Curtis E. LeMay Bombing Trophy* (donated by Norden Systems of United Technologies) to recognize the bomber crew with the most points in high and low-level bombings. The *LeMay Bombing Trophy* replaced the old *Bombing Trophy* began in 1949.

## 1981

Historian's Note: President Reagan directs the deployment of the B-1 bomber and the development of a future radar-evading stealth bomber. First air launched cruise missile delivered to the USAF.

6-14 July: SAC participated in the RAF Strike Command's Bombing and Navigation Competition – GIANT STRIKE XI. No trophies for SAC participants.

12-22 September: SAC's Munitions Loading and Security Competition/GIANT SWORD held.

18 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Twenty-fifth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE was the first year KC-10 aerial tankers participated. The Bomb Comp was held in two phases, including in-unit competition from 1 May to 15 September and then the second phase in early November. Only CONUS-based SAC units participated in this Bomb Comp with participating units sending two B-52s or FB-111 and crews. Tanker units from the ANG and USAFR

participated. Interceptor fighters for the second phase were provided by ADTAC. The RAF missed this Bomb Comp and the next two due to its continuing conversion to the *Tornado* aircraft. The *Fairchild Trophy* was taken by the [509 BW](#) (FB-111) (8 AF).

### 1982

13-21 September: SAC's Combat Weapons Loading Competition/GIANT SWORD held with a name change from "munitions" to "combat weapons".

22-24 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Twenty-sixth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE saw a format change with the first phase being an in-unit evaluation of planning and execution of missions similar to Emergency War Order implementation mission resulting in the top two bomber and tanker crews selected. The first phase was conducted from February to September. Final competition conducted 1-8 November decided the winning units. Participants included SAC bomb and tanker units, ANG, USAF, RAAF (F-111s), and Air Defense Tactical Air Command with its fighter interceptor squadrons. For the first time KC-10 tanker units competed for trophies. Two new trophies were introduced. The *General John D. Ryan EWO Bombing Trophy* (donated by Boeing Aircraft) to recognize the best B-52 bombing score (to resolve inequitable competition in bombing accuracy between B-52s and FB-111s). The *McDonnell Douglas Trophy* – in 1986 renamed the *Richard H. Ellis KC-10 Trophy* – was donated by McDonnell Douglas to recognize the best active duty or reserve KC-10 tanker squadron. The *Fairchild Trophy* was taken by the [509 BW](#) (FB-111) (8 AF).

### 1983

20-27 September: SAC's Combat Weapons Loading Competition/GIANT SWORD held.

8-10 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Twenty-seventh Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE conducted using the same format as in 1982. Participants included all but two SAC bomber wings, TAC (F-111s), ANG (KC-135s), and USAFR (KC-135s). NORAD provided fighter interceptors during the second phase including aircraft from the Royal Canadian Air Force. The *Fairchild Trophy* went to the [509 BW](#) (FB-111) (8 AF) for the third straight year.

### 1984

Historian's Note: SAC receives its first re-engined KC-135.

20-27 September: SAC's Combat Weapons Loading Competition/GIANT SWORD held and for the first time featured the air launched cruise missiles as a competitive loading event.

31 October (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Twenty-eighth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/ GIANT VOICE saw the first appearance of USAFE. This Bomb

Comp was the first one to use inert practice bombs dropped on the Nellis Range during the in-unit conducted first phase. Participants included 15 SAC units (B-52s and tankers), TAC (F-111s), USAFE (F-111s), ANG and USAFR (KC-135s), RAAF (F-111s), and the return of the RAF flying the new *Tornado* fighter-bomber (supported by the RAF *Victor* tanker). NORAD provided fighter interceptor aircraft. And the Competition Headquarters at Barksdale AFB was renamed Hoban Hall in honor of Lt Gen Richard M. Hoban, a former 8 AF Commander who had refurbished the building as the permanent home of Bomb Comp. The *Fairchild Trophy* was won by the [380 BW](#) (FB-111) (8 AF) – the only SAC unit to win the top trophy five times. A new major trophy, the *General Bennie L. Davis Trophy* (donated to SAC by the Chamber of Commerce of Memphis, TN) was introduced to recognize the most improved unit in the Bomb Comp versus the last year's competition's results. .

### 1985

Historian's Note: First B-1B bomber (#83-0065) was delivered to SAC.

19-26 September: SAC's Combat Weapons Loading Competition/GIANT SWORD held. For 1985, [Eighth Air Force](#) swept the competition.

12-14 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Twenty-ninth Bombing and Navigation Competition/ GIANT VOICE became the second time since 1974 that a B-52 unit won the top trophy. Previously FB-111 units with more modern avionics equipment had a string of top wins but the B-52 fleet had undergone an avionics upgrade to facilitate the new air-launched cruise missile system thus equalizing the competitive field. Participants included 15 SAC bomber and tanker units, TAC (F-111s), ANG and USAFR (tanker units), and RAF *Tornados* (supported by RAF *Victor* tankers). Bomber competition was conducted in two phases with the first phase consisting of a day and night missions with the second phase a mission through the Nellis AFB Red Flag Range. Fighter interceptors were provided by NORAD. The *Fairchild Trophy* was won by the [97 BW](#) (B-52) (8 AF).

### 1986

Historian's Note: 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SAC and 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Looking Glass*. The B-1B bomber reaches Initial Operational Capability with 12 of the new bombers assuming alert status.

18-25 September: SAC's Combat Weapons Loading Competition/GIANT SWORD moved from Ellsworth AFB to Fairchild AFB.

27-29 October (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Thirtieth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/GIANT VOICE where the 92 BW (B-52) dominated the competition taking nine trophies. SAC competitors included 16 bomb and 11 tanker units and F-111s from TAC participated. First Bomb Comp since 1983 without foreign participation. Due to one bomber wing (the 92 BW) winning nine awards within one



competition, the rules were changed to exclude aircraft specifically modified for the competition and the SAC Operations Staff would henceforth select the competing crews, not the wings. The Navigation Trophy began in 1951 was renamed the Bruce K. Holloway Trophy to recognize the top score in navigation during Bomb Comp.

### **1987**

Historian's Note: General Chain, CINCSAC, testifies before Congress stressing the need for strategic modernization of both nuclear and conventional capabilities. B-1B bomber sets many world aviation records.

19-26 September: SAC's Combat Weapons Loading Competition/GIANT SWORD returns to Ellsworth AFB.

23-25 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Thirty-first Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition would the last year the exercise name of GIANT VOICE is associated with the Bomb Comp.

### **1988**

SAC's Combat Weapons Loading Competition/GIANT SWORD cancelled due to funding restrictions.

3 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Thirty-second Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/PROUD SHIELD 88 had several firsts with EC-135s eligible to compete; F-111 crews could compete for the *Fairchild Trophy*; and B-1B crews could compete. A new trophy was added called the *Billy Mitchell Trophy* to recognize the bomber unit with the top scores in conventional bombing accuracy, survival in an electronic countermeasures environment, and avoiding intercepting fighters. (Since B-1B units had at the time a nuclear mission, they could not compete for the *Mitchell Trophy*. Also KC-135s were allowed to compete in the KC-135 phase since these special purpose aircraft still had the capability for in-flight refueling.)

### **1989**

Historian's Note: The LeMay Strategic Warfare Center was activated at Ellsworth AFB.

Mid-August: SAC's Combat Weapons Loading Competition/GIANT SWORD conducted at Fairchild AFB marking the first competition of B-1B wings. (This was the last year for "Load Comp".)

6-8 November (symposium at Barksdale AFB): Thirty-third Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/PROUD SHIELD 89 was the first year a B-1B unit took the *Fairchild Trophy*. A new trophy, the *Maynard "Snuffy" Smith B-52 Gunnery Trophy* was awarded for the first time to recognize the top scoring B-52 unit in gunnery and fighter defense activity.

## **1990**

Bomb Comp, SAC Combat Weapon Loading Competition, SAC Reconnaissance Competition, all cancelled for Operation DESERT STORM.

## **1991**

Bomb Comp, SAC Combat Weapon Loading Competition, SAC Reconnaissance Competition, all cancelled for Operation DESERT STORM.

## **1992**

Historian's Note: SAC in inactivated on 1 June 1992.

April: Thirty-fourth Annual Bombing and Navigation Competition/PROUD SHIELD 92 was the last Bomb Comp conducted by SAC. Similar to the most recent Bomb Comps, PROUD SHIELD 92 was conducted in phases. First phase involved KC-10 cargo unloading and unloading exercise on 8 April. The flying portion took place between 13 and 15 April with 21 SAC units (B-52s, B-1s, KC-135s, EC-135s, and KC-10s); five USAFR units (KC-135s, KC-10s); nine ANG units (KC-135s); and a KC-10 squadron from TAC. For each day of competition bombers and tankers launched from their respective bases in two-ship cells and proceed to a common point in north-central Nebraska. Bombers and tankers would pair up and conduct air refueling over western Nebraska and Wyoming where scoring took place. Afterwards tankers and EC-135s headed towards orbit and day celestial navigation competition in northern Montana before recovering to their respective bases. After refueling, bombers entered the Utah Test and Training Range and performed two single weapon releases at 20,000 feet. Descending to 300-500 feet, the bombers would perform terrain avoidance and two low-level drops at two different complexes while avoiding SAM and antiaircraft threats. The last recipient of the *Fairchild Trophy* was 92 BW (B-52).

## **1994**

First and only Bomb Comp conducted by Air Combat Command.