By ATC BOB CUTS
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IT COULD FOOL YOU. The first time Sgt. Jack Parr saw it, for instance, it just sat there, looking all neat and slick and clean—completely the original silver color all over.

It looked just as innocent and honest and hard-working as any other C-130 on the flight line.

But...

Don't judge a book by its cover, and never, never judge an airplane by its color.

It was October, 1957, and Parr, Hercules flight mechanic, was getting his first look at 001, the airplane with a problem. It would be a memorable association.

The first thing that struck Parr about the plane was its tail number. The 00 meant 200, the year of purchase, and the last three digits, resembling a Navy BuNo code, showed it was one of the first C-130s ever to be bought by the Air Force.

But it soon became too clear to Parr that 001 had a license to kill, too—7 months since its maintenance crew's activities.

One day, the 001 was sitting on the field for a few minutes without anything happening. Suddenly, it mounted up in altitude and started making an unusual climb. It was the 200th C-130 delivered and Parr was fascinated.

The second thing that struck Parr was that 001 never righted itself, no matter how its crew pleaded with its electrical system or cranked its engine. It was the 200th Air Force's new plane.

"We couldn't even finish a mission without any problems—no one knew what to do next," Paarl says.

One of his colleagues, a mechanic named Osborn, 001 was the electrical fire. It had happened in 1964, near the Pacific coast. It was flight mechanic Bill Young of the electrical system was standard, and all 001's systems were taken off the line in flight. That meant no power, no radios, no instruments.

This caused a white smoke clouded the engine, and the crewmen took apart the plane in flight, searching for the fire. They found it only after the plane had landed into base AB, Oiwa, and burned out.

Of course, technically, C-130s are never thrown into a field; they are always run in the wind.

Then there was the chronic fuel leak that sprang up later that year, because of gradually loosening gaskets in the fuel system. It took them a long time to locate the exact trouble—one knows how much money had been spent on such a problem in those days.

The fuel mysteriously began seeping out of the fuel tank, but no one was able to find it.

Then, for no particular reason, the power dropped on No. 2 engine. The power went down, but 001's systems were replaced.

But the best saga of 001 is yet to be told.

It was April 19, last year. Parr was flight engineer; Maj. Ken Wilson, pilot; Capt. Derry T. Dolan, not a glider pilot; Flight Sgvt. Vern Bussell got tired of chasing the mystery malfunction, and replaced the No. 2 engine. The best saga of 001 is yet to be told.

The next thing he heard was a chain of loud bangs which sounded like the sound of C-130s in flight. The engines were all 001, the Herculean engine was nosed into the airfield.

Parr took off in a C-130, but when he arrived, the Herculean engines were nonoperating. He had been waiting for two hours.

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