

# The AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## A SHORT HISTORY



■ By Dr Charles J. Gross ■  
NGB Historical Services Division

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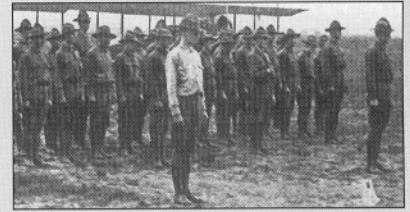
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## ABOUT THE COVER

An air-to-air front view of an A-7K Corsair II aircraft (top) and an A-7D Corsair II (bottom). The two aircraft are flown by the Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Fighter Wing. The A-7s were enroute to Chitose Air Base, Japan for the Cape North exercise in 1988.

Throughout most of our history, we Americans have relied upon the militia (later, the National Guard) and wartime volunteers as the bulwarks of our defense. Prior to the twentieth century, that policy was considered effective, economical, and consistent with our nation's cherished values by most of our countrymen. Citizen-soldiers bore the main burden of fighting America's wars and restoring domestic tranquility when local order broke down.

*In this study of the Air Guard* and its militia roots, Dr. Charles J. Gross, a former Guardsman and a professional historian assigned to the National Guard Bureau, documents America's citizen soldier heritage. He then traces the transformation of National Guard aviation from a grass roots experiment to a true force in reserve of the U.S. Air Force.

*The Air Guard's militia heritage, volunteerism, and growing professionalism* are this volume's main themes. Those developments

came to fruition during the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990-1991. Dr. Gross explains how the Air Guard did not truly emerge as a combat-ready reserve force until relatively recently. In developing their current relationship under the total force policy, the Air Force and the Air Guard have resolved the dilemma of maintaining a reserve force capable of participating in a broad range of global air operations on short notice.

*The Air Force has long been* recognized as a leader within the Defense Department in developing and creatively employing its reserve components. This history sheds a great deal of light on why and how that has happened. It also suggests how citizen-soldiers have adapted our nation's venerable militia institutions to the demands of high technology air warfare in the late twentieth century.

**DONALD W. SHEPPERD**

**Major General, USAF**

**Director, Air National Guard**

**D**uring the opening day of Operation Desert Storm, Captain Jay Johnson flew his F-16A fighter-bomber over Iraq. Braving the terrific sound and light show that accompanied barrages of antiaircraft fire, he dropped his bombs and returned safely to Saudi Arabia. Johnson's F-16A came away unscathed as did all the other aircraft in his unit. Johnson belonged to the South Carolina Air National Guard's (ANG's) 157th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS). Although barely mentioned in the public debate over the future of the America's defense establishment, the performance of the Air Guard during operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm was a significant element of U.S. military success in the Persian Gulf War. The ANG's immediate and professional response to the crisis augured well for its future in an era of dramatic American military retrenchment after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Moreover, it suggested that the Air Force's implementation of the Defense Department's total force policy was sound.

*The citizen-soldiers of the militia and wartime volunteers* were America's oldest and most venerated military traditions. Colonists inherited the militia tradition, along with a fear of large standing armies, from England in the seventeenth century. As the threat of destruction by marauding Indians and hostile European powers grew more remote in the English colonies, the common militia began to decay. It was augmented by volunteer militia units and wartime volunteer formations. For most of our history, that reliance was effective, economical, and consistent with our values. A combination of geography, the absence of strong enemies on our borders, and growing friendship with Great Britain after the War of 1812 enabled America to rely on citizen-soldiers as the bulwark of its national defense. But, modern technology, the ability of the

state to mobilize vast national resources for total war, and the emergence of the United States as a world power changed all that in the twentieth century. Many believed that the citizen-soldier was an endangered species.

*American military reformers after the Civil War* had wanted to displace the militia with a large, strictly federal reserve system fed by conscripts but their efforts failed for several reasons. The concept of a peacetime draft was unacceptable to the American people. There was no pressing foreign military threat to the continental U.S., and before 1917, few thought that America would ever have to deploy massive land forces overseas on relatively short notice. Furthermore, the militia had retained its own independent social and political base across the country. It refused either to be bypassed or swallowed up by the federal military structure. Instead, it had emphasized the heritage of the Civil War state volunteer system as the basis of its own continued existence. Victory in the Spanish-American War, no matter how inept, was seen by the militia as a further validation of its own central organizing concepts.

*State and local authorities had become increasingly aware* that they needed readily-available military forces to suppress the growing industrial violence of late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A rebuilt militia was needed to continue to fill that historic role. Finally, Congress and the American people had retained their historic distrust of standing armies and conscription. They remained satisfied with the militia's dual state-federal status.

*The militia, increasingly known as the National Guard*, benefited from the active support of the National Guard Association, a strong and well-organized lobbying organization with deep

## Introduction

roots in local communities and state houses across America. The association was a private organization. Acting through it, the Guard developed a reputation after World War I as one of the most effective interest groups in American politics. As an organized pressure group, it enjoyed four key advantages. First, it was a public organization created and legitimized by the Constitution's militia clause. This bestowed on it patriotic claims on resources that were unmatched by most other pressure groups outside the government. Second, the Guard was deeply rooted in communities throughout America. It had units in every congressional district. Third, the National Guard was closely tied to state governments and both major political parties. Within each state and territory, the National Guard was administered by a two-star adjutant who usually was a political appointee of the governor. Many individual Guardsmen were also active in state and local politics. Fourth, the association was a disciplined organization that pursued clear and readily-communicated goals.

*Despite the Guard's strong political support, growing American international involvement and poor military*

performance during the Spanish-American War underscored the need for a larger and more effective reserve system. As a result, some two decades of sporadic controversy after 1898 produced a compromise between those who were essentially satisfied with the status quo and the advocates of a European-style centralized system. The basic framework of the system—established by the Congress in the Militia Act of 1903 (and modified in 1908), the National Defense Act of 1916, and the National Defense Act of 1920—has survived into the 1990s. It provided the institutional framework for a more effective reserve system organized and run along more professional military lines.

*The system had four essential elements. First, it produced a large professional force, especially during the Cold War. However, that force was substantially smaller than those of its principal adversaries. Second, purely federal reserve forces were established for the first time. They focused primarily on support, specialist, and technical missions. The militia, officially renamed the National Guard in 1916, won for itself the primary responsibility to provide reserve ground and air combat units.*

Third, the federal government obtained increased control of and funding for National Guard training, organization, and equipment. In return, the Guard acquired a greater liability for federal service while retaining its state control and responsibilities. Finally, a Reserve Officer Training Corps was established at some colleges and universities to produce reserve officers.

*The introduction of the peacetime draft and large peacetime standing forces in 1948 did not alter the fundamentals of that reserve system until it was replaced by the all-volunteer force in 1973. Conscriptio was grafted on to the traditional volunteer and militia system. Volunteers were recruited for both the active forces and the reserve components, including the National Guard. The draft was used to compensate for shortages of volunteers rather than to allocate the nation's manpower resources systematically.*

## CHAPTER I

National Guard aviation emerged early in the twentieth century during a period of enormous organizational and technological ferment within the American military establishment. Reformers were bent upon transforming it from what amounted to a small, constabulary focused on such tasks as policing the Indians and developing the nation's infrastructure to a modern force whose primary role was to engage in combat against other major industrial powers. It was also beginning the difficult task of determining how to incorporate such startling new developments as radios, automobiles and trucks, machine guns, and aircraft into its doctrines and operations.

*The National Guard was a hotbed of early interest in aviation. On 2 August 1908, the Army had formally accepted the world's first military airplane from the Wright brothers. Meanwhile, that April, a group of enthusiasts had organized an "aeronautical corps" at the 7th Regiment Armory in New York City to learn ballooning. They were members of the 1st Company, Signal Corps, New York National Guard. Although they had received instruction and assembled a balloon, it was not clear whether members of the unit had ever actually ascended in it. In 1910, the unit raised \$500.00 to finance its first aircraft. The investment disappeared when the plane crashed on takeoff during maneuvers that same year. In 1911, the Curtiss Aeroplane Company loaned it an aircraft and a pilot named Beckwith Havens. Later, Havens joined the unit as a private and was recognized as the National Guard's first aviator. In August 1912, he flew with the Army in joint maneuvers.*

*There were many efforts to form Guard*

aero units in various states by civilian flyers, businessmen, and National Guardsmen. They were as interested in promoting the general development of American aviation as they were in establishing Guard flying programs. However, there was little support for them by either the states or the federal government. World War I began to change that. On 1 November 1915, Captain Raynal Cawthorne Bolling—a prominent New York attorney—organized the Aviation Detachment, 1st Battalion, Signal Corps of the New York National Guard. It was the Guard's first genuine aviation unit. Subsequently, the organization was redesignated the 1st Aero Company. Located at Mineola on Long Island, the unit rented and then purchased its on aircraft with funds donated by the Aero Club of America and other contributors. It was "provisionally recognized" on 22 June 1916 and then called into federal service on 13 July 1916 during the Mexican border crisis. However, instead of active service in the southwest, it remained at Mineola training and was released from federal service on 2 November 1916.

*The three months at Mineola were, in general, a summer of discontent for Bolling and other fledgling National Guard aviators. Little was accomplished by either individuals or the group. That episode convinced Bolling that "National Guard aviation units, as units, are not and never will be practicable." Aside from the difficulty of obtaining funds and spare parts, Bolling saw the main problem as the inability to recruit expert mechanics into the National Guard. Instead, his unit had to rely entirely on paid civilians to maintain its aircraft. He was convinced that military aviation could only be developed under the auspices of the regular Army. Bolling's skepticism was shared by the Acting Chief of the Militia Bureau, a regular Army officer. Consequently, the War Depart-*

## Early National Guard Aviation

ment decided Guard aviation units would not be activated during World War I. Instead, they were disbanded. Individual Guardsmen were encouraged to volunteer for active duty. The latter was a controversial precedent that has persisted in National Guard aviation throughout its history.

*When President Woodrow Wilson* asked Congress for a declaration of war in April 1917, Guardsmen provided a major pool from which the Army could draw aviators. Approximately 100 of them had either qualified as pilots or were in training to become military aviators. Nearly half of those Guard flyers were from New York. Under War Department policy, they were required to leave the Guard and volunteer for the Signal Corps Reserve if they wished to remain in aviation during the war.

*The Air Service grew to* 12,000 pilots and 183,000 officers and men before the war ended in November 1918. About 58,000 of them served in France. The actual burden of combat fell on 1,500 aviators in 45 operational squadrons that engaged the enemy because the AEF's Air Service was not really committed to combat until the spring of

1918. Focusing on the air superiority and observation missions, it destroyed 781 German aircraft and 73 balloons at a cost of 235 men killed and 289 aircraft destroyed.

*Although comprehensive* figures were not available on how many Guardsmen actually served in the U.S. aviation program during World War I, they made substantial contributions to it as individual volunteers. After joining the Signal Corps Reserve, Colonel Bolling led an important U.S. mission to Europe in the summer of 1917 after he left the Guard. Its recommendations played a critical role in shaping America's huge wartime aircraft production program. While assigned to the A.E.F, he established schools and training centers in Europe for American fliers. But Bolling wanted to see combat at the front. That desire for action proved fatal. He was killed by German infantry during a ground reconnaissance near Amiens, France on 26 March 1918.

*Other members of New York's* 1st Aero Company served with distinction in France. For example, Lt Col Philip A. Carroll, an attorney, had learned to fly with Bolling in 1915 at Mineola, New York.

He had left the Guard with Bolling to help form the 1st Aero Reserve Squadron and had shipped overseas as the unit's commander. Once in France, Carroll had been assigned to the Aviation Instruction Center at Issoudin, France. He eventually became the Assistant Chief of the Training Section of the AEF's Air Service. Captain James E. Miller, a banker in civilian life, was sent overseas in July 1917. He headed the training facility at Issoudin and then was assigned as commander of the 95th Aero Squadron. Miller was killed in action in March 1918 while flying over the German lines. First Lieutenant Blair Thaw served in the Air Service's 1st Aero Squadron and then was killed in an aircraft accident while commanding the 135th Aero Squadron.

*Major John M. Satterfield,* whose 2nd Aero Company had trained with Bolling's unit during the summer of 1916, was a prominent banker and businessman from Buffalo, New York. During World War I, he served on General Pershing's staff in France. His principal duties were to buy aircraft and develop airfields for the A.E.F.'s Air Service.

*The Guard contributed* four aces to the allied air effort. The most famous was Major Reed Chambers who had joined the Tennessee

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Guard in 1914 and had served on the Mexican border in 1916. Chambers became an original member of the famed 94th Pursuit Squadron in France. On 14 April 1918, Chambers flew with Eddie Rickenbacker and David Peterson on the first combat mission ever ordered by an American commander of a U.S. squadron of American pilots. He would be credited with six aerial victories during World War I. Chambers was a friend and trusted confidant of Rickenbacker. America's top wartime ace rated Chambers' advice and example a "close second" to those of the legendary Major Raoul Lufbery, America's first ace of aces. After the war, "Captain Eddie" recalled that "At night and on rainy days, Reed and I would discuss combat flying by the hour. In this completely new arena of warfare, we were convinced that if we thought long enough and hard enough we could devise some new strategy, some new technique, that would mean the difference between victory and defeat, life and death."

*Guardsmen also volunteered for aviation duty after they were mobilized with their ground units in 1917. For instance, John H. Buckley had enlisted in an engineer com-*

pany of the Colorado National Guard in 1916. After winning his commission the following year, he volunteered for pilot training. In France, First Lieutenant Buckley flew with the 28th Aero Squadron. On 27 September 1918, during the Meuse - Argonne offensive, Buckley volunteered for a strafing mission behind German lines. He was killed in action while attacking enemy positions.

*Erwin R. Bleckley, a field artilleryman from the Kansas National Guard, volunteered for aviation duty after he reached France. Second Lieutenant Bleckley completed training as an aerial observer and then flew with the 50th Aero Squadron. On 5 October 1918, members of the squadron attempted to locate and resupply an American infantry battalion that had been cut off by the Germans in the Argonne Forest. The following day, Bleckley and his pilot, First Lieutenant Harold E. Goettler (a non-Guardsman), braved poor weather and intense ground fire to drop supplies to the "lost battalion." On their second mission they flew their DH-4 "Jenny" even lower to deliver packages to the American infantrymen. But, flying at an altitude of 200 feet, their aircraft was downed by enemy*

rifle and machine gun fire. Both Bleckley and Goettler received the Medal of Honor posthumously for their heroism. Bleckley was the first National Guard aviator to be awarded the nation's highest military decoration.

*During the First World War, the airplane had emerged as a significant weapon. Pilots established air superiority over the battlefield, flew valuable observation and close air support missions, transported messages, and carried wounded soldiers to medical help. They even engaged in limited strategic bombing forays. There was a big argument within the Army over aviation's postwar future. Radical reformers like Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell wanted a separate service like Britain's Royal Air Force that could concentrate on strategic bombing and other independent air missions. But, his calls for a separate air force were rejected by the Congress and senior officials in the executive branch of government who doubted that air units had an independent mission. Instead, aviation remained an adjunct of the established surface forces in the Army and Navy. Postwar National Guard aviation was shaped by that basic policy decision.*

*Initially, the War Department and the Army Air Service*



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had no intention of organizing aviation units in the postwar National Guard. However, intense interest soon developed in flying in the Guard. Responding to political pressure, the War Department changed its position. Early in 1920, the Militia Bureau and the Air Service agreed on a plan for organizing National Guard aero units. The U.S. government would provide the equipment while the Militia Bureau would arrange for the states to furnish facilities. Those units located close to Air Service installations would be based and trained there. The Air Service sent a regular Army officer to each state to serve as an instructor. On 17 January 1921, the 109th Observation Squadron of the Minnesota National Guard became the first postwar air unit to receive federal recognition.

*Some units were the product of the activities of former Army pilots, reserve officers, and local aviation enthusiasts. For instance, the "Birmingham Escadrille" transformed itself from a flying club into the 135th Squadron, Alabama National Guard, and gained federal recognition on 21 January 1922. During the interwar period, 29 observation squadrons were established. They were either integral elements of Na-*

*tional Guard infantry divisions or assigned to corps aviation. Because of regular pay and the fact that they trained as organized units for wartime roles, National Guard aviation was generally more attractive to potential recruits than the Organized Reserve of the Air Service (later the Army Air Corps).*

*The leaders of National Guard aviation during the interwar period were largely combat veterans of the Great War in Europe with no previous Guard service. For example, Errol H. Zistel's military career had begun in April 1917 when he enlisted in the aviation branch of the Signal Corps. He was then trained as a pursuit pilot by the Royal Flying Corps in England. After serving as a pilot in the British Expeditionary Force's Flying Corps, he transferred to the American Expeditionary Force as a reservist. He joined Ohio National Guard as a captain in June 1927. He was promoted to major and assigned as commanding officer of the 112th Observation Squadron in April 1931. Zistel was promoted to lieutenant colonel in December 1934 and entered federal service as the air officer of Ohio's 37th Division in October 1940. Subsequently, he served in a variety of Army Air*

*Forces (AAF) assignments in the continental U.S. during World War II. He left the AAF in 1946 and was appointed Commanding General of the 55th Fighter Wing in December 1947. He was promoted to major general in 1953 as Chief of Staff of the Ohio Air Guard. Zistel -- considered one of the Ohio Air Guard's founding fathers -- served in that assignment until his retirement in 1957.*

*Charles A. Lindbergh became the most famous Guard pilot of the interwar period. His service in the National Guard illustrated the close linkages between military and commercial aviation in those days. Lindbergh had joined the 110th Observation Squadron of the Missouri National Guard in November 1925. The following year, he was promoted to captain. Lindbergh served as a flight commander as well as a parachute officer and pilot in the 110th. In 1926, Major William Robertson and his brother Frank, both pilots in the squadron, were awarded a government contract to fly the mail between St Louis and Chicago. Lindbergh was their chief pilot on that route. Later, he recalled his service in the Guard fondly. Lindbergh wrote that his fellow pilots "joined the Guard for two reasons: first, because of the opportunity it offered to keep in flying training, and second, because they*

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considered it a patriotic duty to keep fit for immediate service in the case of a wartime emergency.”

*Interwar Guard flying was an informal affair by later standards. Pilots could always find aircraft when they had time to fly. It was unusual for them to file flight plans. Guard aviators usually flew as individuals and rarely engaged in cross-country or night flying. At first, they averaged about four hours of flight time per month. With the availability of more advanced aircraft, they were logging approximately 100 hours yearly, on average, by the mid-1930s.*

*Like today, the Guard's aviation units conducted 48 drills a year. However, unlike contemporary practice, they were not all concentrated on one weekend each month. Instead, they typically drilled on two Sundays and two Wednesday nights each month. Some air units lacked their own armories. Maj Gen Howard F. Butler recalled drills with the 105th Observation Squadron of the Tennessee National Guard in the 1920s, “The Sunday drill would be a good portion of the day . . . We would drill and fly and practice and do the things that we were required to do. But, it was not an all-day drill, netting two drills*

*in one day; it was four times a month. On night drill, we didn't have an armory, so we just would meet wherever we could. . . . On those nights they couldn't fly we would just have classes. There wasn't any night flying at the time because the fields weren't lighted.”*

*Between September 1940 and March 1941, the National Guard's 29 observation squadrons were ordered into federal service as non divisional formations and absorbed into the Army Air Forces (AAF). Approximately 4,800 National Guard aviation personnel were mobilized. Abandoning a plan approved in July 1940 to convert them to pursuit squadrons for the air defense of the continental United States, Guard units were stripped of many key personnel, especially pilots. Gradually, they gave up their obsolete O-38s and O-47s and were reequipped with more modern aircraft.*

*Some of the early-deploying squadrons maintained a degree of unit integrity and cohesion. They included the 107th (Michigan), 109th (Minnesota), and 153rd (Mississippi) that formed the organizational core of the AAF's 67th Observation Group. It deployed to the United Kingdom in the summer of 1942. The*

*68th Observation Group — organized around three National Guard squadrons: the 111th (Texas), 122nd (Louisiana), and the 154th (Arkansas) — was sent to the Mediterranean theater in the fall of 1942. Well after the mobilization had begun in 1940, 8 brand new Guard observation squadrons (of the 29 called into federal service) were organized.*

*While some National Guard squadrons retained their numerical designations, most lost their character and identity as Guard organizations. Many of their key people were used by the rapidly expanding AAF as cadres or individual fillers to help build new units. By V-J Day, only nineteen of the Guard outfits still carried their pre-war numbers. Of the remaining Guard squadrons, nine were disbanded or inactivated. The surviving units were transformed from observation organizations into reconnaissance, liaison, fighter, and bombardment squadrons. They served in every major combat theater during the war. At least six pilots who served in mobilized National Guard units became aces although none of them had entered federal service as Guardsmen.*

*The most significant wartime contribution of National Guard aviators was to train and lead the large numbers of volunteer airmen who had entered the AAF during World War II.*

## Early National Guard Aviation

That role was epitomized by Lt Col Addison E. Baker, a Guardsman from Akron, Ohio. Baker's military career had begun in 1929 when he enlisted as a private in the Air Corps' 90th Attack Squadron at Fort Crockett, near Galveston, Texas. Subsequently, he earned his wings and was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant in the Air Corps Reserve. Baker then served with the 94th Pursuit Squadron at Selfridge Field, Michigan. Following his release from active duty, Baker joined the 107th Observation Squadron of the Michigan National Guard in 1936. After moving to Akron, he transferred to the 112th Observation Squadron which was then part of Ohio's 37th Division.



Signal Corps photo

**Errol H. Zistel, pictured during World War I, was a leader in developing the Ohio Air National Guard.**

*Baker's unit was ordered into federal service in Novem-*

ber 1940. It was ordered to Pope Field, North Carolina to prepare for anti submarine pa-

group was assigned targets in Lille, France with Baker at the controls of the lead aircraft of

trol missions. But, Baker's talents and experience were in demand elsewhere. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he was reassigned to a tow target detachment at Pope. In early 1942, he was sent to Barksdale Field, Louisiana to help form the 328th Bombardment Squadron, an element of the AAF's 93rd Heavy Bombardment Group which was to be equipped with brand new B-24Ds. In May of that year, the group moved to Fort Myers, Florida after completing its initial combat training. Baker, recently promoted to major, commanded the 328th. The 93rd deployed to Alconbury in the United Kingdom that August. On October 9th, the

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the 108-plane mission. Just before Christmas in 1942, the group was temporarily attached to the Ninth Air Force in North Africa. They returned to England in late February 1943. In March, Baker was re-assigned to group headquarters and became the 93rd's commander on May 28th. On June 25th, the 93rd returned to North Africa.

*On 1 August 1943, Baker* commanded his unit, nicknamed the "Traveling Circus," on a daring but ill-fated low-level attack against enemy oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania. The Ploesti raid, nicknamed operation "TIDALWAVE," had been authorized by American and British military leaders at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943. Apparently to appease Stalin and Churchill as well as to relieve military pressure on the Red Army and the Allies in Sicily, the Americans offered to bomb the crucial oil facilities at Ploesti. Those installations supplied two-thirds of Germany's petroleum. The Americans attacked from bases in North Africa. Because of the distance to the target, they could not be defended by AAF fighter escorts. Instead, they relied on a surprise low-level attack. Ploesti was heavily defended by anti-air-

craft guns and German fighter planes. But, execution of the mission was badly flawed. Early on, the element of surprise was lost. The Germans learned of the raid. The lead B-24 group then made a navigational error and bore down on Bucharest, not Ploesti. German ground and air defenses were waiting for them.

*Baker was one* of the first commanders to react to the crisis. When he saw the smoke from Ploesti's refineries on the wrong side of his aircraft, he wheeled his aircraft "Hell's Wench," sharply and headed toward the target. Consequently, Baker's B-24 attacked from the south instead of from the west as had originally been briefed. Although Baker maintained radio silence as planned, the "Traveling Circus" followed. The 93rd flew into withering fire from German anti-aircraft guns. While approaching the target, Baker's B-24 was heavily damaged and set ablaze by a large caliber shell. Baker refused to jeopardize the mission



Signal Corps photo

**World War II Medal of Honor Winner  
Ohioan Lt Col Addison E. Baker.**

and break up the formation by making a forced landing. Suitable terrain was available for "Hell's Wench" to land safely. But, Baker led his unit to the target, bombing it with devastating effect. Baker's aircraft crashed in the target area. All aboard the B-24 perished. For his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy," Baker and his copilot, Major John J. Jerstad, were each posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Some observers considered the attack a failure because of heavy losses.

## Chapter II

Regardless of the contributions of citizen- airmen like Addison Baker, the men who fought for an independent postwar Air Force during World War II did not place much faith in the reserves, especially the state-dominated National Guard. The ANG as we know it today—a separate reserve component of the USAF—was a product of the politics of postwar planning and interservice rivalry during World War II. Leaders of the AAF like Gen. Henry H. Arnold were determined to build the largest and most modern standing force possible. They assumed that future wars would be short and highly destructive affairs decided by the ability of one side to deliver massive aerial firepower on an enemy's heartland. They were convinced that reserves could not operate complex modern weapons without extensive post- mobilization training. Reserves did not play a prominent role in their vision of the postwar Air Force.

*But, domestic politics and American history* forced them to significantly alter their plans. Determined not to be excluded from the postwar U.S. military establishment, the National Guard flexed its considerable political muscle during World War II. It forced the War Department (including the Army Air Forces) to retain it as the nation's primary reserve force once the war was over. Dramatic military budget cuts by President Harry S. Truman after V-J Day and his determination to split defense dollars evenly among the Army, Navy, and Air Force compelled the latter to plan for a far smaller active duty force than it had envisaged during the war. The reserve components had to help fill the gap.

*Consequently, in the late 1940s, the Air Force* found itself stuck with the Air Guard

against its best professional judgement. The ANG would be manned by some 58,000 personnel. Its primary units would be 84 flying squadrons, mostly fighters. Air defense of the continental U.S. was its main mission. A separate National Guard aviation program began to emerge in 1946 as individual units obtained federal recognition. But, the Air Guard's official birth date was 18 September 1947, the same day the Air Force became a separate service.

*There was little trust and understanding* between the active duty USAF and the ANG. Although it looked good on paper, one Air Force general referred to it as "flyable storage." Other observers called its units state - sponsored flying clubs. The Air Force and the NGB spent the late 1940s fighting over who was in charge. Essentially, that issue was resolved in 1950 when the Army and Air Force strengthened the power of the ANG and Army National Guard division chiefs to administer their organizations in response to the directives of their respective services.

*The Korean War was a turning point* for the U.S. military establishment including the Air Guard. Some 45,000 Air Guardsmen, 80 percent of the force, were mobilized. That callup exposed the glaring weaknesses of the ANG. Before the Korean War, it had been glorified flying clubs for World War II combat veterans. Units and individuals lacked specific wartime missions. Their equipment, especially aircraft, was obsolete. Their training was usually deplorable. Once mobilized, they proved to be almost totally unprepared for combat. Guard units were assigned almost at random to active duty, regardless of their previous training and equipment. Many key Air Guardsmen were stripped away from their units and used as fillers elsewhere in the Air Force. It took months and

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months for them to become combat ready. Some units never did. Eventually, the mess was sorted out. The recalled Guardsmen contributed substantially to the air war in Korea and to the USAF's global buildup for the expected military confrontation with the Soviet Union. However, the initial fiasco forced the Air Force to achieve an accommodation with the Air Guard and to thoroughly revamp its entire reserve system.

*Despite their poor initial showing, Air Guardsmen flew 39,530 combat sorties and destroyed 39 enemy aircraft during the Korean War. But, the ANG paid a high price in Korea as 101 of its members were either killed or declared missing in action during the conflict. The Air Guard's 136th and the 116th Fighter Bomber Wings compiled excellent combat records. The 136th—composed of the 111th (Texas), 154th (Arkansas) and the 182nd (Texas) Fighter-Bomber Squadrons—flew its first combat mission in the Far East on 24 May 1951 in F-84E "Thunderjets." On 26 June 1951, while escorting B-29s near "Mig Alley," First Lieutenant Arthur E. Olinger and Captain Harry Underwood of the 182nd shared credit for the Air Guard's first jet kill. They*

destroyed one of five Mig-15s that attacked their formation. The 116th arrived in Japan in late July 1951. Its fighter-bomber squadrons included the 158th (Georgia), 159th (Florida) and the 196th (California).

*During the Korean War, as in previous conflicts, Air Guardsmen made their most dramatic contributions as individuals rather than members of Guard units. They demonstrated their combat skills with four Air Guardsmen achieving the coveted status of ace. Captains Robert J. Love and Clifford D. Jolley of the 196th transferred to the USAF's 4th Interceptor Wing. While flying F-86 "Sabrejets," they became the Air Guard's first jet aces. Love destroyed six enemy aircraft while Jolley downed seven.*

*Major James P. Hagerstrom became an ace in two different wars. During World War II, he joined the AAF and flew 170 combat missions and was credited with destroying six enemy aircraft. After the conflict ended, he left active duty and joined the 111th Fighter-Bomber Squadron of the Texas Air Guard. In October 1950, Hagerstrom was mobilized with the 111th which was equipped with F-*

51s. Subsequently, he transferred to an active duty Air Force squadron. Flying an F-86 Sabre jet in the skies over North Korea, Hagerstrom was credited with 8.5 kills.

*Robinson Risner had joined the AAF during World War II and served in obscurity as a fighter pilot in Panama. After the war, he had left service, went into business in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and married. Because he was determined to remain involved with aviation, Risner joined the Oklahoma National Guard and began flying P-51s in its 185th Fighter Squadron. His unit was mobilized for the Korean War and transitioned to the F-80, the Air Force's first operational jet fighter. When it became clear that the 185th was not going to the Far East, Risner arranged a series of transfers that ultimately landed him in the Air Force's 4th Fighter Wing in Korea. After learning to fly the F-86, he was credited with destroying eight enemy aircraft. Risner completed 108 combat missions and returned to the U.S. having decided to remain on active duty with the Air Force. Years later Risner was given command of the 67th Tactical Fighter Squadron based at Korat, Thailand. While flying against a heavily-defended target in North Vietnam, his F-105 was shot down in 1965. Risner was captured and imprisoned in the infa-*

## Forging the Air Guard

mous "Hanoi Hilton." Despite torture, filth, and isolation, Risner took charge and played a key role in creating a disciplined military organization among his fellow American prisoners of war. He was released from his horrible ordeal in 1972. Risner's captivity in Hanoi epitomized the courage, professionalism, and patriotism of Air Force and Navy pilots during the Vietnam War.

*In the 1950s, Congress* played a key role in placing reserve programs on a sound footing because of the political uproar that the poorly managed reserve mobilizations during 1950-1951 created. The Congress was much more willing than either the Department of Defense or the military services to fund the reserves properly. Moreover, beginning with the passage of the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952, a

series of key laws eliminated most of the old inequities and fostered the development of more effective reserve components. It also permitted the use of Guard and Reserve volunteers to support the active duty forces.

*The ANG led the way in* developing new approaches to reserve training and management during the 1950s. Blessed with innovative leaders like Maj Gen Winston P. "Wimpy" Wilson and a strong political base in the states, the ANG traded some of its autonomy as a state-federal force for closer integration with the active duty Air Force. Wilson was probably the single most important officer in the ANG's history. He was mobilized from Arkansas in 1950 for the Korean War expecting to be in Washington, D.C. for 21 months. Instead, he remained

for 21 years. Wilson served as head of the ANG from 1954 to 1962 and then became the first Air Guardsman to be Chief of the National Guard Bureau from 1963 to 1971. Wilson was "a one man gang who really did his homework. He never delegated authority and chains-of-command were meaningless. He was a quick thinker and a guy of action."

*Wilson recognized that the* Air Guard faced a dim future unless it acquired definite wartime missions, integrated into Air Force missions on a daily basis, and met the same tough training standards as the active force. The Air Guard also needed more full-time manning. It had to be ready for combat the moment it was called into federal service. Finally, Wilson and other Guard leaders fought hard to acquire modern aircraft and facilities. Wilson was able to sell those concepts to the ANG, the USAF, Congress and the



Photo courtesy of the Montana National Guard

**Montana Air Guard F-89C Interceptors fly in formation in the mid-1950s. The aircraft were part of the 186th Fighter Interceptor Squadron's arsenal.**

## Forging the Air Guard

states. Under his leadership, the ANG was transformed from a flying club to a valued reserve component of the USAF.

*Pushed by its reserve components and their political supporters, (primarily the ANG), the Air Force adopted several management and training innovations after the Korean War that promoted the evolution of combat-ready reserve forces. The four most significant policy innovations were: (1) including the air reserve forces in war plans, (2) the ANG's participation in the air defense runway alert program, (3) the gaining command concept of reserve forces management, and (4) the selected reserve force program.*

*Beginning in 1951, the Air Force for the first time established specific mobilization requirements for the Air Guard in its war plans. The ANG would train against those requirements and plans for the first time. ANG leaders proposed the air defense runway alert program as a way to combine realistic training and support of a significant combat mission in peacetime. Beginning on an experimental basis in 1953, it involved two fighter squadrons at Hayward, California and Hancock Field at*

Syracuse, New York. They stood alert from one hour before daylight until one hour after sundown. Despite Air Staff doubts and initial resistance, the experiment was a great success. By 1961, it had expanded into a permanent, round-the-clock program that

included 25 ANG fighter squadrons. Today, the ANG provides 100 percent of the Air Force's CONUS-based air defense interceptor force. The runway alert program was the first broad effort to integrate reserve units into the regular peacetime operating structure of the American armed forces on a continuing basis. It was the precursor of the total force





## Forging the Air Guard

approach to reserve components training and utilization.

*The third major innovation* — the gaining command concept of reserve forces management — meant that the major air command responsible for using a Guard or Reserve



U.S. Air Force photo

unit in wartime would actually train it during peacetime. ANG leaders had pressed for that arrangement for years. However, the active duty Air Force had strongly resisted the change. The concept was grudgingly adopted in 1960 because of budget cuts and public criticism of the air reserve programs by Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, then Air Force Vice Chief of Staff. It improved the effectiveness of ANG units by giving Air Force commanders direct personal incentives for improving the performance of those reserve organizations. It also established firm precedents for the total force policy by integrating the Air Guard into the daily operations of the active force.

*The fourth major policy innovation* — the selected reserve force program — reflected Secretary of Defense's Robert S. McNamara's determination to build an elite force of highly capable reserve units to support the Kennedy administration's flexible re-

**Maj. Gen. Winston P. "Wimpy" Wilson (far left) was sworn in as Guard Bureau chief by Secretary of the Air Force Eugene M. Zuckert Sept. 4, 1963. Wilson was the first Air Guardsmen to serve as head of the Bureau.**

sponse policy. It wanted America's military forces, including its reserve components, prepared to respond immediately to a spectrum of conflicts including guerilla and limited conventional war. To support flexible response and improve readiness, McNamara acted to shrink America's large reserve establishment and merge the National Guard with the purely federal reserve components. Efforts at merger had been tried several times since World War II, and always failed. They failed again in the early 1960s. McNamara then created a selected reserve force in each of the military services. They had priority access to equipment, could recruit to full wartime strength, and were allowed to conduct additional training each year. They would provide most of the nation's strategic military reserve in the United States while a growing share of the active force was engaged in the Vietnam War.

*Through the 1950s, stimulated by the adoption of the air defense runway alert program, the Air Guard evolved into a force that was increasingly integrated with the planning and operations of the Air Force. By the end of the decade, the Air Guard had become a larger, more capable, and increasingly diverse organization. By the end of FY 1960, its personnel strength had grown to 71,000*

## Forging the Air Guard

including 13,200 technicians. The ANG's force structure included tactical fighter and reconnaissance, troop carrier, heavy airlift, and aeromedical evacuation units. But, while it continued to modernize its weapons systems, its aircraft were still obsolescent by active duty Air Force standards. For example, in 1960 its fighter inventory consisted entirely of jets including F-100s, F-104s, F-84s, and F-89Js.

*During the 1960s, the air reserve components began to demonstrate the fruits of those four policy innovations. In 1961, President Kennedy activated a limited number of Reserve and Guard units during the Berlin crisis. In a show of American resolve, the President dispatched 11 ANG fighter squadrons to Europe. Although they required significant additional training after they were ordered into federal service, all of those Guard units were in place overseas within one month of mobilization. By contrast, mobilization and overseas deployment during the Korean War had taken ANG units at least seven months. Some 21,000 Air Guardsmen were mobilized during the Berlin crisis. During the Berlin callups, reliance on second-rate equipment continued to plague the Air Guard.*

*Although publicly lauded for their performance, the Berlin mobilization revealed serious shortcomings in the ANG. Basically, it had not been trained and equipped as a highly ready force capable of immediate deployment and integration with the active duty Air Force in a broad spectrum of scenarios ranging from a general war with the Soviet Union to low level counterinsurgencies or "brush fire wars" as they were called in the early 1960s. Instead, the Air Guard was still a "Mobilization Day" force that required substantial training, personnel augmentation, and additional equipment after it was called into federal service. Despite adoption of the gaining command concept of reserve forces management, the Air Force lacked plans and adequate stocks of spare parts to employ Air Guard units in situations short of a general war with the Soviet Union.*

*Guard units had been limited by DoD policy to 83 percent of their wartime organizational strength. The gap had to be filled by mobilizing approximately 3,000 AFRES individual "fillers." Air Guard pilots, although considered excellent individual flyers, had to be trained rapidly for transoceanic flight, crash landings at sea, and aerial refuel-*

*ing. During the summer and fall of 1961, the Air Guard had to respond to frequent changes in personnel manning documents by the Air Force.*

*For all these and other reasons, Air Guard units mobilized in 1961 required extensive training, reequipping, and reorganization once they were called into federal service. The United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) lacked spare parts needed to support aging Guard F-84s and F-86s. ANG units had been trained to deliver tactical nuclear weapons, not conventional bombs and bullets. They had to be retrained for conventional missions once they arrived on the continent. Altogether, it took an enormous effort to make those units operational in Europe. The majority of mobilized Air Guardsmen remained in the continental United States.*

*Privately, the Air Force concluded that the Air Guard units sent to USAFE had achieved an extremely limited operational capability before they returned home in 1962 after the crisis abated. They were skeptical about the military value of the entire deployment. Senior officers noted that it had required a major diversion of USAFE's resources and doubted the effectiveness of ANG units in the opening stages of a general war.*

## Forging the Air Guard

*A vast gulf separated the* conclusions of Air Force and Air Guard leaders about the lessons of the Berlin mobilization. The former failed to recognize immediately the constraints which obsolescent aircraft, inadequate funding and incomplete manning as well as poor planning had placed on the Air Guard's development. Many of them still viewed the Air Guard as an amateur organization which had not improved significantly since the Korean War. But, the Berlin mobilization stimulated the Air Force to make significant improvements in the air reserve components. Those changes were reflected in Air Force Regulation 45-60, published in February 1963. It shifted the objectives of its reserve programs away from providing mobilization-day units and individuals that required extensive post call-up preparations before they were ready for combat. Instead, the new goal was "to provide operationally ready units and trained individuals that are immediately ready to augment the active duty establishment."

*Driven by the Kennedy* administration's adoption of the "flexible response" strategy and the large American military buildup during the

1960s, the Air Guard continued to modernize and diversify its aircraft inventory. It had entered the tanker business in FY 1962 with the acquisition of KC-97s. In 1963, Air Guard tactical flying units began to deploy outside the continental United States on their annual active duty training tours. The ANG's total aircraft inventory shrank from 2,269 in 1960 to 1,425 by 1965. Following the end of active American military involvement in the Vietnam War in 1973, there was a substantial reduction in the active duty Air Force enabling the ANG to acquire another infusion of modern aircraft and equipment. These included A-7s, A-10A's, F-105s, OA-37s and some brand new C-130s. But its principal fighter aircraft, F-4s, had logged many flying hours including combat operations in Vietnam before they came to the Guard. The Air Guard's personnel strength stood at over 90,300 by the end of FY 1973 when active American military involvement in the Vietnam War ended.

*The Vietnam War illus-*trated a central paradox facing the USAF's reserve components. In January 1968, President Johnson had mobilized naval and air reservists following the North Korean seizure

of the USS Pueblo. More reservists were called into federal service following the February 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam. Altogether, approximately 10,600 Air Guardsmen were mobilized into federal service in 1968. Although most of the reservists were used to strengthen America's depleted strategic reserve force, four ANG fighter squadrons were dispatched to Vietnam. On 3 May, F-100s from the 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron (Colorado) arrived at Phan Rang Air Base. By 1 June, all of the 120th's pilots were flying combat missions. In the meantime, the 174th (Iowa), 188th (New Mexico), and the 136th (New York) had all deployed to Vietnam with their F-100s. In addition, 85 percent of the 355th Tactical Fighter Squadron — on paper a regular Air Force unit — were Air Guardsmen. They performed superbly according to Gen George S. Brown, the Air Force Commander in Vietnam. But, two ANG units deployed to South Korea in 1968—the 166th (Ohio) and the 127th (Kansas)— had a spotty record. Their own support organizations had been stripped from them in the U.S. and there was no logistical structure in place to support their F-100s when they arrived in South Korea. The wing's readiness rate fell below Air Force minimums in December 1968. The wing lost four aircraft and had

## Forging the Air Guard

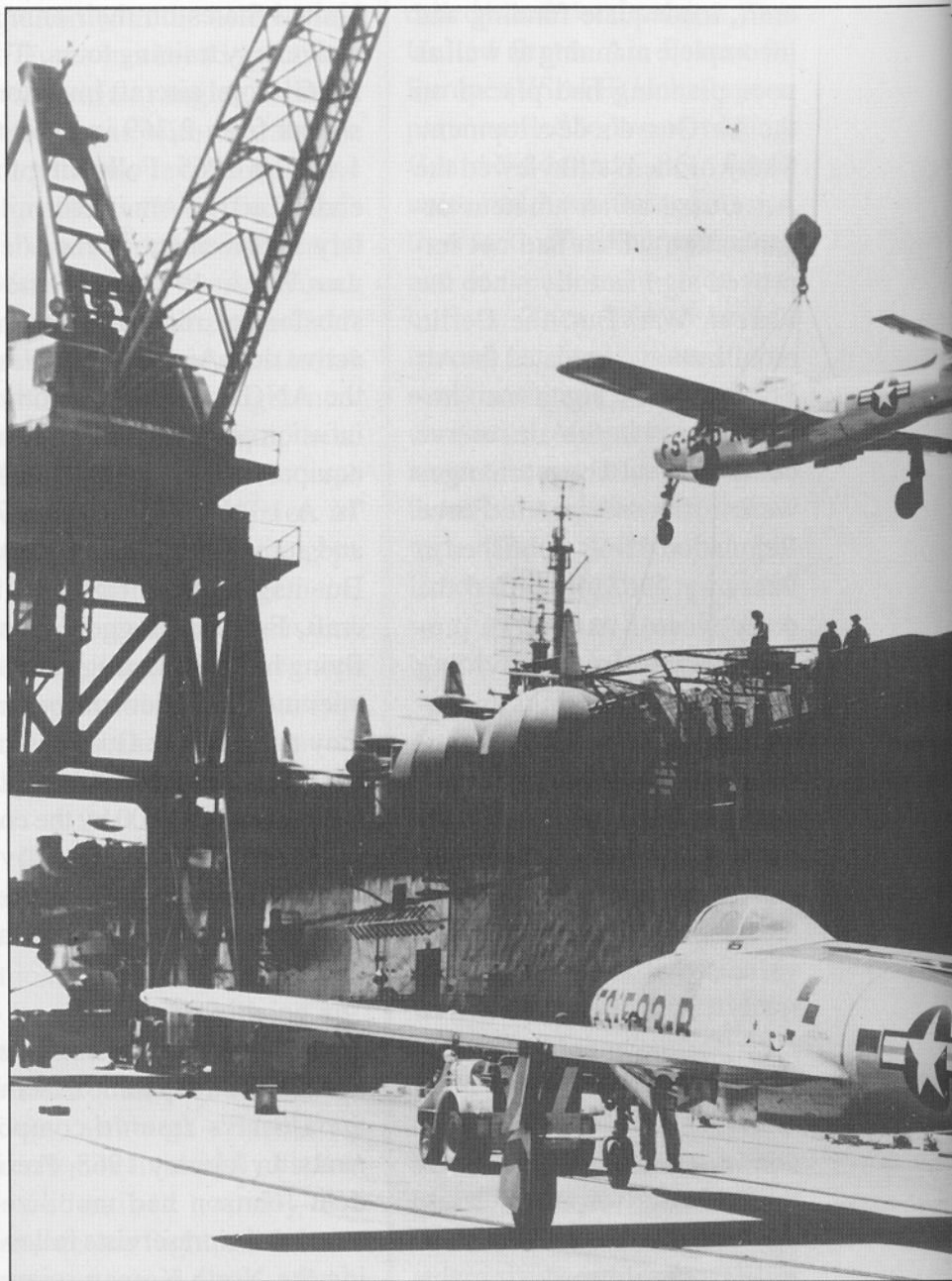
one pilot killed in early 1969. It also failed an operational readiness inspection (ORI). In the meantime, the Air Force had belatedly rediscovered that the F-100C was poorly-suited to its announced air defense mission. The 354th's mission was then shifted to supporting the ground forces in Korea. Once the Pueblo's crew was returned, the Air Guardsmen prepared to return home from Korea. The unit passed an ORI and both of its fighter squadrons were rated combat-ready. They returned to the United States and left federal service in May and June of 1969.

*The 123rd TRW also experienced a rocky tour on active duty. The wing was not part of Secretary McNamara's selected reserve force. It had not been rated combat-ready when mobilized on 26 January 1968, primarily due to equipment shortages. The unit was given an unsatisfactory ORI rating in October 1968. Despite those problems, the 123rd made a significant contribution to active force operations. It began functioning as the primary Air Force tactical reconnaissance unit in the continental U.S. Elements of its squadrons rotated temporary duty assignments in Japan and Korea from July 1968 until April 1969 providing photo recon-*

*naissance support to American forces in those areas. The wing's units were returned to state status between December 1968 and June 1969.*

*Vietnam revealed a nega-*

*tive aspect of relying on reservists. For largely domestic political reasons, President Johnson chose not to mobilize most of the nation's reserve forces. The 1968 callups were only token affairs. Johnson's decision to avoid a major reserve mobilization was opposed by the senior leadership*



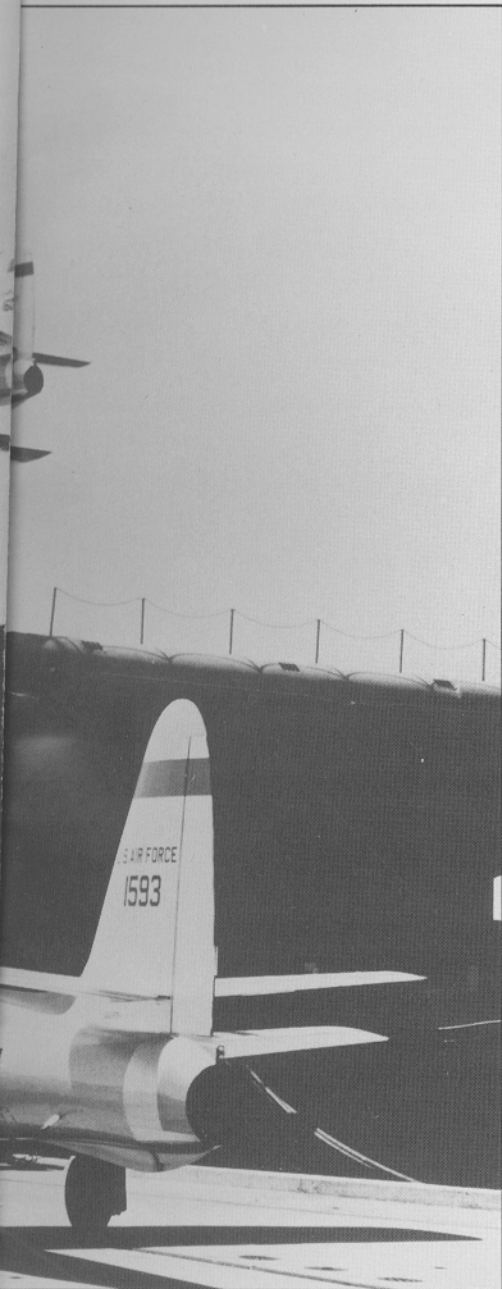
## Forging the Air Guard

of both the active duty military establishment and the reserve forces, but to no avail. The Reserves and the Guard acquired reputations as draft havens for relatively affluent young white men. Military leaders ques-

tioned the wisdom of depending on reserve forces that might not be available except in dire emergencies.

*Race had emerged as another major issue with flowering of the American civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. For over a decade after the active duty military establishment had begun to integrate its ranks during the Korean War, the National Guard had remained an almost exclusively white organization. Discrimination varied, but 10 states with large black populations and understaffed Guard units still had no black Guardsmen in their ranks as late as 1961 and segregated units were not limited to states south of the Mason-Dixon line. Secretary of Defense McNamara had tried to encourage voluntary integration in the early 1960s, with little success. The NGB had disputed his legal authority to force integration while the Guard was under*

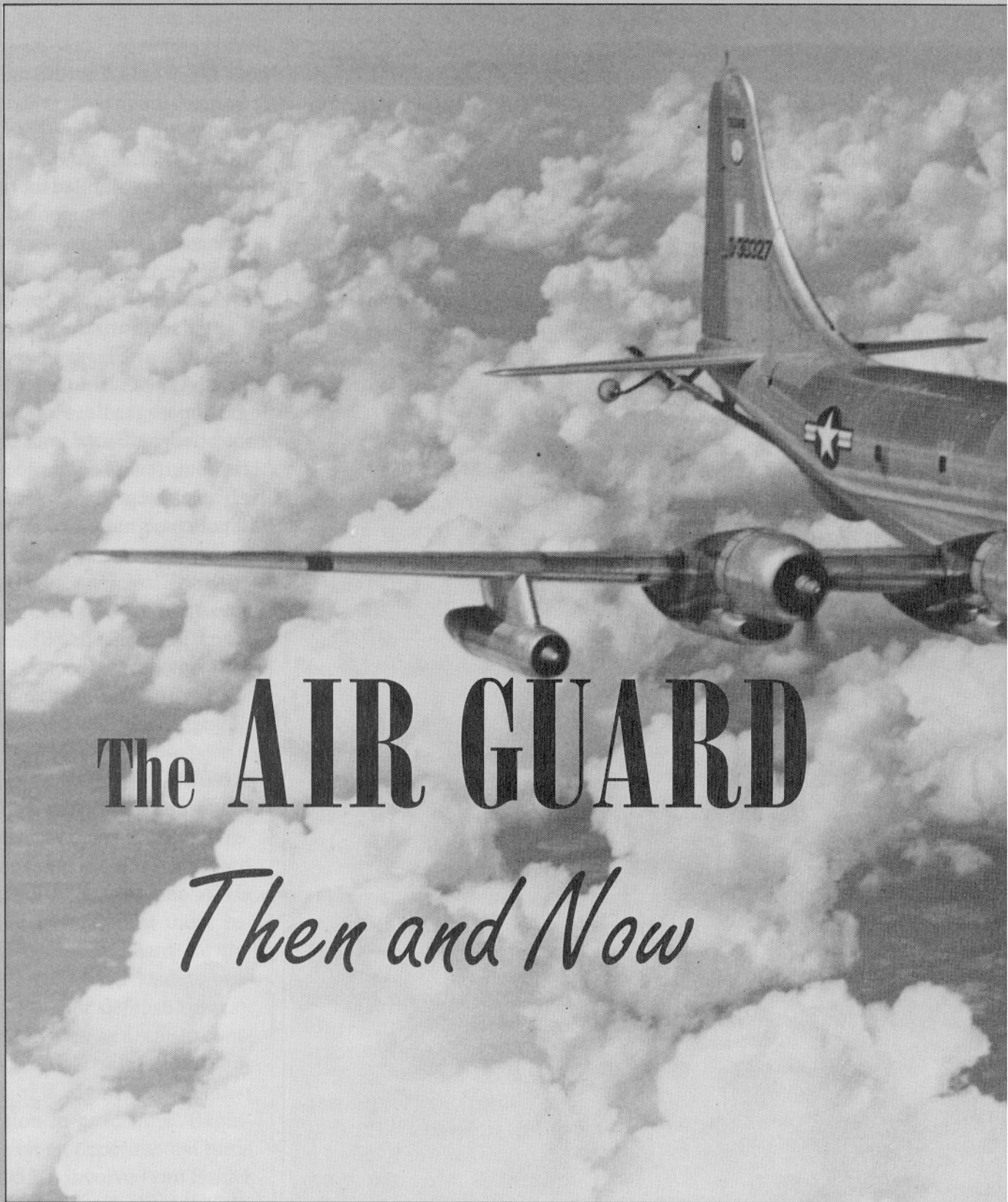
**The 116th Bomber Fighter Wing's F-84 Thunderjets (left) being loaded on the aircraft carrier Sitkoh Bay for transport to Japan during the Korean War. The 116th consisted of Air National Guard units from Georgia, California and Florida.**



U.S. Air Force photo

state control. It had also argued that integration would be political suicide for some governors and would hurt the military capabilities of their units.

*The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited the use of federal funds to support discriminatory activities, dramatically altered the attitude of the Defense Department toward racial discrimination in the National Guard. It gave federal officials the power to force integration regardless of who controlled the Guard in peacetime. But, real progress to effectively integrate the Guard did not come until the 1970s.*



The **AIR GUARD**  
*Then and Now*

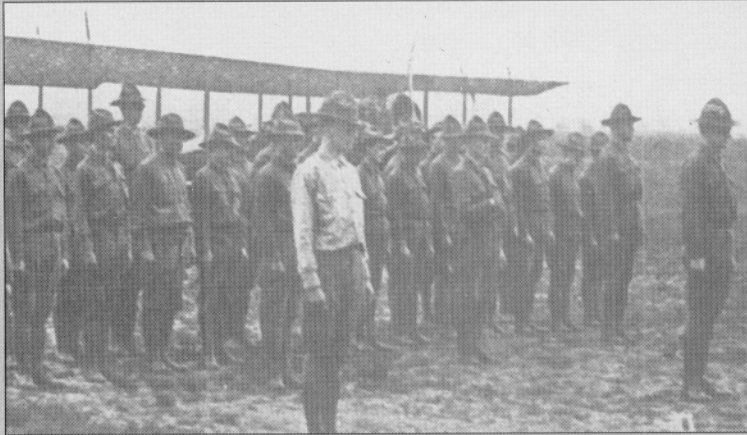


Photo by TSgt. H.H. Deffner

In the 1960s, large airplanes like the KC-97L tanker (left) from Texas became an important part of the Air Guard's inventory. F-16As (above) from South Carolina's 169th Tactical Fighter Group fly in formation after their 1989 "Gunsmoke" victory.

Photo courtesy of the NGAUS Library

## The Air Guard - *Then and Now*



NGB Historical Services file photo

Members of the 1st Aero Company (above) from New York mobilized for federal service in 1916. Kansas Guardsman Field Kindley (right) with his pet dog, became an ace during World War I.



Signal Corps photo

Capt. Robinson Risner (right), an Oklahoma Air Guardsman, became an ace during the Korean War.





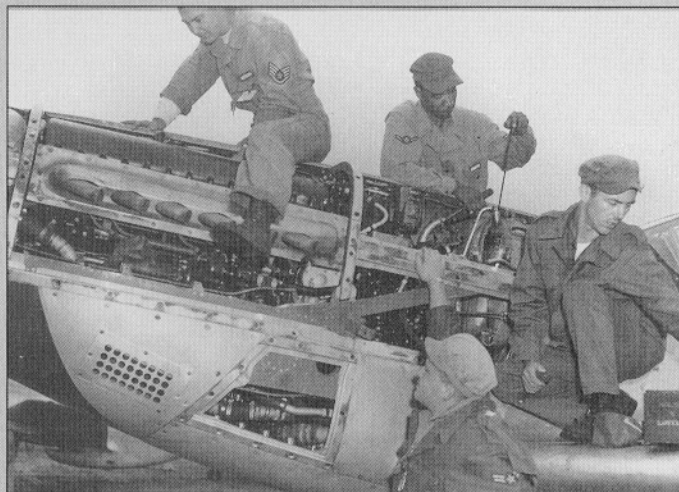


U.S. Air Force photo



Center for Air Force History file photo

**2nd Lt. Erwin Bleckley (left), a Kansas Guardsman, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during World War I.**



Signal Corps photo

**A maintenance crew from New Jersey's 119th Fighter Interceptor Squadron work on an F-51 in 1955. Air Guard African Americans were rare until after the Vietnam War.**

## The Air Guard - *Then and Now*

2nd Lt. Marilyn Koon (below), of the Arizona Air Guard, at flight training. She was the Guard's first female pilot. A KC-135 from the Arizona Air Guard (right) refuels an Air Force F-16 during Operation Desert Storm.

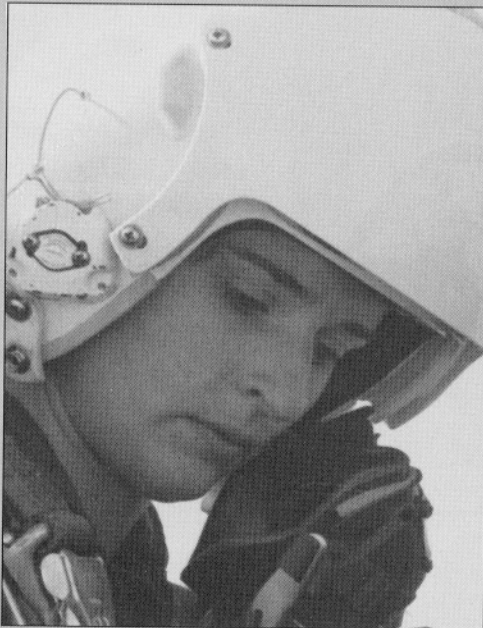


Photo courtesy of the Arizona National Guard



A crew with the Texas Air Guard's 181st Airlift Squadron load a C-130 during Operation Desert Shield.



Photo by TSgt. Perry Heisner



Photo by SSgt. F. Lee Cockran

**Airman First Class Larry Demereth (below), a Iowa Air Guardmember, visits with orphans during his unit's deployment to South Vietnam, 1968-1969.**



Photo by MSgt. John Luszuz



Photo by A1C Thomas P. Sullivan

**A New York Air Guard pilot (left) with the 174th Fighter Wing walks to a fully-loaded F-16 during Operation Desert Storm.**

## Chapter III

Within the Defense Department, all reserve forces planning and policymaking is governed by the Total Force Policy. Based largely on the Air Force's experience with its own reserve components, the Total Force concept was adopted by the Defense Department in 1970. It sought to strengthen and rebuild public confidence in the reserves while saving money by reducing the size of the active duty force. Those objectives emerged from America's disenchantment with the Vietnam War. In practical terms, the Total Force Policy sought to insure that all policymaking, planning, programming, and budgetary activities within the DoD considered active and reserve forces concurrently. Its ambitious objective was to determine the most efficient mix of those forces in terms of costs versus contributions to national security. The policy also committed the nation to use Reservists and Guardsmen as the first and primary source of manpower to augment the active duty forces in any future crisis.

*Much of the credit for the Total Force concept belonged to Dr Theodore Marrs, an avid former Air Guardsman from Alabama, who served as a high ranking civilian official in the Air Force and the DoD in the early 1970s. Gen Creighton Abrams, Army Chief of Staff and former U.S. commander in Vietnam, recognized the political rationale for the total force. He sought to assure that the Army could not go to war in the future without mobilizing significant portions of its reserve components and, with them, the American people.*

*The Air Guard had been employing a total*

force approach since the air defense runway alert program began on an experimental basis in 1953. It had been extended overseas during the Vietnam War era. On 1 May 1967, Colonel (later Brig Gen) Nowell D. Didear had launched his lumbering KC-97L tanker on a mission over Baumholder, Germany. Didear commanded the Texas Air Guard's 136th Air Refueling Wing (ARW). The mission — which lasted nearly four hours, off-loaded 14,000 pounds of jet fuel to F-100s from USAFE - pioneered Operation Creek Party. It continued for ten years. During that period, hardly a day passed when ANG KC-97Ls were



Photo by Oscar E. Porter

### Dr Theodore C. Marrs

not airborne over Europe from their base at Rhein Main, Germany. It pioneered a new dimension of the total force by using contingents of unmobilized Air Guardsmen to support an active duty Air Force continuing operational requirement overseas in peacetime.

*Following the Vietnam War, the draft's elimination and the adoption of the all-volunteer force significantly affected the Air Guard. In January 1973, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird terminated the induction of draftees into the armed forces. Instead, the nation would return to its historic practice of relying on volunteers to fill the peacetime ranks of its active duty*

## The Total Force

military establishment. Senior military leaders, aware of the growing military power of the Soviet Union and its allies, were skeptical of that move. The President of the National Guard Association doubted that America could maintain adequate reserve forces without conscription. Some powerful members of Congress, including Senator John Stennis of Mississippi and Representative Mendel Rivers of South Carolina, were also opposed.

*But, frustrated by the Vietnam War and the inequities of the draft, Americans were ready for a change. The waiting list for entry into the National Guard shrank rapidly. Service personnel leaving the Army and Air Force showed little interest on the whole in joining the Guard. To overcome those problems, the National Guard launched an intensive recruiting campaign. It also obtained approval for enlistment and reenlistment bonuses in 1977.*

*The all-volunteer force also forced two major social transformations on the National Guard. First, it became a racially integrated organization because of growing pressure to admit blacks and the need to secure additional sources of manpower once the*

*draft ended. The Air Guard had contained only 888 blacks (1.01 percent) and 1,456 other minorities (1.66 percent) in its ranks as late as 30 June 1971. It faced an even more daunting challenge than the Army Guard because of its established emphasis on obtaining prior service veterans and other recruits with high levels of education and advanced technical skills. Nevertheless, a high priority was placed on recruiting blacks and other minorities into the ANG during the 1970s. By the end of the decade, the NGB could report substantial gains. Total ANG minority membership had risen to 12,856 personnel (13.8 percent) by 30 September 1979.*

*The Air Guard experienced a second major social transformation in the 1970s, the inclusion of women on a significant scale. Except for nurses and other medical personnel, the ANG had not recruited women because they had been prohibited by law from belonging to combat arms and units. Less than 1 percent of the Air Guard consisted of women and minorities when the draft was abolished. With the adoption of the all-volunteer force, policies were dropped which had excluded women from service*

*and service support units. Aviation was also opened to women except for fixed-wing combat aircraft and attack helicopters. By 30 September 1979, the number of women in the ANG had risen to 7,197 (7.7 percent). Women had not been allowed to join the Air National Guard until 1956, when President Eisenhower authorized the appointment of female nurses. In October 1956, Captain Norma Parsons Erb became the first female to join the National Guard. That month she entered the New York ANG as a nurse and rose to the rank of colonel before retiring in 1986. In November 1967, Congress removed a two percent personnel strength and rank ceiling limitation that had been imposed in 1948 by the Women's Armed Services Act. Consequently, the National Guard Bureau authorized the states to enlist and appoint Women in the Air Force (WAF) on 1 July 1968, a policy change which opened non-medical positions to women.*

*Flight training was opened to Air Force women in 1976. In January 1978, the Air Guard claimed its first female pilot when 2nd Lt Marilyn Koon of the 161st Aerial Refueling Group (Arizona) pinned on her silver wings. In April 1992, Roberta V. Mills, a member of the Tennessee ANG, became the first ANG assistant to the*

## The Total Force

head of the Air Force Nurse Corps. Subsequently, she became the first woman ever promoted to general officer rank in the National Guard.

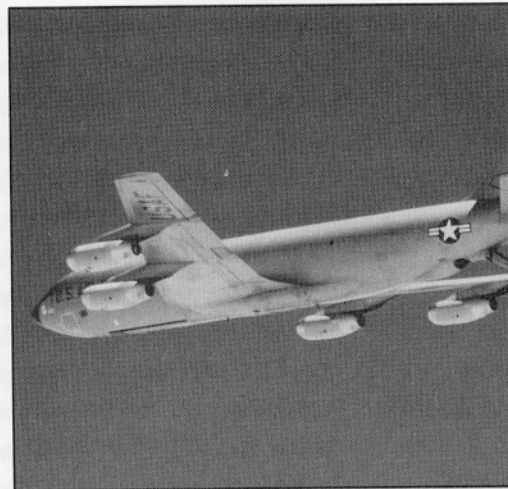
*There had been a significant increase in female and minority representation in the Air Guard by the mid-1980s. In 1974, the ANG had only 1,227 women, some 1.3 percent of the total force. By 26 March 1986 there were 12,551 women in the Air Guard or 11.4 percent of its personnel strength. Minority groups, consisting of blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians and others numbered 4,174, or 4.4 percent of the ANG in 1974. By 26 March 1986, minority representation in the Air Guard had increased to 16,130, or 14.6 percent of the ANG.*

*Air Guardsmen continued to assist state and local authorities in dealing with civil disturbances and the ravages of nature. Much of the involvement in the former was driven by unrest associated with opposition to the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. Following the tragic assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. on the night of 4 April 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, riots broke out in 19 major American cities for the next 6 days. Some 68,600*

National Guardsmen and 22,600 Army troops were called upon to suppress those outbreaks. While the bulk of those troops were Army Guardsmen, more than 3,000 Air Guardsmen served. They employed 162 aircraft to transport 9,340 passengers and 1,896,390 pounds of cargo during those civil disturbance operations. Specially-equipped C-130s dropped retardant on forest fires in Southern California in the late 1970s and early 1980s in operation Volant Forest. Members of the 193rd Tactical Electronic Warfare Group, based in Middletown, Pennsylvania, assisted authorities during the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor incident in 1979 by providing local transportation and servicing aircraft supporting efforts to contain the crisis. But, the state mission of the Guard remained predominantly an Army responsibility. For instance, 51,016 National Guardsmen served on state duty in 354 callups during 1979. Only 4,184 of them (8.2 percent) were Air Guardsmen.

*During the 1980s, changes in the Air Guard were driven by President Ronald Reagan's military buildup and the need to prepare for a possible war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in central Europe.*

The ANG focused on modernization, increased readiness, and personnel growth primarily in non-flying, mission support units. However, efforts by states and local communities to encourage a major increase in the number of ANG flying units were rebuffed. The ANG evolved into a true force in reserve. It was held in a high state of readiness, prepared to back the active duty Air Force on short notice. Through the



generous defense budgets of the 1980s, strong congressional support for new reserve forces weapons and equipment, and the Air Force's determination to avoid the "hollow force" of the immediate post-Vietnam era, the Air Guard put real teeth in the total force policy. Its leaders were convinced that the ANG's investment in modernization and readiness paid off during the Panama contingency and the Persian Gulf War.

## The Total Force

*The Air Guard had a limited involvement in operation "Just Cause," the invasion of Panama in December 1989. Air Guardsmen provided close air support and airlift services to the ground forces. Avoiding formal partial mobilizations, the ANG relied on volunteers and members already on active duty to support*

*"Volant Oak" rotation in Panama. "Volant Oak" was a C-130 airlift deployment that had been supported by the ANG and the Air Force Reserve. It had provided theater airlift support to SOUTHCOM since October 1977. The Volant Oak aircrews flew 22 missions, completed 181 sorties, moved 3,107 passengers and*

*passengers and 1,404.7 tons of cargo. Air Guard A-7 "Corsair II" fighters were already deployed to Panama in the "Coronet Cove" mission when American forces invaded. "Coronet Cove" aircraft and personnel on short rotations had provided the air defense of the Panama Canal since 1978. Consequently, elements of two ANG fighter units—the 114th TFG (South Dakota) and the 180th TFG (Ohio)—flew 34 missions during Just Cause.*

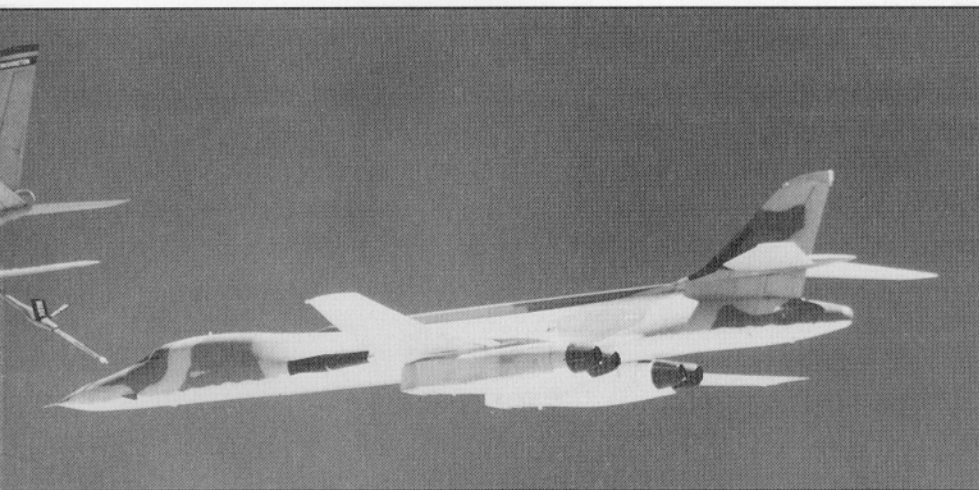


Photo by SSgt. Bill Thompson

the Air Force during that contingency. Most Air Guard units participated in the operation because they had already been scheduled for duty in Panama. Only the 193rd Special Operations Group (SOG), Pennsylvania ANG, was part of the integral planning process by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Air Staff for Just Cause. ANG personnel from the 146th Tactical Airlift Wing (TAW), 136th TAW, 139th Tactical Airlift Group (TAG), and 166th TAG were participating in the

**The Washington Air Guard 141st Air Refueling Wing's KC-135 refuels an active force B-1 bomber during a 1981 training mission.**

551.3 tons of cargo. Of the 775 airlift missions performed by MAC units from 17 December 1989 through 14 February 1990, ANG aircraft flew 7.35 percent of them. In addition, volunteers from the C-141 equipped 172nd AG (Mississippi) and the C-5s equipped 105th AG (New York) flew 35 airlift missions moving 1,911

*On 2 August 1990, Iraq seized its tiny, oil-rich neighbor, Kuwait. To protect western access to Persian Gulf oil, President George Bush rushed American military forces to the region and assembled a broad international coalition against the Iraqis. At the outset of operation Desert Shield, when the Air Force turned to its reserve components for help, it was swamped with volunteers. Before President Bush mobilized Reservists and Guardsmen on 22 August 1990, nearly 1,300 Air Guardsmen had actually entered active duty as volunteers. Initially, most of them concentrated on airlifting American forces to the Persian Gulf region. The first two ANG units to volunteer before the President's mobilization order were the 105th Airlift Group (AG), New York ANG, and the 172d MAG, Mississippi ANG. Respectively, they flew the C-5A and the C-141.*

## The Total Force

According to Gen Hansford T. Johnson, Commander of MAC and the U.S. Transportation Command, "When the history of Desert Shield and Desert Storm is written, America's reserve and guard forces will receive a great deal of credit for America's success. Quite simply . . . we could not have done it without them." The early surge of volunteers helped the Air Force meet its operational commitments without forcing President Bush to announce a premature reserve mobilization. That factor gave him time to generate public and political support for his Persian Gulf policies, including a reserve mobilization.

*According to the NGB,* 10,456 Air Guardsmen were mobilized for active duty during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The Bureau reported that 1,160 of them were in fighter and reconnaissance units, the only Air Guard combat formations that served during the Gulf war. That was the first time in the ANG's history, that the majority of personnel involuntarily recalled for active duty had not been members of combat flying units. Moreover, the majority of mobilized Air Guardsmen had not been members of any type of flying unit at all. The total number of Air Guards-

men called-up from airlift, tanker, and fighter units had been 4,494, less than half of those recalled to active duty. Instead, such units as medical and aeromedical evacuation (2,151), security police (1,688), services (546), firefighters (420), mobile aerial ports (387), combat communications (271), and

engineers (248) provided the majority of the mobilized ANG force. They reflected not only the Air Force's needs in the Persian Gulf but dramatic changes in the Air Guard's composition that had occurred in the 1980s.

*However, the mobilization* process revealed some problems. Volunteerism stripped some units of badly-needed personnel when those units





## The Total Force

were mobilized later. Relatively few outfits were mobilized as units. Instead, the gaining commands called up either individuals or "tailored UTCs [Unit Type Codes]." The latter generally stripped away critical support personnel. It disrupted the mobilization and deployment process causing units to complain that many

people who had trained together in peacetime were now being left behind when the crunch came. General recruiting fell off slightly and specialized medical recruiting virtually dried up once the crisis began.

*Lt. Gen. Charles A. Horner*, the allied air leader, noted that his Air Force Re-

servists and Air Guardsmen did not lose a single plane to enemy fire and proved a match for their active duty counterparts. "They performed very well," emphasized Horner, "I'm absolutely truthful about this, I cannot tell the difference between active, Guard, and reserve. And that's the way it's supposed to be."



Photo by SMSgt. Clem Barry

**The New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Group's C-5A Galaxy aircraft brought supplies and personnel in and out of the Persian Gulf region throughout Operation Desert Shield and Storm. The 105th is the only Air Guard unit that flies the C-5A.**

## CHAPTER IV

In the process of responding to the Persian Gulf crisis, the Air Guard redefined itself for a new era. Despite some misgivings because of the impact on unit morale and cohesion, it had to be capable of responding to a broad spectrum of missions. To accomplish that, it was prepared to tailor its responses to fit the situation and serve the needs of its patron, the active duty Air Force. Mobilizing entire flying units and maintaining their integrity while in federal service, although desirable, would no longer be the only acceptable approach in a national crisis. Instead, the Air Guard would be prepared to custom tailor its response to fit the situation. That could involve individual volunteers, tailored unit type codes of volunteers or mobilized Guardsmen developed in response to specific contingencies, and mobilizing entire units up to wings which could operate as stand-alone units on austere bases.

*The Air Guard and the Air Force had pioneered a "Total Force" approach to reserve programs after the Korean War. It began with the ANG's offer to augment the Air Force's air defense runway alert program. Gradually, it had been extended to other key innovations, including the gaining command concept of reserve forces management, the widespread use of volunteers to augment active force operations, the selected reserve force program, and including the Guard in war plans.*

*Policy changes and mobilizations such as Korea and Berlin as well as liberal infusions of resources in the 1980s drove evolutionary changes in the Air Guard. Its basic organizational paradigm shifted from an M-day force requiring post-mobilization training and additional re-*

sources to a true force-in-reserve. By the late 1980s, Air Guard units were held in a high state of readiness and capable of rapid global deployment. Trained and inspected by the Air Force in accordance with active duty standards, integrated on a daily basis with the planning and operational activities of its parent service, enjoying the benefits of a growing force of full-time members, and successful in recruiting large numbers of active duty veterans to fill its ranks, the Air Guard performed in an increasingly professional manner while maintaining its militia roots and volunteer tradition.

*Today, the Air Force and the Air Guard are complementary. The Guard requires modern equipment, substantial peacetime missions, realistic training, and integration into wartime plans to be effective. The active duty Air Force relies on the ANG to help accomplish many crucial missions. In the process of developing an accommodation with the active duty Air Force, the ANG has demonstrated that citizen-soldiers need not take a backseat to any military airmen in the world.*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**C**harles J. Gross wrote this study in 1994 while serving as chief of the Air National Guard history program in the National Guard Bureau (NGB).

It is based in part upon his earlier work, *Prelude to the Total Force: The Air National Guard, 1943-1969*, published by the Office of Air Force History in 1985.

He holds a PhD in military history from The Ohio State University. The degree was granted in 1979. In addition, he holds bachelors degrees in political science (1964) and education (1970) from the same institution. He was awarded an MS in American history by Utah State University in 1973.

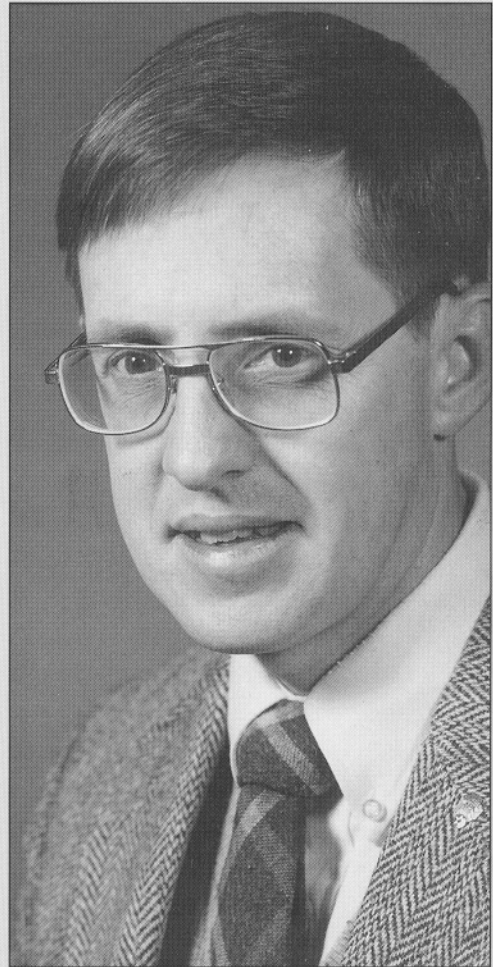
From July 1964 until September 1969, Dr Gross served on extended active duty with the United States Air Force (USAF). His assignments included three years as an intelligence watch officer in a NATO air defense command post in Germany and 12 months as officer-in-charge, Target Analysis Branch, 12th Reconnaissance Intelligence Technical Squadron at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in

Vietnam.

The author began his reserve career in 1972 and spent nearly three years with the Ohio Air National Guard's 179th Tactical Fighter Group. From 1976 to 1984, he was assigned to the Air Force Intelligence Service Reserve. Currently, he is an Air Force Reserve colonel assigned to the Air Force Historical Research Agency.

Dr. Gross joined the USAF history program as a civilian historian in May 1979 at Headquarters Air Force Logistics Command. Subsequently, he served at Headquarters Air Force Systems Command (December 1981 to February 1990) and Headquarters USAF (February 1990 to January 1992). Currently, he is a civilian historian with the NGB.

Dr Gross has written numerous articles and studies focused primarily on the



**Dr Charles J. Gross**

USAF reserve components. His book, *Prelude to the Total Force*, won the Henry Adams Prize offered by the Society for History in the Federal Government in 1986.

Dr Gross is married. He and his wife, Barbara, live in Crofton, Maryland.



**An Air National Guard C-130 drops flame retardant on fires that swept through California in October 1993. The Air Guard has a rich history for helping its neighbors.**



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - The Air National Guard historical program is especially indebted to TSgt. John Malthaner of the National Guard Bureau's Command Information Division for the invaluable support he provided in establishing the design and layout of this publication.**