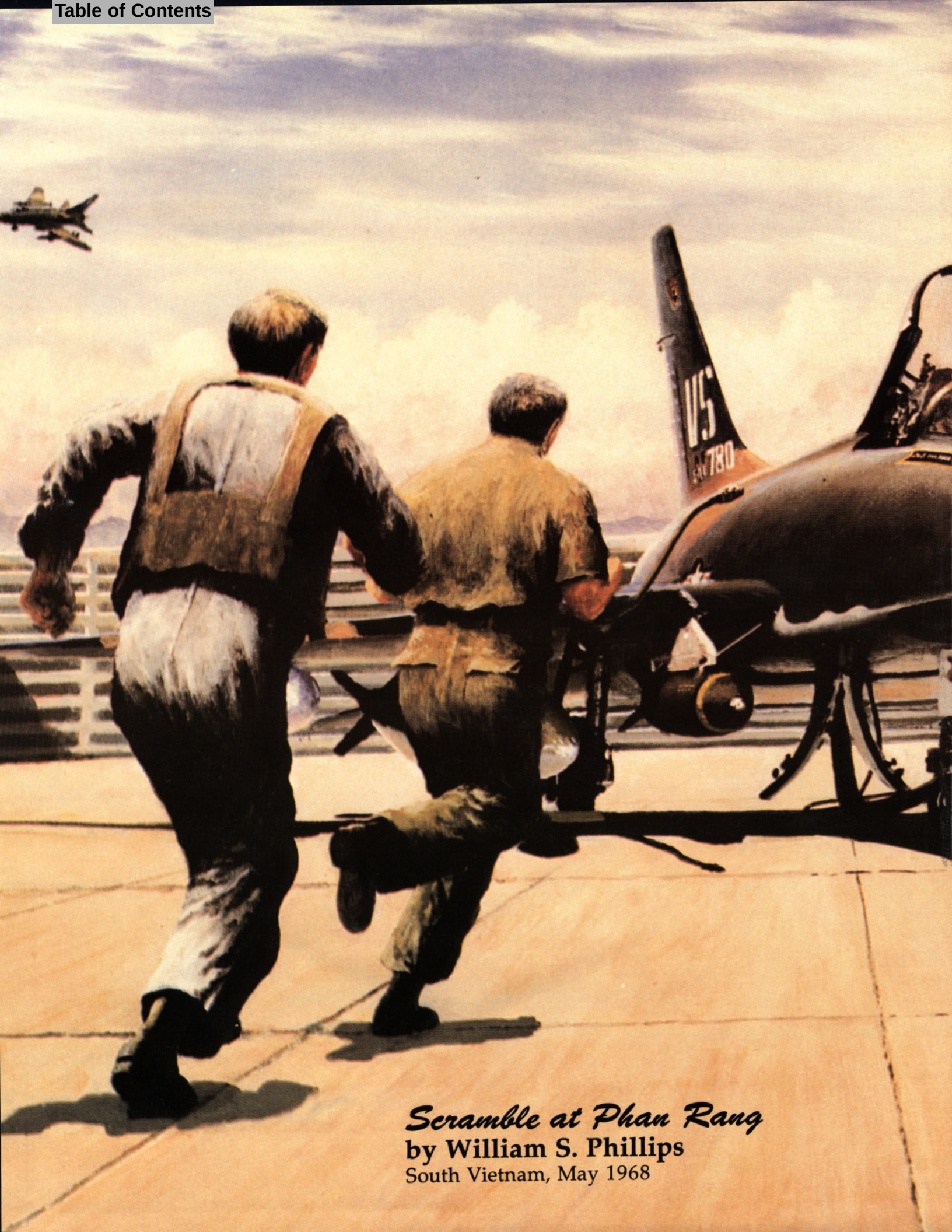
# COLORADO PRIDE

## A COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY OF THE COLORADO AIR NATIONAL GUARD

1923-1988

Table of Contents



*Scramble at Phan Rang*
**by William S. Phillips**
South Vietnam, May 1968

## For those who dare

It is not the critic who counts,
or how the strong man stumbled and fell,
or where the doer of deeds could have done better.
The credit belongs to the man
who is actually in the arena,
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood,
who strives valiantly, who errs and
comes short again and again, who knows
the great enthusiasms, the great devotion,
and spends himself in a worthy cause;
and if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly;
so that he'll never be with those cold and timid
souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Table of Contents

# *Scramble at Phan Rang*

## by William S. Phillips

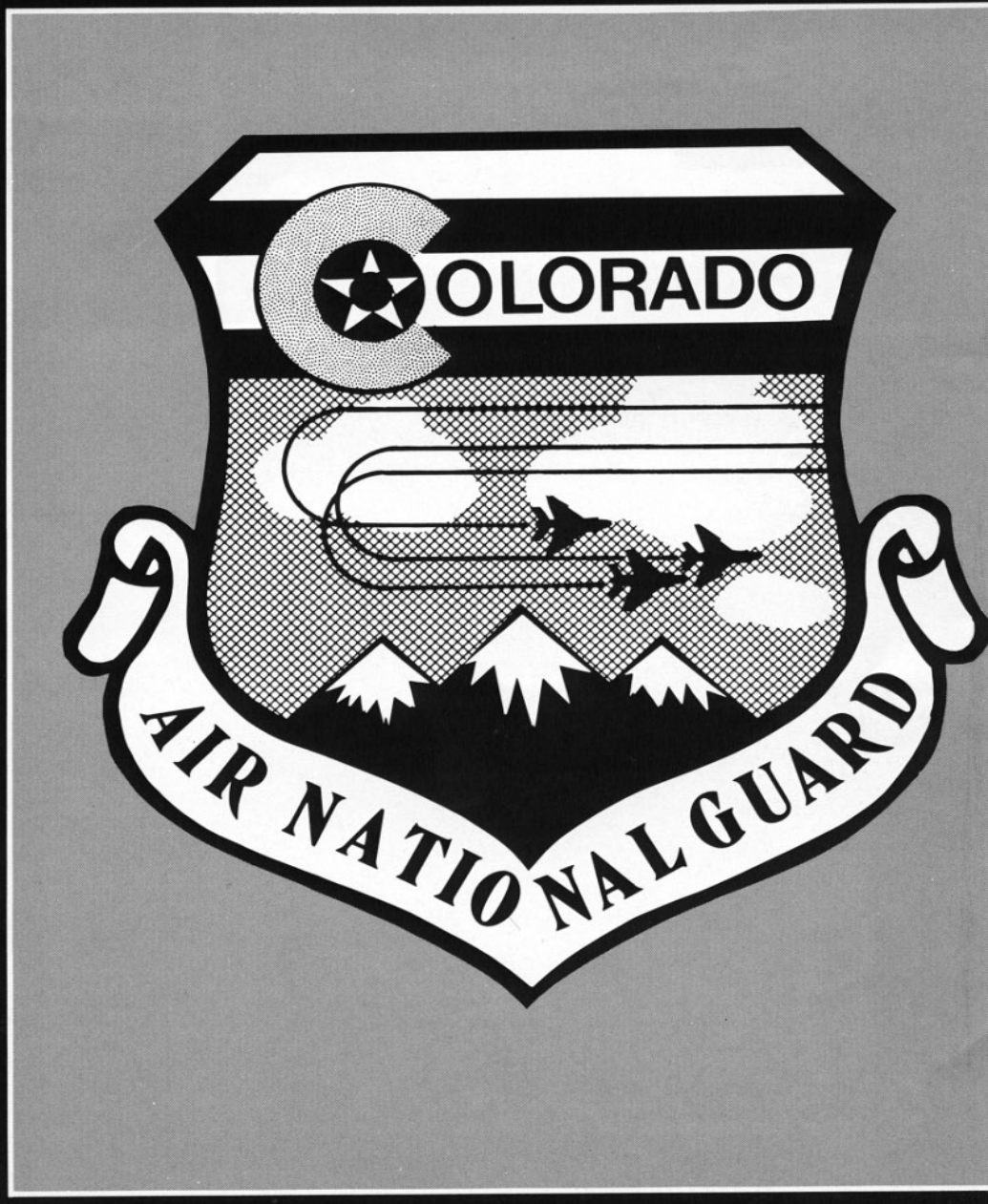
South Vietnam, May 1968

Part of the *National Guard Heritage* art series, the painting which appears on the preceding pages shows four Colorado Air Guardsmen scrambling to their F-100C on alert in a revetment. It depicts the combat readiness of the unit during its Vietnam tour of duty in 1968 and 1969. The caption that appears on this well-known work of art follows:

The 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Colorado Air National Guard, arrived at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, during the concluding days of the second Viet Cong offensive of 1968. The squadron was ordered into active federal service as a result of the *Pueblo* incident in January 1968, along with three other F-100 tactical fighter squadrons: the 136th TFS, New York; 174th TFS, Iowa; and the 188th TFS, New Mexico. The 120th TFS entered combat on 5 May 1968, two days after its arrival, and completed its 1,000th mission 51 days later.

During the Air National Guard's 11 months of service in Vietnam, the four F-100 squadrons flew 24,124 combat sorties and accumulated 38,614 combat flying hours. The Air Guard's record proved, once again, the combat-ready status and professionalism of the Air National Guard.

# Colorado Pride




## A Commemorative History 1923-1988

Table of Contents

# Foreword

This book, long overdue, is dedicated to a special breed of people, the citizen-airmen of the Colorado Air National Guard. While *Colorado Pride* tells a portion of the story of man's progress through flight, it specifically tells the Colorado Air Guard story — that of people who made a difference, of people who when called upon readily responded to their country's call. It covers the 65-year period from June 27, 1923, to the end of 1988.

Dating back to the early days of aviation, Colorado Air Guardsmen and their predecessors made an indelible mark in history books — etching their place in the annals of history while flying through the hostile skies over Europe and the South Pacific during World War II.

The 140th Fighter Wing became the first Air National Guard unit recognized after World War II. Wing personnel fought in the lonely and forgotten outposts of the

Colorado Air National Guard A-7 *Corsair II* (top left inset) and T-43 (bottom right inset, at Peterson Field, Pikes Peak in background). TPS-43 radar at sunrise near Wendover, Utah.

**Copyright © 1989 by the Colorado Air National Guard**
**International Standard Book Number: 0-9621980-0-5**
**Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 89-060294**
Printed in U.S.A. by TAYLOR PUBLISHING COMPANY — Dallas, Texas

Please see the Editorial Comments on pages 342 and 343 for additional information on *Colorado Pride*.

*Major Charles Whitley*
*Project Coordinator*

Korean conflict on behalf of the United Nations. The Berlin call-up in 1961 once again tested their mettle. Seven years later, Colorado became the first Air Guard organization to deploy as a unit to a combat zone — Phan Rang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam.

The wing and its subordinates have deployed throughout the world in the 1970s and 1980s. Other COANG units like the 154th Tactical Control Group and Det. 1 have performed their worldwide missions as well, building substantial reputations in the process.

Words and photographs alone cannot cover all the places, people and events that comprise nearly seven decades of history. It's but a blink of the eye. But what a blink! It is hoped that *Colorado Pride* will evoke memories for many readers. This is the story of people who truly "matched the mountains."

Our citizen-airmen did, and still do, represent all walks of life . . . stockbrokers, farmers, ranchers, businessmen, college students, homemakers, airline pilots and others. It's only fitting that we pay respect to those who in their own way have contributed so much to preserving our way of life. Our people fought in three of our nation's wars, giving much and in the process teaching us all a valuable lesson in service and citizenship.

We would be remiss if we did not also pay tribute to all of our friends and fellow airmen who gave the last full measure of devotion. Those who have left us must be remembered, for they're a part of the fiber and heritage that carries us forward.

To those from the illustrious past — and all present and future Colorado Air National Guard patriots — this book is respectfully dedicated.

**Roots:** For almost seven decades, Colorado Air National Guardsmen have exhibited an unselfish determination and willingness to sacrifice in defense of freedom.

Progressing through many mission and support aircraft through the years, Colorado has flown the A-7 since 1974. Shown here with their World War II-era *Corsair I* namesake, today's *Corsair IIs* have flown throughout the nation and world. Colorado A-7s outflew all competitors in *Gunsmoke '81,* earning the title carried forward today . . . **World Champions.**

# Table of Contents


Front Cover
Inside Front Cover
Colorado Pride . . . . . 1
Forward . . . . . 2
Table of Contents . . . . . 5
Historical Aircraft . . . . . 6
The Air Guard Story . . . . . 8
Aviation...the early years . . . . . 12
About the Air Guard Today . . . . . 16
I am the Guard. . . . . 18
Roy Romer - Governor of Colorado . . . . . 19
Colorado Senators. . . . . 20
History . . . . . 23
The Twenties ... historical overview . . . . . 25
The Thirties ... historical overview . . . . . 41
The Forties ... historical overview . . . . . 57
The War Years... . . . . 64
Stanford Gregory . . . . . 70
The Fifties ... historical overview. . . . . 81
Joe Moffitt . . . . . 102
The Sixties ... historical overview . . . . . 109
Walt Williams. . . . . 118
Vietnam - First ANG unit.... . . . . 130
Maj. Gen. John France remembers..... . . . . 140
COANG Activation Roster . . . . . 146
The Seventies ... historical overview. . . . . 151
John France . . . . . 164
The Eighties ... historical overview . . . . . 181
Gunsmoke '81 . . . . . 186
George Franzen . . . . . 194
COANG Historical Milestones . . . . . 214
Aircraft . . . . . 221
A-7 Corsair II . . . . . 226
COANG Units . . . . . 229
Headquarters, COANG . . . . . 230
140th Tactical Fighter Wing . . . . . 232
120th Tactical Fighter Squadron . . . . . 236
Colorplates . . . . . 242
Organizational Emblems. . . . . 244
Worldwide Deployments . . . . . 250
140th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron . . . . . 256
140th Mission Support Squadron . . . . . 268
140th Resource Management Squadron 272
140th Communications Flight . . . . . 276
140th Tactical Hospital . . . . . 278
140th Weapons System Security Flight . . 281
120th Weather Flight . . . . . 284
140th Civil Engineering Squadron . . . . . 286
240th Civil Engineering Flight . . . . . 290
HQ, COANG OL-BB (Det. 1). . . . . 292
154th Tactical Control Group . . . . . 296
138th Tactical Control Squadron . . . . . 300
227th Air Traffic Control Flight. . . . . 304
COANG 1988 Roster . . . . . 308
Special Features . . . . . 313
Hall of Stars . . . . . 314
Buckley Air National Guard Base . . . . . 320
COANG Glossary . . . . . 334
History of the "Other Side of the Mountain Gang" . . . . . 338
Editorial Comments . . . . . 342
Looking Back. . . . . 352
Inside Back Cover
Back Cover


## *Colorado Pride* Original Art Series

by James W. Potter, Jr.

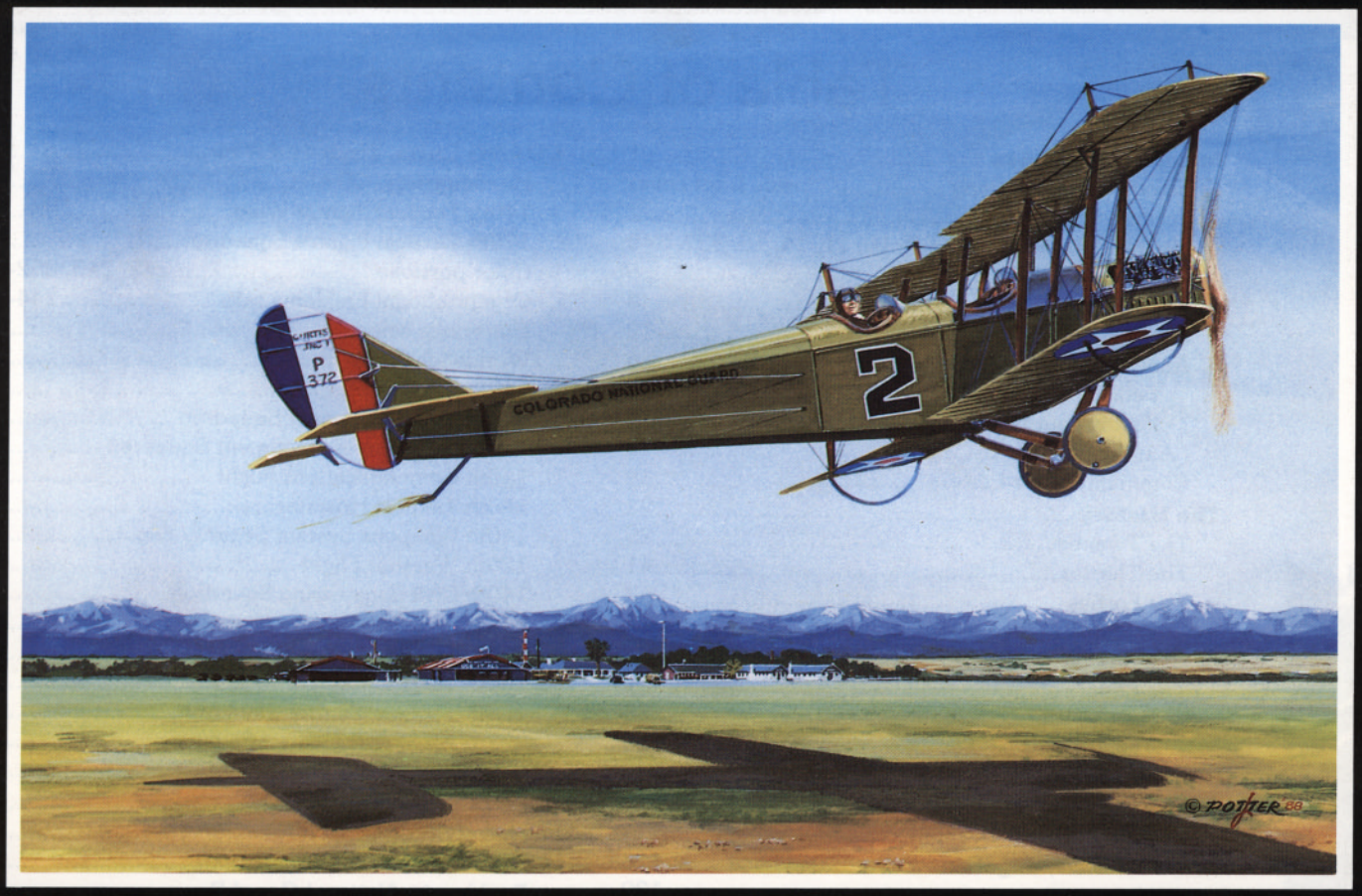
*Colorado Pride* is very proud to present a series of 16 original paintings of Colorado Air National Guard mission aircraft by James W. Potter, Jr. They appear throughout the book and on the inside back cover. Mr. Potter has reproduced and made commercially available all of his COANG artwork.

Born in Denver and graduated from East Denver High School, Potter served with the 120th Observation Squadron from 1938 through 1940, resigning to join the Army Air Corps. He served on active duty and in the Reserves until 1958, when he was honorably discharged as a first lieutenant.

Potter studied at the University of Colorado in Boulder and the University of Denver. He worked in art agencies in Denver for three years as a commercial artist, and later worked for the Boeing Co. in Seattle for 33 years as an artist and illustrator. Since his retirement in June 1985, he has been active in the American Society of Aviation Artists.

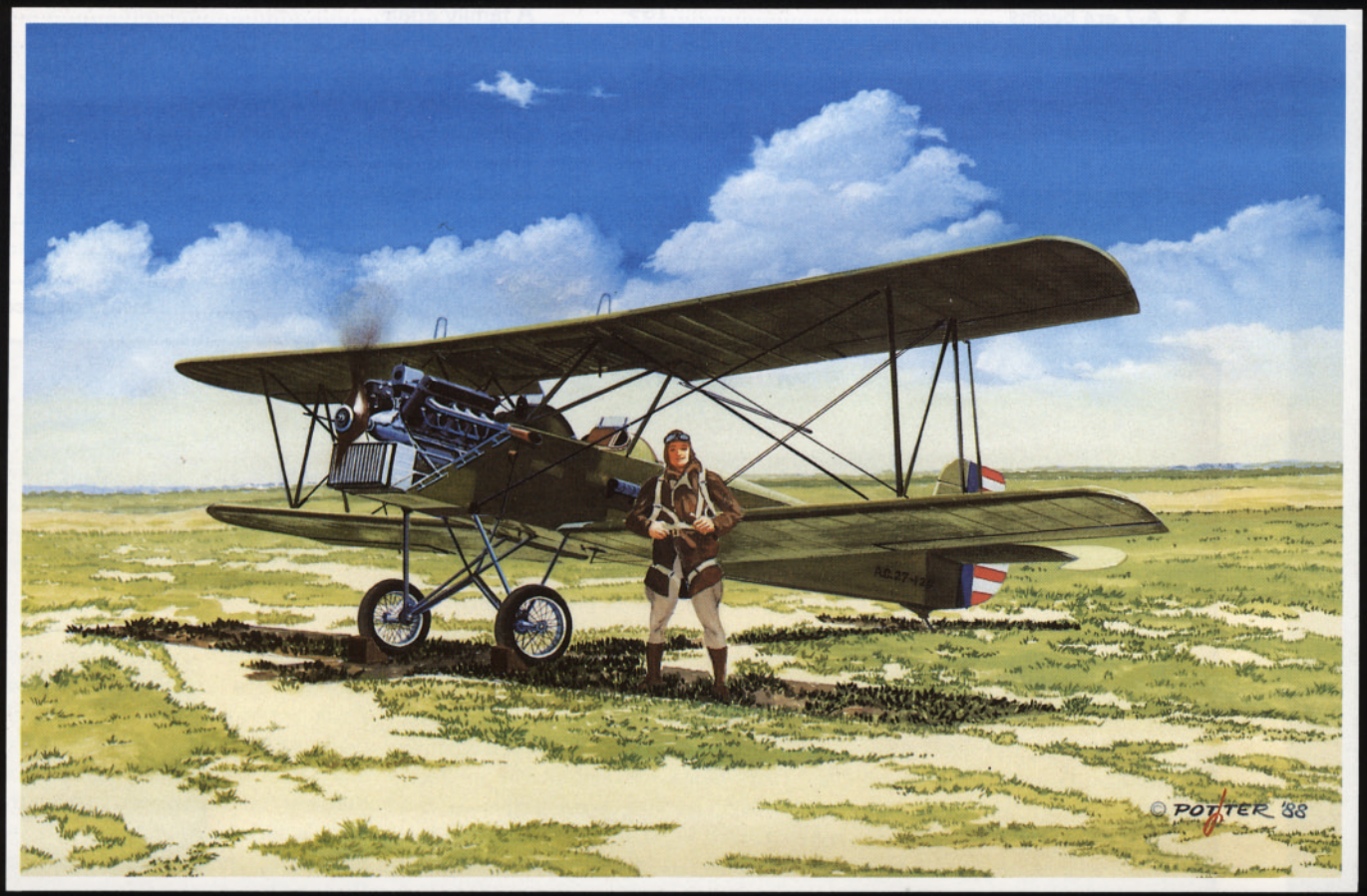
Jim Potter has contributed *considerable* time and great talent to this historically significant series. We are deeply grateful to our fellow Colorado Air Guardsman for his valuable contribution to *Colorado Pride*.


Copyright © 1988 Jim Potter (artist) All rights are reserved for *Colorado Pride* reproductions of art work. None of Mr. Potter's paintings, or any other art work in this publication, may be reproduced without the artist's permission. They are intended for one-time use in *Colorado Pride*.




## This Field is Small, Use It All

Curtiss JNSE *"Jennie"* (1924-1927) . . . Taking off from old Lowry Field (East 38th Avenue and Dahlia Street, Denver)




## Wooden Ships and Iron Men

Consolidated PT-1 (1927-1931) . . . Maj. Virgil Stone ready for takeoff . . . at old Lowry Field

## "Mile High Militia" Observation Duties

Douglas O-2H (1928-1934) . . . High off the Colorado foothills

## Back Home

Consolidated O-17 (1930-1935) . . . Taxiing to hangar area at old Lowry Field

**The First Muster** by Don Troiani
Salem, Mass., 1637

Adopting the English militia system in December 1636, the Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered all males between the ages of 16 and 60 to possess arms and participate in the defense of their community. The growing threat of the Pequot Indians warranted the first drill of the Colony's East Regiment more than 350 years ago, a tradition that continues to this day throughout the National Guard.

**"... the whites of their eyes!"** by Ken Riley
Bunker Hill, Boston, Mass., June 17, 1775

Colonial soldiers coolly held their fire as seven crack regiments of the British Army, the best infantry in the world, advanced toward them. Heeding an officer's warning: "Do not fire until you see the whites of their eyes," they waited ... fired ... and thus began the War for Independence. The Colorado Air Guard's precision flying team of the 1950s, the *Minute Men,* was named after these early militiamen.

# The Air Guard Story

The entire concept of the Guard began when a group of shopkeepers, fishermen and farmers first took up arms to defend the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636. Citizen-soldiers have been showing their courage ever since. They reinforced the Continental Army, helping to win our independence during the Revolutionary War. The militia that became the National Guard fought at Lexington and Concord and crossed the Delaware with Gen. George Washington, himself a Virginia militia officer.

Those early Minutemen played such a vital role in winning our freedom that the Militia Act of 1792 was written into the Constitution, a law that required all states to enroll men between the ages of 18 and 44 into state militias.

Militiamen were with Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans and also formed a vital force during the Mexican War. They served bravely on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line during the Civil War. They went up Cuba's San Juan Hill and chased bandits in Mexico with General John J. Pershing.

One of the most important events in the Air National Guard's history took place in 1911. It was then that a Guardsman from the 1st Company, Signal Corps of New York, first took to the air. The event took place just eight years after the Wright Brothers' famous flight at Kitty Hawk; it spelled the beginning of the modern-day Air National Guard.

Four years later, the 1st Aero Company, New York, the Guard's first organized aviation unit, was called to active duty to help put an end to Pancho Villa's raids along the Mexican border.

In 1917, Guardsmen enlisted in the active Army and served during World War I. They fought at Chateau Thierry, Belleau Wood and other locations — including Meuse-Argonne where 1st Lt. John Harold Buckley, the man for whom Buckley ANG Base is named, was killed.

During World War II, 4,800 men from 29 Guard observation squadrons, including Colorado's 120th Observation Squadron, were called to active duty. They helped form the nucleus of what was to become the greatest Air Force in world — the United States' Army Air Force. Guardsmen served on and above battle-

**Mission over Normandy** by William S. Phillips
Normandy, France, May 1944

The Michigan National Guard's 107th Observation Squadron was one of 29 National Guard squadrons, including Colorado's 120th Observation Squadron, ordered into federal service for World War II to augment the rapidly growing U.S. Army Air Forces. Flying the F-6A (recon version of the *Mustang)* in support of the 1st U.S. Army during the Normandy Campaign, the 107th was the first unit to operate from French soil.

**Air Guard in MiG Alley** by William S. Phillips
MiG Alley, North Korea, June 26, 1951

During the Korean War more than 45,000 Air Guardsmen, in 22 wings and other units including the Colorado Air National Guard, were called into active federal service. Flying F-84E *Thunderjets* in escort of USAF B-29s over "MiG Alley" in northwestern Korea, 1st Lt. Authur Oligher of Texas' 182nd Fighter-Bomber Squadron shot down a MiG-15 near Yongyu, the first Air National Guard jet "kill."

**The Rough Riders** by Mort Kunstler
Kettle Hill, Santiago, Cuba, July 1, 1898

Theodore Roosevelt recruited businessmen, cowboys and outdoorsmen for his 1st Volunteer Cavalry unit, better known as the "Rough Riders." The men from New Mexico joined more than 160,000 other National Guardsmen who entered federal service when war was declared with Spain in April 1898. The American victory at Kettle Hill in support of the Battle of San Juan Hill led to the Spanish surrender two weeks later.

**Trail-Blazers in the Sky** by Woodi Ishmael
Mineola, New York, Nov. 19, 1916

One by one,10 JN-4 *Jennies* dropped out of cloud-laden skies at the end of their trail-blazing flight, the first mass cross-country flight in U.S. military aviation history. The pioneer flight from Mineola to Princeton, N.J. and back set the stage for Air National Guard accomplishments in the years to come. A year later, most members of New York's 1st Aero Company were flying combat missions in France.

fields from Bataan and Corregidor to Anzio and Berlin.

After the war, the 120th Fighter Squadron of Colorado became the first federally recognized Air National Guard unit. It was then that Air National Guard units began to evolve into what they are today. And it was then that citizen-airmen, giving two days a month to serve their country, took their place beside citizen-soldiers in defense of our nation.

In 1947, the National Security Act was passed. With that, our organization was officially named the Air National Guard. And since then, dependence upon the Air Guard for the security of our country, as well as individual states, has increased steadily.

Twenty-two wings with 66 tactical squadrons, for example, were called to active duty during the Korean conflict. Pilots from the 120th Fighter Squadron answered the call in their P-51 *Mustangs,* while other wing personnel served at Clovis AFB, N.M., and elsewhere. In 1961, the 140th Air Defense Wing and more than 22,000 of the nation's Air Guardsmen responded to the Berlin crisis.

**Watch Over the Rhine** by Ed Valigursky
Germany, 1961-1962

As the Soviets tightened their grip on West Berlin, and events appeared to be escalating toward a nuclear showdown, President John F. Kennedy mobilized 65,460 Army and Air National Guardsmen from many states including Colorado. Air Guard units like Tennessee's 151st Fighter Interceptor Squadron patrolled the skies over Europe in the greatest display of citizen-airmen combat readiness to date.

On Jan. 26, 1968, 11 ANG units with more than 9,000 people were called to active duty in response to the Pueblo crisis and Tet offensive. The Air National Guard flew nearly 30,000 combat sorties during the Vietnam War; more than 2,000 Air Guardsmen served in combat. At the same time, Air Guard units comprised more than three-fifths of America's total air power in Korea.

The 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron and wing members spent 15 months on active duty, including a year at Phan Rang AB, Republic of Vietnam. The 120th flew almost 6,000 combat missions with its F-100C *Super Sabres,* earning in the process the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with the "V" device for valor.

But while our strength and readiness capabilities have made us a powerful wartime force, they also serve as a powerful deterrent to war. That really is the ultimate mission of the citizen-airman — to preserve peace and protect the people of our country, our states and our hometowns.

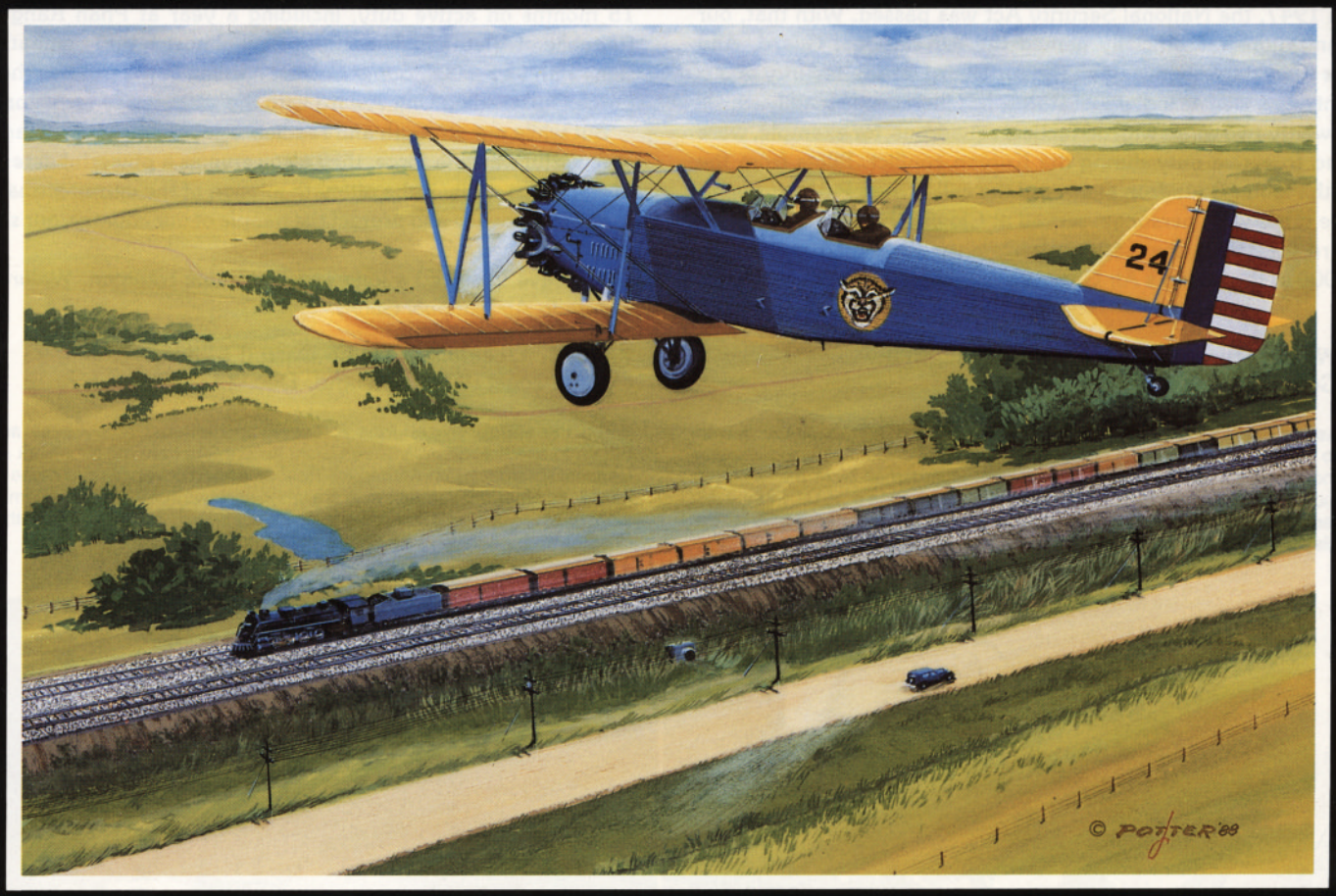
We have inherited a long and honorable tradition. *We are the Colorado Air National Guard.*

**Atlantic Ocean Rescue** by Darrell Millsap
Off the coast of Long Island, Dec. 27, 1979

When the sailing vessel *John F. Leavill* encountered heavy seas and began to sink, HH-3E *Jolly Green Giant* helicopters from the New York Air National Guard's 106th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group came to its aid. As night descended, nine crewmen and two 106th pararescuemen who directed the operation were hoisted aboard, adding yet another chapter to the annals of Air Guard peacetime heroism.

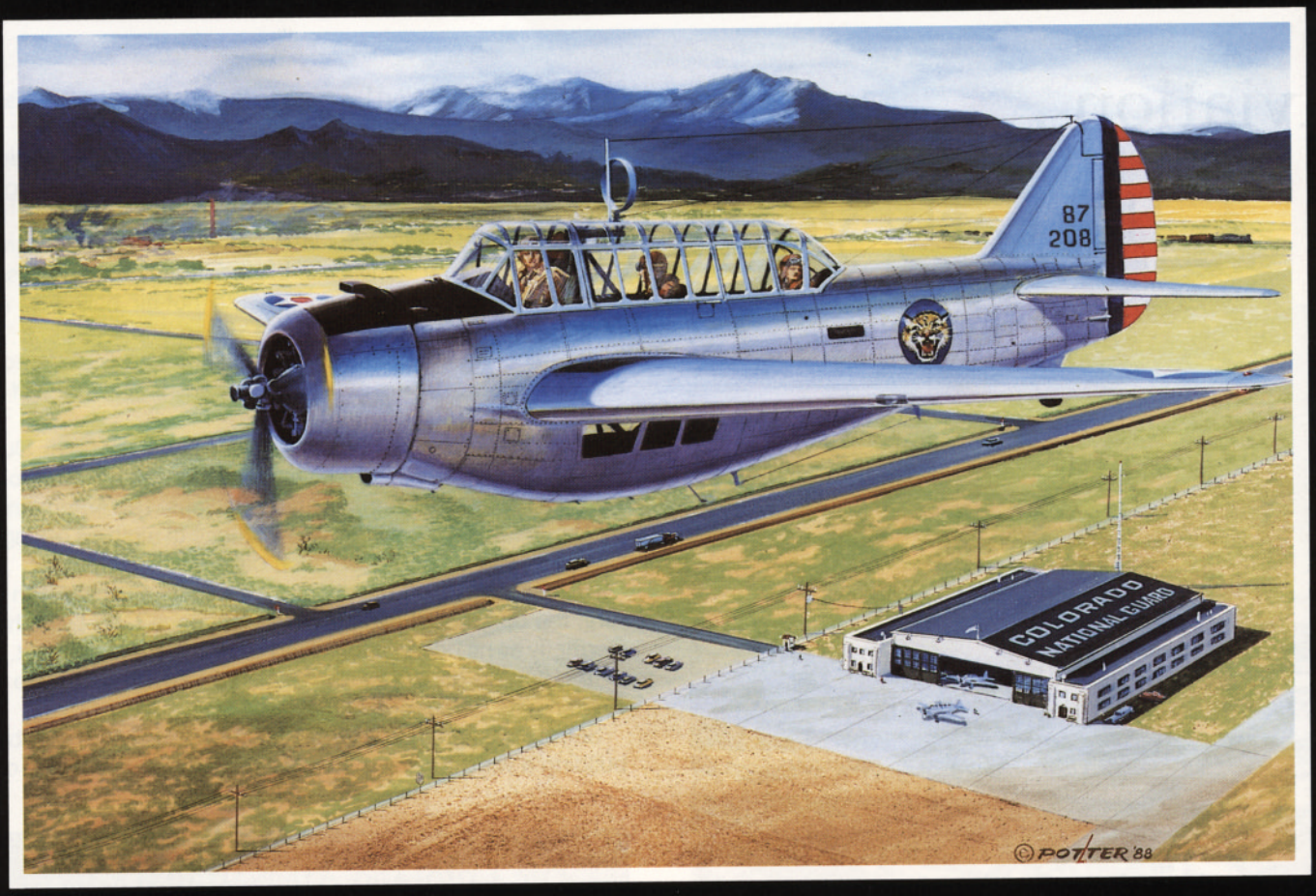
## *Dry Run*

Douglas O-38 (1933-1935) . . . Making low pass over Colorado arroyo, heading for firing range




## *Airborne*

Thomas-Morse O-19E (1935-1938) . . . Taking off from old Lowry Field, north over Smith Road




## *Cougar Patrol*

**North American O-47 (1938-1943) . . . Three seats and an enclosed cockpit over 120th OS hangar at Stapleton Field**

## *Alpine Panorama*

**North American P-51D *Mustang* (1946-1953) . . . High over the Continental Divide**



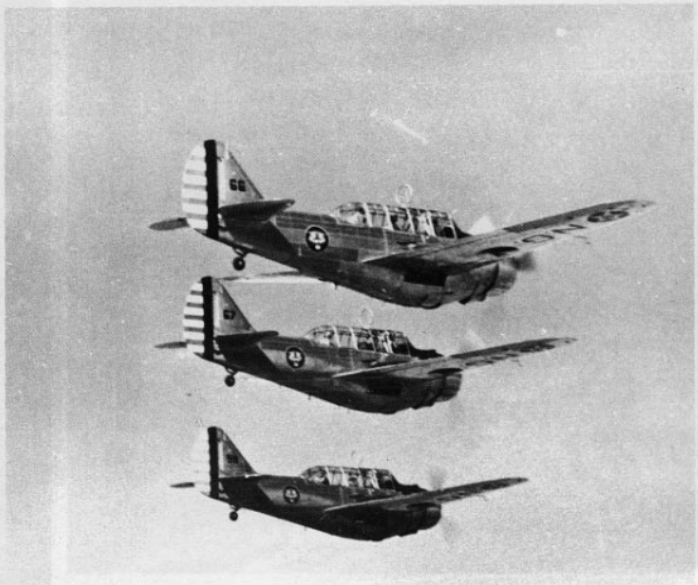
Table of Contents

# Aviation . . .

## the early years

**The wonders of flight:** Douglas O-2Hs stacked near Pikes Peak, 1931.

**Eternal vigilance the price of freedom:** Colorado took North American O-47s to Biggs Field in 1941 for World War II duties.



Since man first lifted his eyes to the heavens, he's dreamed of conquering the sky.

In the 15th century Leonardo da Vinci directed his genius to the observation of birds in flight. His manuscript, "The Flight of Birds," contained sketches of flying machines and set forth principles used many years later by the first glider designers.

In the 1700s, the Montgolfier brothers, Jacques and Joseph, of France began experimenting with hot-air balloons. After using test subjects of a rooster, a sheep and a duck, a "test pilot" named Jean-Francois de Rozier soared 85 feet, to the end of a tether, staying airborne for nearly four-and-a-half minutes.

The military soon found a use for the wonders of flight. During the French Revolution, observation balloons were used for the world's first aerial reconnaissance missions. The American military first realized the military significance of airships during the Civil War, also using observation balloons.

Developed by the English during the first half of the 19th century, the first model gliders would influence Otto Lilienthal of Germany as he became the world's first "hang glider pilot." Lilienthal flew his gliders by shifting his weight, making more than 2,000 flights before crashing fatally in 1896.

Samuel P. Langley returned to da Vinci's study of birds, building a wind tunnel in the late 1890s to study lift and drag.

### The Colorado Air National Guard

" . . . It is only natural, I suppose, that Colorado fliers would excel . . . after all, they are starting a mile nearer the sky . . ."

*Former Colorado Senator Gordon S. Allott*

**An age of daring and courage:** The COANG's famed *Minute Men* F-86 Sabre Jet aerial demonstration team, 1958.

In December 1903, his steam-powered airplane crashed in a launch attempt from a houseboat in the middle of the Potomac River.

Six days later, two brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, made aviation history. The toss of a coin on the morning of Dec. 14, 1903, decided that Wilbur would attempt the first powered-aircraft flight. It lasted only 3.5 seconds; the airplane stalled shortly after liftoff.

We celebrate Dec. 17, 1903, as the day of man's first powered flight. The Wright brothers actually made their second through fifth flights on this day; the longest flight lasted 59 seconds with the aircraft traveling 852 feet. These were the world's first controlled flights of powered heavier-than-air craft.

In August 1907, the chief signal officer of the U.S. Army established the Aeronautical Division, which consisted of one officer. The Wright brothers were awarded a contract to build an airplane that could carry two people at a speed of 40 miles per hour for 125 miles. When the Army established the military aviation rating in 1912, there were but 17 Army pilots.

In 1914, the Curtiss JN-1, the forerunner of the famous *Jenny,* was formally accepted by the Signal Corps. At the same time they created the 1st Aero Squadron, under the command of Capt. Benjamin Foulois, the first Army pilot trained back in the "old days" of 1909. A photo of Maj. Gen. Foulois in the 1950s appears on page 49 of *Colorado Pride.*

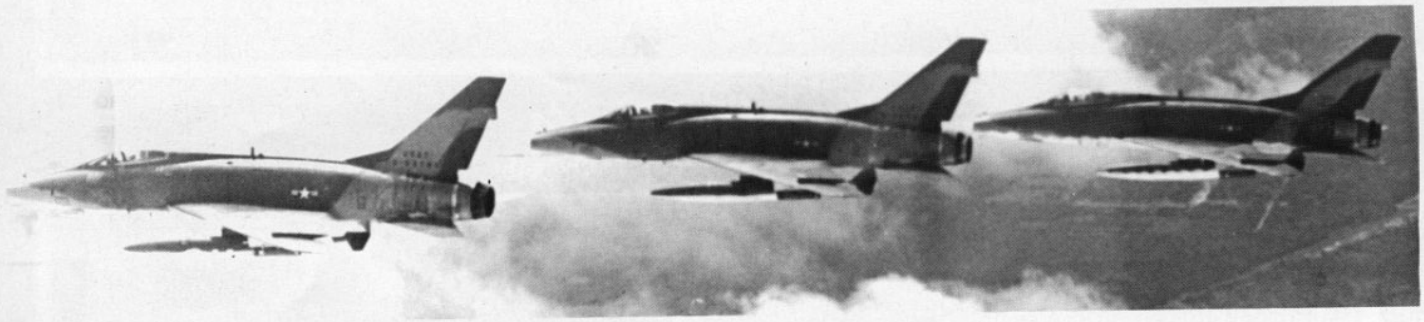
World War I was a time of rapid growth and development for military aviation. The war in the air was not limited to dogfights and observation missions. It also saw the beginnings of strategic bombing. By 1916 both sides realized that aerial bombardment was an integral part of warfare.

Although the air war was more glamorous than the war in the trenches, it was by no means less dangerous. The average life expectancy of a fighter pilot in 1916 was three weeks. The pilots, always under the spectre of sudden death, pushed themselves, and their airplanes, to the limit. The aircraft of the day were extremely temperamental; they'd shed wings, stall out and spin without warning. They were also highly flammable — often burning with the helpless pilot inside.

Until the end of the war no pilot carried a parachute. This was partly because of their size and weight and partly due to the insistence of ground-oriented superiors who thought pilots would be prone to jump from "perfectly good airplanes." Added to it all was the fact that some pilots thought using a parachute was "sissy."

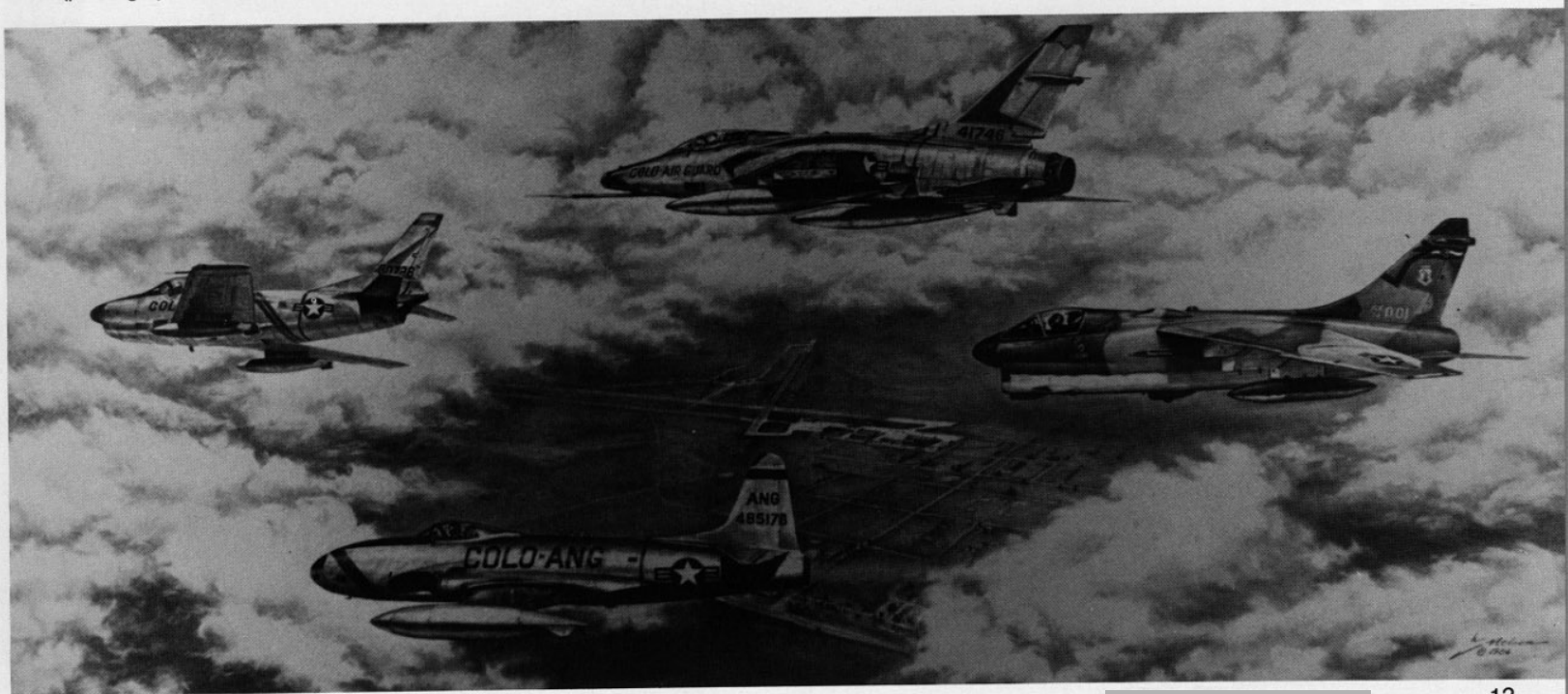
It was an age of men whose daring and courage brought them both fame and, in many instances, early death as they pursued man's dream of flying.

*The dream continues . . .*



**Man's flight through life is sustained by the power of his knowledge:** COANG F-100s earned great respect for the Air National Guard in Colorado's 1968 Vietnam activation.

**On Guard:** from the left, North American F-86 *Sabre Jet,* Lockheed F-80 *Shooting Star,* North American F-100 *Super Sabre* and LTV's A-7D *Corsair II* (painting by W. Nelson).



## *Jet Age Roots*

**Lockheed F-80C *Shooting Star* (1953-1957) . . . Over the Colorado plains**

## *Wild Blue Yonder*

**North American F-86 *Sabre Jet* (1955-1960) . . . With Long's Peak in the background**

## *Mission Vietnam*

North American F-100C *Super Sabre* (1961-1971) . . . IV Corps sortie on ammo-carrying sampan, Mekong Delta, 1968

## *Double Sluf*

LTV A-7D *Corsair II* (1974-Present) . . . Flying tandem over Denver looking west to the Rockies, approximately 1981



Table of Contents

# About the Air Guard Today

The men and women in the Air National Guard are full-time civilians, part-time airmen; people with just about every type of civilian job you can imagine.

They're your neighbors and friends. And once a month they meet together — to operate and maintain the equipment — and wear the uniforms of the U.S. Air Force.

It's a quiet kind of patriotism. Because there's a job to do — the most important part-time job there is. Protecting America. And all Americans. In time of war or natural disaster.

The distinguishing feature of the Air National Guard is its dual status as both a federal and a state military force.

## Federal Mission

Under their federal mission, Air Guard units are available for mobilization as a federal force . . . by call or order of the president; upon declaration of war by Congress; or when otherwise authorized by law. The Guard's primary federal mission is to create and maintain a force of trained and operationally ready units and individuals available for active duty in time of national emergency or war.

We can meet the challenge because we get the highest level of training our Air Force counterparts receive. What's more, the concept of the dedicated and patriotic citizen serving part-time has enabled us to do a crucial job, side by side with Air Force counterparts, whether protecting America's skies or this nation's interests abroad.

**Equal partners:** Formed at the same time as the USAF in 1947, the Air National Guard has become a vital part of the total force.

**A-7 orientation ride:** Maj. Andy Love with the COANG's peacetime commander, fellow pilot Gov. Roy Romer, June 1988.

## State Mission

The Colorado Air Guard serves state and local communities as well. In peacetime, the Air Guard is commanded by the governor. Under its mission, Guard units protect life and property, and preserve state internal security. The Guard is the only military force immediately available to a community in the event of a natural disaster or emergency.

The Colorado Air National Guard has flown food, clothing and medical supplies to regions isolated by floods and blizzards and provided assistance in the aftermath of tornadoes. We've helped spot forest fires and air-dropped feed to snowbound cattle. We've also helped search for lost people and locate downed airplanes. On many occasions we've airlifted victims to life-saving medical facilities.

Down on the ground, our mission support units have offered all sorts of emergency services, including providing electrical power, illumination and medical support to areas ravaged by natural disaster. The Colorado Air Guard also has sponsored programs to help the handicapped and the underprivileged.

On top of everything else, we've staged countless static displays, open houses and air shows, thrilling millions of spectators with the story of the Colorado Air National Guard.

The Air Guard's dual federal-state role enables a single body of military personnel, with a single outlay of money for training, equipment, facilities and administration to fulfill two vital tasks . . . one of national defense and one of assistance during state emergencies.