

# The Forties . . . historical overview

The 1940s began with the possibility of war in the thoughts of every American. An election at such a crucial time convinced President Roosevelt to run for an unprecedented third term. Late in 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II, quickly ending any arguments over American foreign policy and unifying the nation to meet the crisis. The wheels of war were set in motion.

By 1943, the peacetime industrial establishment had been converted into a mighty wartime arsenal. Industry, agriculture and labor joined forces in support of the war effort. Despite 1942's bumper agricultural crops, it was difficult to meet the tremendous demand for food for America and its allies. Domestic consumption was partly controlled through rationing imposed by the Office of Price Administration.

Even though the activities of individual citizens were more strictly supervised by the government than at any other time in the history of the United States, the American people still escaped the severe regimentation so commonplace in most nations.

American labor was on the upswing, with a production record from 1940 to 1941 surpassing any previous record in the nation's history. Wages as well as the length of the work week rose along with the production rate. The greatest of all assets the United States had in the early war years was that of its transportation system. Railroads and shipping lines operated at their highest level of efficiency.

Even though Japan had brought us into the war, the threat of the Japanese empire was subordinated by the strategy of the Allied powers to defeat Nazi Germany. From the moment the U.S. entered the war its energies were mainly directed toward the liberation of Europe from Hitler's tyrannical stranglehold.

On May 7, 1945, at Reims, France, a representative of the German general staff accepted the terms of "unconditional surrender." *V-E Day was at hand!* The United States exploded an atomic bomb over Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945. Three days later a plutonium 239 bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. The world had its first look at the most devastating weapon ever conceived by man. All previous international strategies

became obsolete. The Japanese signed surrender documents on Sept. 1, 1945 — the great war had finally ended . . . leaving many devastated nations in its wake. The possibility of nuclear confrontation would affect the foreign policy of every major power from this point on.

The most important of all the wartime conferences was held at Yalta in the Crimea, with England's Churchill, Russia's Stalin and America's President Roosevelt in attendance. Secret, as well as public, decisions were made concerning the

division of postwar Europe . . . decisions which continue to impact on the world. By the close of 1945, 51 nations had ratified the United Nations Organization Charter; the U.N.'s first meeting was held on Jan. 10, 1946.

During 1946 and 1947 relations between the Soviet Union and the Western powers slowly deteriorated. The problem of administering the conquered nations was a long and difficult task. The Soviets dropped an "Iron Curtain" dividing Europe, making it difficult to sustain favorable diplomatic relations. A Communist movement penetrated Asia as well, setting the stage for future confrontations in a distant arena.

Vice President Harry Truman assumed office after the death of President Roosevelt on April 12, 1945. The new president quickly showed decisiveness which reassured his nation. The close election of 1948 was a surprising victory for Truman. He subsequently proposed a "Fair Deal" program advocating legislation to continue the assistance programs of the New Deal. Prices soared; inflation was checked only by a great outpouring of goods by industry. The

American dream of high employment, ample food and available housing became a reality that directed the efforts of most Americans well into the next decade.

The decade ended with a world tired of war and torn by progressively strained East-West relations. Underlying the struggle for world power was the knowledge that another war — this time with nuclear weapons — could bring doom to mankind.

The *Cold War* had begun.



Anti-Aircraft Quits Must Have Something To Aim At

# NATIONAL GUARD BILL SIGNED BY ROOSEVELT

(Continued From Page 1)

be drawn. There are no provisions, however, which would require a soldier to be first, for some aut. The S. some aut. two weeks at the end of summer man- ning of the is- period. The last Aug. 31.

**MAY SERVE ANYWHERE IN WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

The guardsmen and reserve including all those summoned in later contingents, may be by the president to serve in the western hemisphere or in any other sphere.

service illness or injuries to be provided.

Re-Employment—Employers who require to re-employ soldier who makes application for reinstatement, job forty days after completing service unless employer finds it "impractical or unreasonable" to do so. States district attorneys employ to act as attorney for soldier to force re-employment. Sailors to receive benefits and sailors relief act. Limited to period, 1942.

of the women

## WE'VE STARTED FOR COLORADO AVIATION UNIT

movement for aviation unit of National Guard was started at the statehouse by two days a mountain division to the Colorado National Guard. The new aviation equipment for which the government will be in effect, a part of the old 120th of Colorado and, either under its old name or the famous Colorado called to the. It was at the by Maj. W. Gregory, commander of the Colorado National Guard.

## NEW PLANES AND EQUIPMENT COMING FOR GUARD AIR WING

New airplanes and the latest scientific aviation equipment will begin arriving in Denver within the next few days as the Colorado National Guard prepares to activate its new aviation wing. The wing, already organized, will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado. The wing will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

## GUARD AIR UNIT SEEKS EX-G.I.'S

The Colorado National Guard is seeking former military aviators to join its new aviation wing. The wing, which will be activated in the next few days, will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado. The wing will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

## COLORADO AIR FORCE LEAVES ON WEDNESDAY

The Colorado Air Force will leave for Fort Bliss on Wednesday. The force, which is being reorganized as the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing, will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado. The wing will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

## Will Hop Off Maneuver Of Pilot Strength

The 12th observation squadron of the Colorado National Guard will be activated on Wednesday as scheduled for maneuvers in Louisiana. The squadron, which is being reorganized as the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing, will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado. The wing will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

## GERMAN QUITS

Germany has declared its intention to withdraw from the world, according to a statement by the German government. The statement, which was issued in Berlin, announced that Germany had decided to withdraw from the world and to concentrate its efforts on the reconstruction of its own country. The statement also announced that Germany had decided to withdraw from the world and to concentrate its efforts on the reconstruction of its own country.

## NEW YELDED FETE

A new fete was held in Denver, Colorado, on Wednesday. The fete, which was held at the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing, was a success. The fete, which was held at the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing, was a success. The fete, which was held at the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing, was a success.

## Shouts Over

Shouts were heard over the radio when the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing was activated. The wing, which was activated on Wednesday, will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado. The wing will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

# ROOSEVELT IS DEAD!

## Air Show at Buckley Today

The air show at Buckley Airfield today will feature a variety of aircraft, including fighters, bombers, and transport planes. The show is expected to attract a large crowd of spectators. The air show at Buckley Airfield today will feature a variety of aircraft, including fighters, bombers, and transport planes. The show is expected to attract a large crowd of spectators.

## Country's Largest Postwar National Guard Aviation Organization Will Have Headquarters in City; Colorado to Have 1,989 Personnel.

Denver will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country. The organization, which will be activated in the next few days, will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado. The wing will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

## Airline Pilots Double as Fighters

Many airline pilots are being trained as fighters. The training program, which is being conducted by the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing, will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado. The wing will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

## Best Observation Squadron In World - Wilson

The 12th observation squadron of the Colorado National Guard is being hailed as the best observation squadron in the world. The squadron, which is being reorganized as the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing, will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado. The wing will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

## Expect Drama To Reach High At Fort Bliss

A dramatic air show is expected to take place at Fort Bliss. The show, which will feature a variety of aircraft, including fighters, bombers, and transport planes, is expected to attract a large crowd of spectators. The show is expected to take place at Fort Bliss.

## Razzle-Dazzle

A razzle-dazzle performance is being held at the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing. The performance, which will feature a variety of acts, including music, dance, and comedy, is expected to attract a large crowd of spectators. The performance is being held at the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing.

## Radar Net Spots Plane, 'Saves Denver'

A radar net spotted a plane that was heading towards Denver. The plane, which was spotted by the radar net, was intercepted by the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing. The plane, which was spotted by the radar net, was intercepted by the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing.

## One of

One of the most important members of the Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing is the pilot. The pilot, who is responsible for the safe operation of the aircraft, is a highly trained and experienced aviator. The pilot, who is responsible for the safe operation of the aircraft, is a highly trained and experienced aviator.

# PEACE



## Truman Takes the Oath

President Truman has taken the oath of office. The ceremony took place in the White House. President Truman has taken the oath of office. The ceremony took place in the White House.

## Gregory to Head Guard Plane Unit

Major W. Gregory will head the new aviation wing of the Colorado National Guard. The wing, which will be activated in the next few days, will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado. The wing will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

## Colorado's Greatest Turnout War Show at Buckley

A record number of people attended the war show at Buckley Airfield. The show, which featured a variety of aircraft, including fighters, bombers, and transport planes, was a great success. The show, which featured a variety of aircraft, including fighters, bombers, and transport planes, was a great success.

## R. G. Leuenberger, Former Teacher, Dies at Fitzsimons

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## September 1948

September 1948 was a month of significant events. The Colorado National Guard Aviation Wing was activated. The wing, which will include all National Guard aviation organizations in Colorado, will have a total of 1,989 personnel, including 1,000 National Guardsmen and 989 civilian personnel. The wing will be the headquarters for the largest postwar National Guard aviation organization in the country.

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**North American P-51:** Acquired by the Colorado Air Guard after World War II, the "miracle" *Mustang* played a decisive role in the air war over Western Europe. Showing its age against MiG-15s in the Korean War, it nevertheless ably served the nation and many COANG pilots in the 1950s conflict.

## The Forties

In its nearly two decades of existence, the Colorado unit had progressed from wooden and canvas airplanes to all-metal aircraft, from 85- to 1,000-horsepower engines, and from an organization of 58 men to a squadron of 150. The men were experienced in the unique aspects of mountain flying and had written some of the first books on aerial navigation. Maintenance crews had learned how to, literally, build an airplane from the ground up. All of this valuable knowledge benefited the Army Air Corps in the frenetic and dangerous years ahead, as many of the Colorado men went on to become instructors and serve in other duties during World War II.

### Global confrontations bring World War

The early 1940s witnessed the first call-up of the Colorado National Guard's air arm into the active military service of the United States. As the war effort geared up and extended periods of field training were contemplated, the unit lost some personnel due to civilian employment conflicts. Resignations depleted the officer strength of the squadron by more than 50 percent. The situation was not confined to Colorado, affecting National Guard units throughout the country.

At the time, the 120th Observation Squadron's commanding

officer, Maj. F.W. Bonfils, stated that calling his men away for training for a year's time would create serious problems in the unit. He went on to say, "If a national emergency existed, none of these questions would arise. The squadron, to a man, would be available and willing for a field service call-up." Adj. Gen. H.H. Richardson accepted, with reluctance, the resignations of Maj. Bonfils, operations officer Capt. Ray Wilson, medical officer Capt. Nole Mumey and other officers and key enlisted personnel. Many eventually did serve in the war with other units. Wilson and Bonfils continued their work with the W&B Flying School, located in Chickasha, Okla. One of several privately operated but Army-supervised primary flying schools, W&B trained many pilots who eventually saw service in World War II. Their training efforts were of great benefit to the war effort.

In August 1940, the squadron was granted a field training requirements waiver permitting them to go to De Ridder, La., near Lake Charles at less than full strength. There was some apprehension that the Guard would be mobilized immediately after the summer maneuvers and not return home. Gen. Richardson assured Guardsmen and area employees that the squadron would not be activated before November or December and would be brought to full strength by the assignment of

reserve flying officers and enlisted personnel from other units.

During the same August maneuvers, legislation passed giving President Roosevelt the authority to order almost 400,000 National Guardsmen and Army reservists into active service.

The bill permitted use of the reserves and National Guard anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, American possessions or the Philippine Islands.

Preparations began shortly thereafter for troop movements



**Biggs Field, Texas:** 120th OS maintenance men prepare their O-47 for aerial photo mapping and observation duties in support of the 1st Cavalry Division, 1941. From left: Wayne Carlton, unidentified, Harry Kemerling.

### Aviation Perspective

Army Regulation 955 created the Army Air Force (AAF) on June 20, 1941; within five months the AAF was engaged in a two-front war. Although initial high-altitude daylight precision bombing raids into Germany met with disaster, Generals Hap Arnold and Carl Spaatz retained the strategy. P-38 *Lightnings* and P-47 *Thunderbolt* escort planes were fitted with extra fuel tanks, stop-gaps until P-51 *Mustangs* arrived.

The first American air unit to see action against the Japanese was the American Volunteer Group (AVG) *Flying Tigers*, flying Curtiss P-40 *Warhawks* in China. Maj. Gen. Claire Chenault handed the AVG over to the AAF in the summer of 1942. The aircraft carrier quickly became the premier weapon in the Pacific Theater. Its importance was demonstrated, April 18, 1942, when Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle led 16 B-25 *Mitchell* bombers on a daring daylight raid of the Japanese mainland. Maj. Richard I. Bong, America's "Ace of Aces" in the Pacific, had 40 confirmed victories. American's European ace, Col. Francis S. Gabreski, had 28 confirmed victories.

By 1943, new American fighters, such as the F-6F *Hellcat* (designed specifically to out-perform the Japanese A6M

*Zero-sen*) and the F-4U *Corsair* (the predecessor of the A-7 *Corsair II*) were helping the U.S. gain air superiority. On Aug. 6, 1945, the world entered the atomic age when a B-29 *Superfortress* named "*Enola Gay*" dropped the "*Little Boy*" on Hiroshima. Three days later, "*Bock's Car*" dropped a second atomic bomb, the "*Fat Man*," on Nagasaki. Within five days, on Aug. 14, 1945, Japan surrendered unconditionally. Surrender documents were signed Sept. 1, 1945.

By 1946, the AAF had fallen from 2 million to just over 300,000 men and the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was formed. Its commander, Curtis LeMay (1948), used the B-29 and B-36 *Peacemaker* to organize the most powerful air fleet the world had ever seen. The National Security Act of July 26, 1947, established the Department of Defense and created the U.S. Air Force. Billy Mitchell's air service had finally gained its independence.

In 1948, the Soviets blockaded Berlin . . . and the first chills of the *Cold War* were felt. The Berlin Airlift began June 26, 1948; by July 20, 54 C-54s and 105 C-47s were airlifting 1,500 tons of supplies a day into Berlin. Finally, on May 12, 1949, the Soviets lifted the blockade.





**Inspection:** Crew chiefs, beginning with Stan Bogren, lined up in front of their glistening O-47s, Biggs Field, 1941.

the fall of 1940 after Maj. Bonfils' resignation. The squadron's activation strength was 19 officers and 116 enlisted men. Two squadron privates, Fred E. Harburg and Clad Christianson, were promoted to second lieutenant. At the same time, TSgt. Joe C. Moffitt was promoted to second lieutenant and assumed duties as an observation and engineering officer, beginning his unprecedented nine-year rise from technical sergeant to brigadier general in the Colorado Air National Guard. Moffitt received his pilot's rating in April 1941.

When activated, the unit owned nine O-47 aircraft and one BC-1A trainer, used to transition pilots into the O-47. Two other O-47s had been transferred to the Mississippi Guard to form a Meridian unit; both planes crashed one month after the transfer. The squadron, with only seven pilots assigned, did not have enough officers with pilot ratings to fly all of its O-47 aircraft to Biggs Field. Enlisted men traveled by train to Texas; four tourist cars, three baggage cars and 10 boxcars accommodated them.

**Going Over There:** Miss Joan Marqua says good-bye to Sgt. Robert Kinsey.



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# The Armament School



# Buckley Field

**Buckley Field:** Named for WWI aviator 1st Lt. John Harold Buckley, the Air Corps Technical School opened in July 1942.

of the Colorado Army National Guard by rail and motor to Fort Sill, Okla., for a year of intensive training. The Air National Guard was destined for activation and movement to Biggs Field, Texas.

"Everywhere," recounts the official USAF history, "there was breathless haste." While aircraft manufacturers geared up for increased warplane production, the Army Air Forces — stunned by the fall of Poland to Hitler's 500,000-man *Luftwaffe* — set out in 1940 to rush unprecedented numbers of pilots, navigators and bombardiers through accelerated flight training programs and into the air. The number of pilots completing training increased from 8,000 in 1941 to almost 300,000 in 1944.

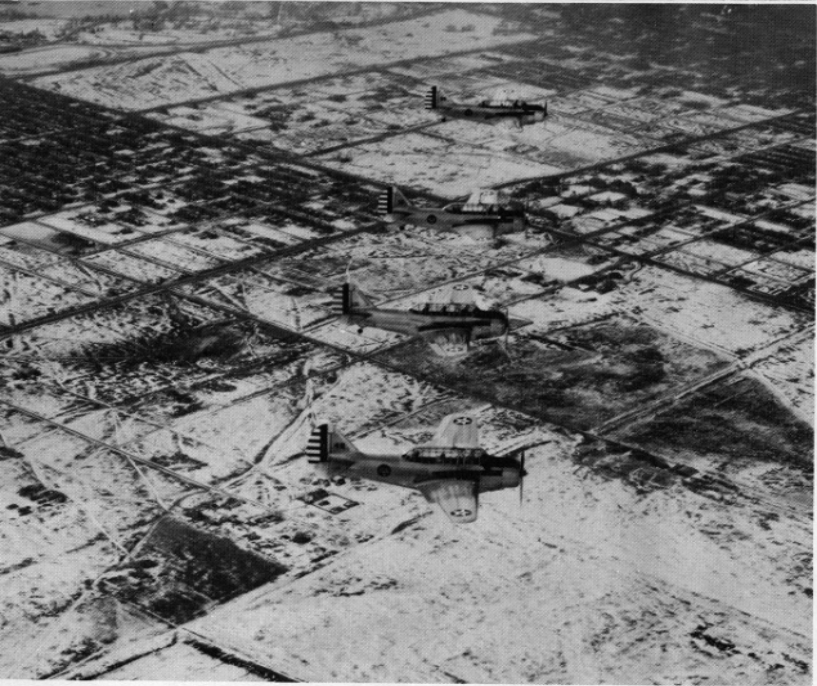
The glamour of silver wings attracted thousands of eager enlistees. "I never wanted anything so badly in my life," recalled a former pilot cadet. Young men, many of whom had never set foot in an airplane, flocked to recruitment centers, vowing — in the words of the Air Force song — to "live in fame or go down in flame."

## First unit activation

When the 120th entered active duty, Jan. 6, 1941, Maj. Harrison W. Wellman, Jr. was the commanding officer, appointed in



**Pre-activation duties:** Photo section with their mobile photographic lab trailer (left); O-47 on the Stapleton line. Both 1940.



**Old Lowry Field:** The northeast Denver original home of the COANG can be seen above the nose of the nearest O-47.

### Stinky Morrison

We called him "Stinky" Morrison because he was always, I mean constantly, washing his O-47.

*CMSgt. Wayne Carlton*

That darn hammer mechanic Carlton is just making conversation. I guess I did keep my plane pretty clean though.

*SMSgt. Stan Morrison*

**Biggs Field photo section:** Left to right . . . Byrna, Peterson, unidentified, Sigafoos, Brouwer, Williams and Harburg 1941.



### Any landing you walk away from . . .

I should probably describe our 140th Fighter Group fighter break maneuver. We would come up, wind across the runway at 500 feet and 260 knots and, when directly over the runway, we would lower the gear handle, do a chandelle to the left, pitching up to a thousand feet when we hit our downwind, and killing off our speed to 160 knots. We would then immediately drop our flap and continue our turn onto base leg. When we hit our downwind point, we would make a quick GUMPS check, i.e., gas, undercarriage, mixture, prop and straps. It was at this point once when I noticed I was a little low on fuel, but I no sooner saw the gauge than my engine quit. I quick hit the boost pump and switched tanks. I knew my left tank was also nearly dry, so I called the tower and told them I was declaring an emergency and was going to continue my approach. I guess in the excitement I let my speed build up, because I was nearly over the fence at 170 knots. I saw that I was going to land hot, so I decided to make a wheel landing. When I touched down, I was chewing up that 8,000 foot runway fast, so in between patches of ice on the runway, I would brake her down a bit. Since I still was rolling in on my wheels, my tail would start to come up each time I did. I guess it made a "hell of a sight to look at" because when I finally got her stopped and taxied in the group commander said, "Now what the hell kind of landing do you call that?!"

*Claude E. Owen*

You may have to fight when there is no hope of victory, because it is better to perish than live as slaves.

*Sir Winston Churchill, after the Battle of Britain*

**A motley crew:** Squadron engineering personnel, Biggs Field, Texas, 1941.







**Liaison pilots:** Flying sergeants Mutts Williams, Wayne Carlton, Howard Belles, Al Metzger and Harold Berryhill.

## Activation orders

Activation orders signed by President Roosevelt read:

### Executive Order

Ordering Certain Units and Members of the National Guard of the United States into Active Military Service of the United States.

By virtue of the authority conferred upon me by Public Resolution No. 96, 76th Congress, approved August 17, 1940, and

the National Defense Act of June 3, 1916, as amended and as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, I hereby order into the active military service of the United States, effective on the dates respectively indicated below, the following units and members of the National Guard of the United States to serve in the active military service of the United States for a period of twelve consecutive months, unless sooner relieved:

### Units & Members

Effective January 6, 1941, all federally recognized elements of: 120th Air Corps Observation Squadron (and others) all members, both active and inactive, of the unit listed below.

All persons so ordered into the active military service of the United States are, from the effective dates indicated above, relieved from duty in the National Guard of their respective states so long as they shall remain in the active military service of the United States, and during such time shall be subject to such laws and regulations for the government of the Army of the United States as may be applicable to members of the Army whose permanent retention in the active military service is not contemplated by law.

*Franklin D. Roosevelt, The White House  
August 31, 1940*

## Initial Roster, 120th Observation Squadron

### Air Corps Denver, Colorado

At Midnight, January 6, 1941, the date of Induction.

**Major**  
Wellman, Harrison W., Jr.

**Captains**  
Bent, Alfred E.  
Cunningham, Eugene  
Empey, Maurice M.  
Gregory, Stanford W.  
Williams, Ford E.

**First Lieutenants**  
Fackerell, Edward C.  
King, George F.  
Morris, James B.  
Ogle, William B.  
Schliecker, Charles L.  
Swink, Manfred W.  
Williams, Howard M.

**Second Lieutenants**  
Christensen, Clad P.  
Harburg, Frederick E.  
Lindsay, Franklin H.  
Moffitt, Joe C.  
Thatcher, Howard S.

**Medical Detachment  
Captain**  
Turner, Carlos L.

**Master Sergeants**  
McGrew, Samuel T.  
Rudolph, Edwin A.

**Technical Sergeants**  
Harkey, Marion L.  
Wilson, Robert E.

**First Sergeant**  
Anderson, Roy E.

**Staff Sergeants**  
Bahmeier, Joe A.  
Bogren, Stanley E.  
Byma, Adolph  
Carlton, Wayne W.  
DePry, Lawrence D.  
DeSaverio, Albert J.

Hamilton, John F.  
Lauck, Leroy L.  
Lauck, Richard B.  
Ludwig, John R.  
Metzger, Albert R.  
Morrison, Stanley M.  
Parrish, Paul R.  
Richards, Lloyd B.  
Rupe, William H.  
Summers, Lloyd H.

**Sergeants**  
Belles, Howard W.  
Hardesty, Raymond R.  
Hill, Arthur W.  
Lawrence, Leroy W.  
Luker, Charles G.  
Nelson, Calvin E.  
Pitts, Wilbur C.  
Wieder, George F.  
Williams, John M.

**Corporals**  
Champion, William J.  
Craft, Ace C.  
Harburg, James P.  
Leedom, Roy E.  
Mason, Robert P.  
Nordeen, Gerald C.

Spears, William N.  
Summers, Loyd H., Jr.

**Privates First Class**  
Chamberlain, Robert E.  
Collins, Rupert P.  
Gorman, Kenneth C.  
Hancock, James K.  
Hansen, Olaf R., Jr.  
Hedding, Milton V.  
Hemenover, Clifford M.  
Olsen, Mervin C.  
O'Rourke, Sam P.  
Schottleutner, Egon  
Sietsema, Ray A.

**Privates**  
Anderson, Kent J.  
Atwood, George M.  
Bahmeier, William R.  
Barnhart, George  
Baum, Harry L., Jr.  
Bell, Charles E.  
Berett, Edward G.  
Berryhill, Harold L.  
Bowen, Clyde C.  
Brouwer, Fred  
Brower, Carl D.  
Bush, Byron C.  
Bush, Charles B.  
Crandall, Orvel J.  
DeTirro, George M.  
Dill, Robert R.  
Dublin, Alfred C.  
Emily, Harry S.  
Fariss, Curtice C.  
Groves, George W.  
Haggerty, William E.

Hiler, Walter E.  
Hill, Dalsie  
Hill, Edward H.  
Hodgkins, Walter P.  
Jeremiason, Robert L.  
Johnson, Kennard F.  
Kallminzer, Malcolm A.  
Kemerling, Harry L.  
Killion, Dale D.  
Krafft, Walter J.  
Kramer, William H.  
Leffelbein, Donald W.  
Lippold, Lester L.  
Martin, Henry E.  
Mestepey, Lloyd T.  
Meyer, Harry  
Meyers, Thomas  
Morse, Bernard V.  
Nelson, Kenneth L.  
Ogle, Charles B.  
Person, Francis  
Peterson, Earl T.  
Pfenning, George H.  
Prentiss, James D.  
Proulx, Orville V.  
Race, Lowell E.

Rafferty, Richard S.  
Rhody, Theodore R.  
Riordan, Cecil S.  
Riordan, Floyd F.  
Rumetsch, Charles B.  
Scheuerman, Charles B.  
Schwartz, Robert E.  
Scott, Harry D.  
Shefcyk, Martin A.  
Sigafos, Thomas R.  
Smith, Paul K.  
Standley, Floyd J.  
Steere, Alphonso H.  
Stewart, Robert A.  
Thomas, John C.  
Tice, Joshua E.  
Von Trotha, Edgar L.  
Waddell, Everett V.  
Wagner, Louis E.  
Wich, George H.

**Medical Detachment  
Privates**  
Cox, Peter C.  
Hostetter, Harry R.  
Miller, Gardiner H.

Except as otherwise indicated after their names, I certify that the individuals whose names appear on this roster reported at Denver, Colorado, on July 6, 1941, and that all men listed claim the city of Denver, or its vicinity, as their place of residence.

*Harrison W. Wellman, Jr.  
Major, 120th Observation Squadron,  
Commanding.*

# The war years . . .

## Biggs Field, Texas

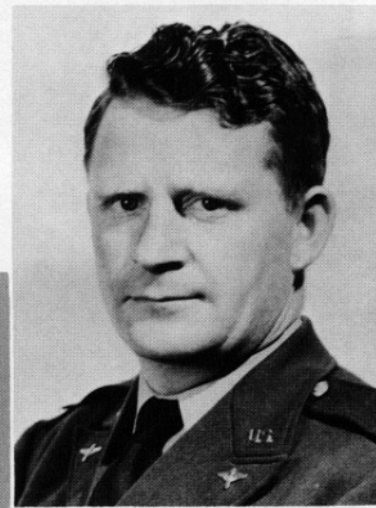
The 120th Observation Squadron's first duty station was Biggs Field, Texas, El Paso, Texas. The unit was later redesignated the 120th Reconnaissance Squadron. Its primary mission, supporting the 1st Cavalry Division, stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, consisted of adjusting artillery fire and simulating strafing and bombing attacks on troops in the field from Fort Bliss. Bombing attacks were simulated by dropping small flour sacks on field units.

A secondary mission was to provide target support for anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) units stationed in the El Paso area. Missions were accomplished by towing targets behind O-47 airplanes at various altitudes, using a 3,000-foot cable. Night missions were conducted with the AAA units using glaring searchlights, creating a tremendously difficult flying task. From these missions, the Army Air Corps' first tow-target squadron was formed.

The 120th also used its photographic capability to take pictures of selected targets and make mosaics for use by the Army commands. Observation photos were developed and printed in the squadron's photo lab trailer. The trailer was equipped with a darkroom, folding tables for mosaic map work, and a 1,000-watt power generator driven by gasoline motors. A separate receiving and sending radio trailer contained approximately \$50,000 worth of equipment. TSgt. R. Wilson, who operated the radio unit, installed most of the equipment. Wilson, an inventor of sorts, built a 45-foot-high antenna mast,



**World War II:** Joe C. Moffitt, here a second lieutenant, rose from staff sergeant in 1940 to brigadier general in 1950 (right); flight crew ready for an O-47 gunnery mission (inset below); O-47s in formation along Colorado's Front Range, 1940 (below).







**Horse soldiers:** While at their first duty station — Biggs Field — the 120th Observation Squadron provided air support while attached to the 1st Cavalry Division stationed at nearby Fort Bliss.

spider-webbed at the bottom, for reception purposes. Equipped to operate in camp or in the field, the radio trailer had its own telephone switchboard.

In August 1941, the squadron temporarily moved to Lake Charles, then to Baton Rouge, La., and from there to Beaumont, Texas, to participate in training maneuvers with the 2nd and 3rd Armies; more than 550,000 soldiers took part in the exercises. The area was familiar to members of the unit, since they had been there during 1940 training exercises. Upon termination of the maneuvers, the 120th returned to Biggs Field and resumed air support for the 1st Cavalry Division. In October, the loss of a 120th Observation Squadron O-47 with three men on board, 2nd Lts. Willis B. Hunt and C.S. Kaiser and SSgt. Richard Lauck, spurred an extensive desert search. The wreckage was finally found in the San Andres Mountains, west of Alamogordo, N.M. There were no survivors. Lts. Hunt and Kaiser were two of the many replacement personnel who came to the unit right out of cadet training. SSgt. Lauck had been mobilized with the squadron in Denver.

After Pearl Harbor, there was great concern that an enemy attack could occur from the south, precipitating another mission: patrolling the Mexican border from Douglas, Ariz., to Big Bend, Texas. The unit's O-47s would land in remote areas with no landing strips to wait and "observe" questionable movements. A ground outpost with aircraft standing by was also established in the Lordsburg-Demming, N.M., area to watch for movements of unscheduled or suspicious aircraft.

Be an example to your men, in your duty and in private life. Never spare yourself, and let the troops see that you don't in your endurance of fatigue and privation. Always be tactful and well mannered and teach your subordinates to be the same. Avoid excessive sharpness or harshness of voice, which usually indicates the man who has shortcomings of his own to hide.

*Field Marshal Erwin Rommel*



**Never draw to an inside straight:** Carlton, Hess, Nichols and others, 1940s poker game.

### Crap game pays for orphans

When the 240th Air Service Group of the Colorado Air National Guard staged its big Christmas party for orphans, Col. Jack Henderson was the happiest executive officer. Christmas parties for orphans had taken on added meaning for Col. Henderson since Christmas 1941, when he was an air cadet in training at Lowry Air Force Base. That Christmas, Henderson and a cadet buddy, both orphans, headed for Denver on a pass from Lowry. They had \$10 between them, which they decided to pool in a barracks crap game. When the game was over they had run the \$10 to \$178 and decided to give a party for orphans. They called the Queen of Heaven Memorial Home and asked permission to bring toys to the orphan children. They were advised the gifts would be welcome. Henderson made a vow that he would try to give a party for some orphans each Christmas.

*Denver Post  
Dec. 24, 1949*



**SSgt. Lloyd "Pappy" Summers:** In front of a North American BC-1 (AT-6 Texan), Stapleton Field, 1940.

## War effort escalates

The Axis powers tempest that had spread throughout the world inevitably plunged the U.S. into World War II. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, the Army Air Forces had only 1,100 combat-ready planes. No one could have imagined then that within the next four years the AAF would become a mighty force in the world conflict, or that it would have the scope to engage in what its commander, Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold, described as a "global mission." Nevertheless, by 1944 the AAF had grown into 16 separate Air Forces stationed around the world, and its 1,100 planes had expanded to nearly 80,000.

The force Gen. Arnold commanded when war broke out was not well balanced, well equipped or anywhere near large enough to fight a global conflict. As Arnold was well aware, it takes years to design a new aircraft, build a prototype, test-fly it, remove the bugs and then get an improved model into large-scale production.

During the first year of the war, the men of the newly rechristened Army Air Forces (AAF) had to hold on grimly with inadequate equipment while training schools and the U.S. aircraft industry hurried desperately to produce the planes and skilled personnel necessary to fight two different air wars in two vast and distant theaters, Europe and Asia.

Produce they did. The Air Forces' training system, which had been turning out some 300 pilots annually by 1939, was expanded to train 50,000 pilots by mid-1942. Dozens of new training fields were laid out and constructed throughout the nation — especially in the South and Southwest, where a favorable climate offered better year-round flying conditions.

Aircraft manufacturers, furiously building new assembly plants and running old ones with three round-the-clock shifts, jumped production from a prewar production of 2,000 planes a year to 4,000 a month by late 1942. Wartime efforts were helped immeasurably by a newly tapped labor supply — women —

**All the comforts of home:** Beaumont, Texas maneuvers, September 1941. 120th Observation Squadron campsite (below); four-seat accommodations (right).



**Where was Harrison?** 120th OS commander Maj. Wellman's quarters were Spartan at best, Baton Rouge, La., 1941.

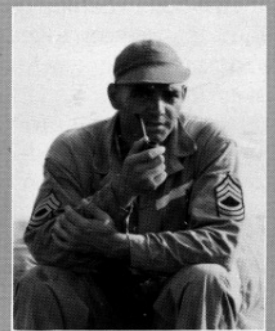
sometimes called "the Jane who made the plane" and "Rosie the Riveter." The Army Air Forces, which possessed a total of 1,700 planes in early 1939, would in the years 1940-1945 accept delivery of a staggering 229,230 aircraft. By 1945 the Air Forces numbered 2.4 million men.

In 1942, under the command of Maj. Ford Williams, the 120th moved for a brief period to De Ridder, La. After redesignation as a reconnaissance squadron in April 1943 and a brief return to Biggs Field, the unit was stationed in June 1943 at Abilene AAF, Texas, Esler Field, Alexandria, La., and eventually transferred to Birmingham, Ala., where it was placed on the inactive list and disbanded on Nov. 30, 1943. Personnel and equipment were absorbed in other units under the control of 3rd Air Force. Captains Schweitzer, Maessen and Rogers all commanded the 120th in the years prior to deactivation.

### Pussycat

Some people were downright intimidated by CMSgt. Samuel T. McGrew. He had the orneriest look about him; but what those people didn't know was that he had a big heart and in reality was . . . a real pussycat.

*Maj. Gen. Joe C. Moffitt*





## Exercises with 10th Mountain Division

In January 1943, the squadron provided air support to the Army's 10th Mountain Division, stationed at Camp Hale near Leadville, Colo. Leadville is known as a fabulously rich gold and silver mining area — home to H.A.W. Tabor's Matchless Mine, the final resting spot of the impoverished Baby Doe Tabor after her husband's death.

With Camp Hale located in a ruggedly mountainous area at an elevation of 10,500 feet, finding a landing strip to support the division in mid-winter proved to be a problem. After considerable research, the most likely landing spot was determined to be snow-covered, frozen Turquoise Lake. After considerable work to pack the snow and prepare the field, L-1A aircraft were used for the support mission due to their short-field landing and take off characteristics.

The first L-1A — flown by Capt. Joe Moffitt — landed on the lake Feb. 4, 1943. Missions were varied: one of the most challenging was an experiment to furnish communications between division units. The task was accomplished by stringing light telephone wire from a reel mounted in the rear of the L-1 aircraft, a dangerous flying operation over the mountainous terrain.

The L-1 was also used to deliver and pick up messages, drop various supplies to units in the field and transport command personnel to observe unit activities. The lake was also used as a recovery point for gliders towed into the area by C-47 aircraft (a one-way trip for the gliders). Following the 10th Mountain Division exercises, the unit — using its O-47 aircraft — performed observation duties for Army units stationed at Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

The 10th Mountain Division became renowned for its exploits during the Italian campaign of the War in Europe. After the war, some of the division's veterans returned to the Leadville-Vail area to begin what was to become Colorado's leading tourism industry — skiing.

## Members scatter throughout the Air Corps

Original members of the 120th, called to active duty, eventu-

**War hawks:** Future Colorado Air Guardsman John Lowell (below) was the state's leading WWII ace; aerial photographer Al Byma (right) on an O-47 photo mission.



**Turquoise Lake landing:** Providing L-1A air support to the 10th Mountain Division near Camp Hale, 1943.

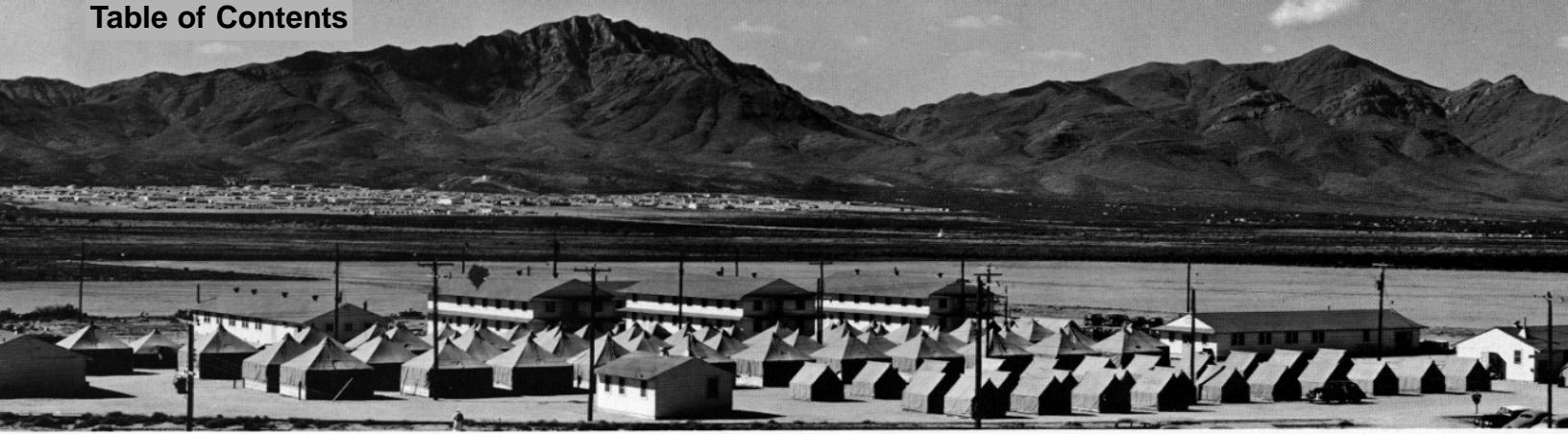
ally transferred and spread throughout the world, becoming part of the Army Air Forces that grew out of World War II.

Colorado aviators were soon engaged in "flying the hump" in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater, the first deep penetrations into Germany at Schweinfurt and Regensburg, the long haul from Saipan to Tokyo, and many other theaters of operations. Some squadron officers commanded newly organized units. Future COANG Maj. Gen. Stanford W. Gregory rose to the rank of full colonel during World War II and commanded a B-26 group in the European Theatre of Operations (ETO), flying a total of 21 combat missions and acquiring some 17 combat decorations.

MSgt. Howard W. Belles and MSgt. Wayne Carlton also found themselves in Europe . . . flying L-5s for the 8th and 9th Air Forces. They had the distinction in 1942 of being the first "flying sergeants" to arrive in England. Crossing the English Channel and flying into Belgium, Belles and Carlton flew their first information-gathering and artillery-spotting missions shortly after D-Day. Other members from the 120th who became L-5 pilots included Albert R. Metzger, John M. "Mutts" Williams and Harold L. Berryhill.

Future Maj. Gen. Joe C. Moffitt remained with the squadron at Biggs Field until April 1943, then was transferred to the 2nd Tactical Air Division of the 3rd Air Force as a technical inspector for organizations being deployed overseas. He was assigned to the CBI Theater in 1945. Called to active duty in 1941 and promoted to second lieutenant, Moffitt returned as a lieutenant colonel. After a brief stint at Clovis Air Force Base, N.M., Moffitt returned to Colorado and was assigned as deputy commander of the 59th Fighter Wing.





**Dusty duty:** 120th Observation Squadron tents and barracks, dirt runway at Biggs Field, Franklin Mountains in the background (above); armament troops and Mutts Williams cleaning up after a sandstorm (below right).



**Sun Bowl game:** El Paso, Texas, 1943.

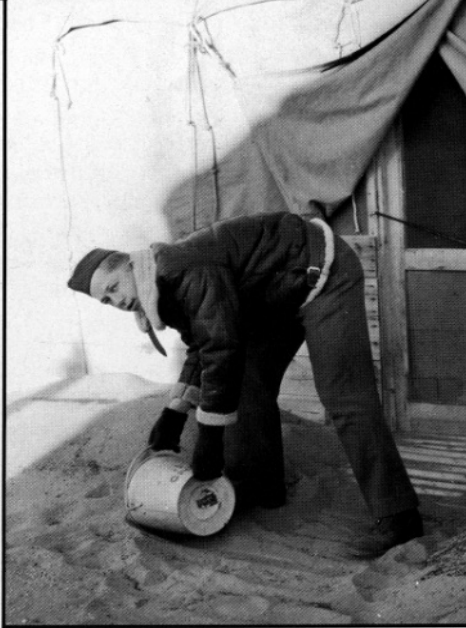
**Biggs Field**

When we arrived at Biggs Field in January 1941 we were greeted by one balloon hangar, two mess halls, two latrines, 27 tent frames and a dust storm. We quickly learned how to put up a tent and how to shovel dirt instead of clean, white Colorado snow. I tried for 22 months, but never could get used to the climate. We had an individual in the orderly room who would inspect our tents. If he didn't like the way our beds were made he would turn our bed upside-down. I learned a lot from that operation, but not how to make a bed.

*Paul K. Smith*



**Who's on first?** Squadron members on a Biggs Field float. Several of Bud and Lou's films in the 1940s helped boost morale.



### Lest we forget

Many future Colorado Guardsmen served with honor in World War II. Walt Williams flew 87 P-47 *Thunderbolt* missions with the 9th Air Force from southern England and was credited with one confirmed and one probable German kill. Tom Barfoot flew P-38s in the same outfit. Flying P-47s in ETO's 8th Air Force, Bob Cherry earned three enemy kills while still in his teens. John Lowell was Colorado's leading ace, credited with 20 kills in the European Theater. He later became commander of the 140th. Bill Axton, Alban Schmidt, David Sigismund, John Blackis, Phil Packer, Jay Worley, Jim Gates, Bill Dilley, Bob Perry and many others distinguished themselves as well.

Many Guardsmen from the unit made the supreme sacrifice for their country. One was Roy Anderson, first sergeant of the 120th when called to active duty. Commissioned during the early days of World War II, he commanded the 120th for a brief period. Shortly after being promoted to major, Anderson was killed during action on Guam. Other 120th Observation Squadron airmen killed during World War II included:

- Capt. Howard Thatcher
- Lt. Frederick E. Harberg
- Lt. Willis B. Hunt
- Lt. Ceaser S. Kaiser
- Lt. Fredrick Swink

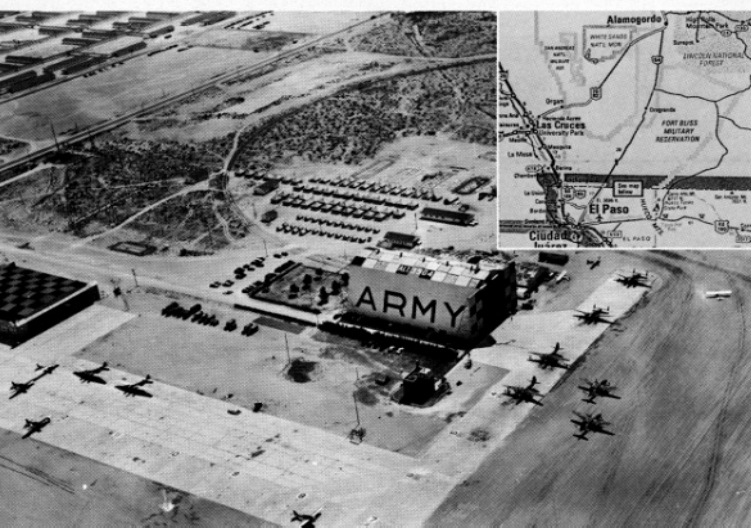




**Biggs Field memories:** 120th Observation Squadron (above); Parachute rigger Gerald Nordeen (left); crew chiefs and Maj. Morris with O-47 (below); commander Maj. Harrison Wellman at El Paso Military Ball; laundry day (both below).



**More memories:** Photographer Howard Belles (above); Goodyear Blimp *Reliance* (right); Biggs Field balloon hangar and map (below).



- \* SSgt. Coffman
- SSgt. Albert R. Metzger
- Sgt. Richard Lauck
- Pvt. Alfred C. Dublin
- Pvt. Walter Krafft

*\*Note: First name unavailable*

The unit's wartime casualties came from varied backgrounds and served their country for different reasons . . . all assigned to their moment in time doing their job for a just cause. They all died too young.

## Postwar re-organization

After the war, a movement for creating a new aviation unit of the Colorado National Guard began in the Colorado statehouse. Interest in establishing the new air unit was endorsed by Colorado Gov. John Vivian, who emphasized his support of a strong National Guard under state control. The new aviation wing would be, in effect, a re-establishment of the old 120th Observation Squadron of the Colorado National Guard. Primarily due to Col. Stanford W. Gregory's efforts, Colorado's 120th Fighter Squadron became the first postwar National Guard aviation unit in the United States to receive formal, federal recognition, June 30, 1946, almost exactly 23 years after the squadron's first recognition.

Many of the men called to duty in 1941 with the 120th Observation Squadron returned to help in the reorganization of the Colorado Air National Guard in 1946. About 1,000 officers

and men in 18 units were eventually stationed in Denver. Col. Gregory assumed command of the wing and was promoted to brigadier general. Other units of Colorado Air Guard organized in this time frame were: Headquarters, 140th Fighter Group; Headquarters, 159th Aircraft Control & Warning (AC&W) Group; Headquarters Detachment, 240th Air Service Group; Detachment "A", 240th Air Service Group; and the 120th Weather Squadron. Shortly thereafter, the 59th Wing was redesignated the 86th Fighter Wing; it ultimately became the 140th Tactical Fighter Wing.

"The fact that more Guard air units have been assigned to the Denver wing headquarters than to any other city in the country is evidence of the recognition of this area's great strategic importance," said Adj. Gen. Frazier Arnold in 1946.

Headquartered under the Denver-based 59th Fighter Wing was the 140th Fighter Group, which in turn embraced Colorado's 120th Fighter Squadron. Fighter squadrons in Butte,

## Stanford Gregory

### World War II leader, organizer of the first Air Guard unit

#### What attracted you to aviation?

My first spark of interest came sometime prior to 1916 when my mother took me out to Overland Park to see a biplane. The next time was in 1919 when I saw a *Jennie* take off from the race track at City Park . . . and wind up in the adjoining trees.

#### How did you get personally involved in flying?

In April 1924, at the age of 16, I saw in a newspaper an article that the Colorado National Guard was organizing an aviation unit. I immediately enlisted, giving my age as 18. The first chore they gave me was to help Danny Kearns unload Hisso-powered *Jennies* from boxcars and assemble them. The *Jennie* was the first airplane I ever flew.

#### What flight training did you receive?

I went to the Air Corps Flying School at Brooks Field, Texas, in 1930 and flew PT-1As, Douglas O-2Hs, and de Havillands. In 1934, I was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 120th Observation Squadron. I flew Thomas Morris O-19s, BC-1As and O-47s, until I was called into active service in World War II.

#### What was your involvement in World War II?

I was called in 11 months prior to World War II and was transferred to the 17th Bombardment Group. We were the first ones to get the B-25, and I ferried some of the straight-wing model B-25As from the North American factory in the U.S. to

Great Britain. When the war started, in '41, I was made squadron commander. I commanded the flight that went to Minneapolis to get long-range rubber fuel tanks, known as "Tokyo Tanks," installed on our planes. While I was there, my squadron received a request for volunteers for an "X" mission. All of us volunteered, but when Jimmy Dolittle finished choosing, I was one of those that missed going on his famous daylight bombing raid on Tokyo.

#### In World War II, did you fly other bombers?

Yes, the Martin B-26 was starting off the production line and they needed people with experience in medium bombers to form the B-26 units. I was transferred to the 320th Bombardment Group as deputy group commander. Following a hair-raising, and costly, training period . . . we lost about "one a day in Tampa Bay" . . . we were presumed to be combat ready. After a false start across the North Atlantic, we were diverted to cross the South Atlantic by way of Brazil, Ascension Island and the Gold Coast to North Africa. I led a flight of 58 aircraft and reached North Africa at the time of the invasion, with the loss of only one plane.

#### What was your mission in North Africa?

I commanded the 320th Bombardment Group in North Africa. Our mission was low-level sweeps on shipping and aerodromes, as well as close-air support. However, the aircraft was not suitable for this

and our losses were heavy. Our mission was changed to medium-altitude bombing, where we set what they call "enviable" records for accuracy and minimum losses. I led the bomb raid on Rome from North Africa; that was the one where our bombing accuracy was extremely important. We had to be certain to hit only military targets, avoiding ancient Roman ruins and other historical and religious sites. There were 108 B-26s in that mission and we didn't have one stray bomb.

#### Did you stay in North Africa for the duration of the war?

No, after the surrender of Italy, I was sent to Sardinia to command a base for three bomb groups. During the 11 months I was there, I had the opportunity to fly a variety of different aircraft. The base was handy for damaged and crippled aircraft to make emergency landings. Our maintenance people would repair them and we would give them a test hop. I got to fly B-17s, A-20s, P-40s and P-38s. After the invasion of Southern France, I was sent to Lyons, France, to command a French B-26 wing, the only wing in the French Air Force. They had been trained in North Africa and were composed mainly of "free" French pilots and crews, those who had escaped France when it surrendered to Nazi Germany early in the year. There were 6,000 Frenchmen in the wing. My American staff consisted of six officers and 50 enlisted men, all of whom were experts in planning, intelligence and communications. In fact, they had just one drawback . . . only



Mont.; Cheyenne, Wyo.; and Albuquerque, N.M., also came under the wing's umbrella at the time. Planes and equipment were sought from government surplus. The 120th Fighter Squadron, under the command of Maj. Ralph Baird, was to eventually have 25 fighter planes and 27 rated pilots. Other units to which planes and pilots were to be assigned included the 109th Radar Calibration Detachment with two attack A-26 aircraft, the fighter group headquarters with one transport airplane, and a utility flight group with two transport aircraft.

Brig. Gen. Gregory's efforts to make the new Colorado air units a reality were significant; his vision was instrumental to creating the Colorado Air National Guard. Gregory originally enlisted in the 120th Observation Squadron, May 16, 1924. He had a distinguished record during World War II, commanding a bombardment group in North Africa and leading the first bombing attack on Rome. He also commanded a light bomber wing in France during the latter part of World War II. After returning



**Oops:** Roy Anderson retrieving an O-47A that had ground looped on landing at Biggs Field, 1941.

one could speak French. Fortunately, however, there were two French officers who were able to speak English fairly well. The six months I commanded the French wing were the most memorable and rewarding experience of the war for me. I have never seen an organization with more esprit de corps and eagerness. Our mission was supporting the Sixth Army, which was composed of a French division, the French Foreign Legion and colonials, as well as several American divisions. Our wing went from the bottom unit on the totem pole (in bombing accuracy and mission accomplishment) to the top, surpassing American units by the time the war in Europe was over.

**The French government decorated you several times, didn't they?**

Yes, I was made a Knight of the Legion of Honor. Also, they awarded me the Croix de Guerre with palm and another Croix de Guerre with star.

**What about your other decorations?**

Well, among other service and campaign medals, I guess the most important ones were the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Air Medal with three oak-leaf clusters, Bronze Star, Campaign Medal with eight battle stars, a special commendation letter from the secretary of the Air Force, Medal of Honor from the National Guard Association of the United States and the Meritorious Service Medal from the state of Colorado.

**Was your experience with the French wing your last of the war?**

Not quite. Immediately after VE Day, I was ordered on an intelligence mission to Linz, Austria. That was where the Nazis had



**Brig. Gen. Stanford W. Gregory** served as commander of the 59th Fighter Wing, 86th Fighter Wing and 140th Fighter Group from August 1946 until February 1948. Interview composed from material submitted by Brig. Gen. Gregory, who died Oct. 11, 1988 at the age of 80.

both their underground jet factory and the Hermann Goring Works. The purpose of the mission was to remove equipment and intelligence data before the Russians occupied the area.

**With all this combat experience, how did your life change when World War II ended?**

Well, after more than 34 months overseas and five years in the service, I came back to Denver. I mustered out at Lowry AFB in 1946 and returned to my law practice.

**Obviously this wasn't the end of your military career. What happened?**

I joined the Air National Guard and, in July

1946, organized and commanded the 59th Fighter Wing at what was then known as Buckley Field. This was the first Air National Guard unit to be organized in the United States after World War II. The designation was subsequently changed to the 140th Fighter Wing. Today, of course, it's the 140th Tactical Fighter Wing. In 1947, I was appointed to the Governor's Aviation Advisory Board and the Denver Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee. Then in 1950, I was appointed chief of staff of the Colorado Air National Guard.

**What were some of the other assignments you held while in the Colorado Air National Guard?**

During the Korean Conflict I attended the Air War College, graduating in June 1951. Upon graduation, I was appointed chairman of the Advisory Committee on Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Affairs for the secretary of the Air Force. I served on that committee for three years. In February 1954, I graduated from the USAF Jet Indoctrination Course — this was necessary to qualify me for jet aircraft. I was appointed by the secretary of Defense, in March 1957, to serve on the Reserve Forces Policy Board. I served on that board for three years; also, during that time, I served on the Air Affairs Committee and the Executive Council of the National Guard Association of the United States.

**When did you retire?**

On Dec. 31, 1967, I retired after 43 years of service with the Colorado Air National Guard and the U.S. Air Force.



**SNETFU:** The label on this 120th OS Baton Rouge, La., photo of a downed L-1 may have originated the term *SNAFU*. The photo wound up on bulletin boards throughout Louisiana and Texas.

to Colorado from his tour of active duty, October 1945, Col. Gregory traveled to Washington several times with Adj. Gen. Arnold for conferences on the establishment of the new Guard units and the release of federal military property to the state. Gregory was one of only seven general officers appointed to command National Guard air or ground units after federal recognition.

With the unit's initial recruitment drive over and manning up to federal inspection standards, Gregory resigned as commander in 1947 to pursue his law practice. Col. Moffitt was appointed to the wing commander's position. In 1950, Brig. Gen. Gregory was appointed as chief of staff for the state headquarters and promoted to major general. He later served as chairman of the Advisory Committee on Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Affairs, sat on the Reserve Force Policy Board and filled several important National Guard Association positions.

Meanwhile, a new era in the military organizations of our country was ushered in Sept. 18, 1947, as a result of the National Security Act. The United States Army Air Forces became the United States Air Force. Its illustrious history included an aviation-oriented lineage dating back to the Signal Corps of the United States Army during World War I. Never separate but always distinct and unique as a branch of the Armed Forces, the Air Corps was now an independent and separate service. Accordingly, the "brown-shoe-and-khaki Air-Corps" gradually evolved into the "black-shoe-and-blues Air Force" we have today. A longer period of transition was afforded reserve-type personnel to convert to the "blues." The National Security Act of 1947 officially established and named the Air National Guard. Units began to look like they do today and citizen-airmen took their place beside citizen-soldiers in defense of our nation.

## Move to Buckley Field

The Colorado postwar units, just as in 1923, had very little equipment and no permanent home. Permanent caretakers (technicians) were authorized July 13, 1946, and within a short

**WWII WAC ferry pilots:** Squadron photographers occasionally free lanced their talents in special situations.



**Juarez, Mexico:** Squadron photographers were masters of the art of aerial photography (above); Camp beer bust (below).

## South of the border

While at Biggs Field in El Paso, we used to cross the Rio Grande into Juarez. Our favorite haunt was a place called Dominguez Cafe. It was the best place in town because the tourists hadn't discovered it yet. A filet mignon with all the trimmings and a bottle of Carta Blanca cost 35 cents in 1941. I suppose it's slightly more expensive today, that's if it's still there and you could find the place.

*CMSgt. Lloyd "Tuck" Mestepey*



period several individuals had been employed on a temporary basis. The unit was hampered in recruiting technicians, because employment was temporary — a situation lasting for three months before the caretakers' status became permanent.

The first few 1946 unit drills were held Sundays at the State Headquarters at 300 Logan St. in Denver. The former home of the 120th at Denver's Municipal Airport had been appropriated by the City of Denver, and negotiations were started to acquire space at Buckley Field.

The outbreak of World War II started Colorado on the road to becoming a great training center for the armed forces. Buckley

**Liaison pilots in England:** Some 120th OS squadron NCOs were among the first "flying sergeants."







**NCO leaders:** Bud DePry, Sam McGrew and Bill Rupe, late 1940s.

### Experience counts

I was a flight chief when World War II broke out. We were sent to England as a group, but upon arrival were dispersed throughout the country. I was assigned to RAF High Wycombe as a first sergeant — I guess because I was a little older than most of the fellows. So much for my flying career.

*SMSgt. Lawrence "Bud" Depry*

Field was built in 1941 and opened April 1, 1942, as a bombardier school and training center. The field was named after 1st Lt. John Harold Buckley of Longmont, who was killed while flying on the third day of the Argonne offensive in France Sept. 17, 1918. The Buckley ANGB section of *Colorado Pride* beginning on page 320 includes additional information on Lt. Buckley.

By 1946, the Army Air Force was closing the base and its temporary buildings — all in a sad state of disrepair. Not until August did the 120th acquire space at the training center located some seven air miles east of Stapleton.

The situation was finally clarified, but for two weeks the new unit's 20 caretakers drove to Buckley every morning and returned each night with a feeling of little accomplishment. By August, the caretaker detachment had acquired a small room in an old wooden hangar. With still no aircraft or equipment on hand, another month went by before the men were given an equally small area on the hangar floor to call their own. For several months the caretakers diligently scavenged various items the Army was discarding, storing them for future use.

A December 1946 roster identified Colorado Air National Guard caretakers under the 59th Fighter Wing:

### A watched pot never . . .

The first months after reorganization were extremely hectic. Air Guard caretakers had no working area to call their own and only meager quarters at Buckley. On July 13th, all the caretakers were loaded on a borrowed truck from the armory and driven over to Buckley. When we inquired as to where the Guard would be located, no one, including the base commander, had the slightest idea. They weren't too concerned anyway, as most of their efforts were directed towards closing the base. It appeared we didn't have a place to hang our hats or a pot to . . .

*Warrant Officer Samuel T. McGrew*



**Esler Field, La.:** 120th Reconnaissance Squadron, October 1943.

### 59th Fighter Wing

Name	MOS	Title
Hosey, Kenneth R.	502	Adm Spec
Rupe, William H.	750	AP Crew Chief
Murdock, Albert E.	0200	Comm O
Rudolph, Edwin A.	835	Supply Clerk
Belles, Russell E.	648	Repairman, Radio
Turner, Frank M.	542	Comm Tech (AAF)
Carter, George R.	261	Wire Chief Tel & Tel
Levas, Nicholas T.	747	Mechanic, AP & Eng

### 120th Fighter Squadron, 120th Utility Flt., Det. "A"

#### 240th Air Service Group

Name	MOS	Title
McGrew, Samuel T.	502	Adm Spec
Ludwig, John R.	925	AP Inspector
Carlton, Wayne	750	AP Crew Chief
Morrison, Stanley M.	750	AP Crew Chief
Lauck, LeRoy L.	750	AP Crew Chief
DePry, Laurence D.	750	AP Crew Chief
Ball, Charles E.	750	AP Crew Chief
Johnson, Kennard F.	750	AP Crew Chief
Emily, Harry S.	750	AP Crew Chief
Belles, Howard W.	750	AP Crew Chief
Mestepey, Lloyd T.	750	AP Crew Chief
Scott, Harry D.	911	Armorer, AP
Haggerty, William E.	747	Mechanic, AP & Eng
Prentiss, James D., Jr.	747	Mechanic, AP & Eng
Wilson, James D.	747	Mechanic, AP & Eng
Gorewit, Harold	747	Mechanic, AP & Eng
Leffelbein, Donald W.	826	Supply Mech, AAF
Bowman, Joseph S.	4823	Acft Maint O
Meis, Joe F.	4902	Tech Supply O, Air
Bowen, Clyde	835	Supply Clerk
Buckbee, Kenneth J.	747	Mechanic, AP & Eng
Barnhart, George	620	Rigger & Repairment
Gantz, Forrest F.	932	Opr Spec Vehicle
Fustka, Alfons, Jr.	014	Mechanic, Auto (AAF)
Bahmeier, Joseph A.	750	AP Crew Chief
Chamberlain, Daniel	747	Mechanic, AP & Eng
Moeller, Walter B.	747	Mechanic, AP & Eng
Bianchi, Logan H.	687	Mechanic, AP & Propeller
Hart, Robert E.	685	Mechanic, AP Electrical
Groom, Donald W.	528	Mechanic, AP Hydraulic
Hartline, John B.	555	Sheet Metal Worker, AP
Mize, Harold H.	686	Mechanic, AP Instrument
Marks, George M.	754	Mechanic, Radio (AAF)

### 140th Fighter Gp. Hq. & Hq. Det., 240th Air Service Group

Name	MOS	Title
Kissell, Joseph E.	747	Mechanic, AP & Eng
Summers, Loyd H., Jr.	750	AP Crew Chief
Shuster, Adolph E.	502	Adm Spec

By fall 1946, the Guard had taken over the entire east hangar at Buckley and received its first plane, a C-47 transport aircraft. Two T-6 training aircraft arrived shortly after. The 600-horsepower T-6 carried a crew of two at a 170 mph cruising speed. It was used for maintaining pilot proficiency and transitioning pilots to the P-51s yet to be assigned. The unit was gain-



**Same base, different names:** Colorado P-51s at Buckley Field, 1946 (left); Naval Air Station — Denver dedication, 1947 (above). Veteran's Village to the west in both photos.

## Variety of missions

ing momentum as other aircraft flowed down the disposition pipeline. Just before Thanksgiving, three P-51 *Mustangs* destined for the Guard were delivered at Lowry Air Force Base. The "P" designation for pursuit was later changed to "F" to designate fighter aircraft.

Tragedy marred the fighter squadron's first flight in the F-51. Maj. Herbert G. Kolb, Air Force advisor and the only pilot current in the *Mustang*, was killed on takeoff November 28 while attempting to shuttle an F-51 from Lowry to Buckley.

Nearly 200 men — many officers and enlisted personnel with distinguished war experience and long records of overseas service — had joined the Colorado air units. Guardsmen were obligated to attend training drills at least two hours a week for 48 weeks a year, plus a two-week summer camp. Starting pay was \$2.50 a drill.

The last Army Air Forces personnel departed Buckley in December 1946 and the Guard acquired the field on a right of entry permit dated December 20th. The new Buckley Air National Guard Base was destined to be one of the principal National Guard aviation centers in the nation. However, state resources were not able to support the field and the large number of tenant organizations involved. Adj. Gen., Brig. Gen. Irving O. Schaefer entered into negotiations with the Navy to have them assume base command with the Air National Guard as a tenant. Necessary arrangements were made and the base was transferred to the Navy Sept. 28, 1947, becoming Denver Naval Air Station.

Men who helped write the brilliant aerial saga of World War II teamed up to operate the new air units. Col. Jean R. Byerly of the regular Army was detailed as senior instructor to the wing. (Byerly was a famous air hero who had spent 17 months in a German POW camp after being shot down in northern Italy.) Ready for action on a 24-hour notice and on duty at least one day a week, 22 pilots were now assigned to the 120th Fighter Squadron. Squadron aviators were all ex-combat pilots, going to school in Colorado or working at civilian jobs.

Within two years, the Colorado Air National Guard had organized additional units — with a total strength of 207 officers and 873 enlisted men — and received its full complement of aircraft. New units included the 109th AAF Communications Squadron (later designated the USAF Communications Squadron); 609th Signal Light Construction Company; 137th, 138th and 139th Aircraft Control and Warning (AC&W) Squadrons; 109th Radar Calibration Detachment; and the 532nd AAF Band (later designated the USAF Band).

Prior to his 1947 resignation, Gen. Gregory commented, "Our personnel strength and plane complement increase every month; it is evident that Colorado is ready to contribute an efficient and well-trained group of men to the state and national cause."

As the Guard received its organizational equipment, personnel training became increasingly important. The U.S. active armed forces had been radically reduced and the Guard's future role as the state's militia arm and important complement to the active service began to develop. As part of a National Guard drive to raise strength throughout the United States, Colorado established an active public relations program to enhance personnel recruitment, staging air shows and open houses to attract new members to fill the ranks of the many units now assigned. As yet another recruiting incentive in the late '40s, the wing offered enlistees C-47 cross-country flights to Mount Rushmore in South Dakota's Black Hills, Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Canyon.

The Air Guard's C-47 aircraft began a series of cross-country, navigational training flights in the summer of 1948. A *Gooneybird*, with 24 souls on board, flew to Los Angeles by way of the Grand Canyon and Hoover Dam, giving Colorado Air Guardsmen an opportunity to "train and tour" on the same trip.

Members of the 86th Fighter Wing met on Wednesday evenings or Sundays to bone up on the practical and theoretical aspects of aviation. A small contingent of 128 men and 10 aircraft before the war as the 120th Observation Squadron, the 86th Wing soon expanded into an integrated force of 722 men and 42 planes of different types. But there were still vacancies for at least 1,500 more Guardsmen — veterans or non-veterans — for flying and non-flying duty.

The wing embarked on a training program for both officers and enlisted men. Pilots took Link Trainer and other ground-school classes, and could increase their hours in the air, check out in multi-engine aircraft and receive additional experience in military leadership. Pilots had to fly at least 100 hours annually. At their disposal were 26 F-51 fighter planes, six A-26 attack aircraft, four C-47 transports and six single-engine trainers. Enlisted personnel were encouraged to enter schools, thus advancing in rank and qualifying for aviation cadet school or Officers Candidate School. The Army's base pay was adopted; men were paid one day's salary according to their grade for each two-hour session they attended at Denver Naval Air Station.

**Mustang muster:** Home to the COANG from the late 1940s, Naval Air Station — Denver was renamed Buckley ANGB in 1960.



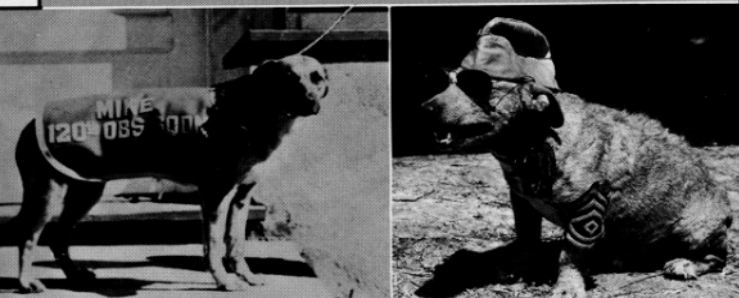




## Mascots

There were the inevitable dog "mascots" at various periods. Besides Jeff the parachuter, there was also "Mike" who rated his own blanket with his title of "Mascot" on the side. "Duke" was around when the 120th was inducted into active service and he accompanied that unit to Biggs Field. There was also a dog named "Sarge" who ran around dressed like a first sergeant.

*Maj. Allan Byma*



**Every dog has his day:** Another Mike in the 1930s at old Lowry Field (left); Sarge in the 1940s (right).

## Fliers bury Mike with military honors

"Taps" sounded above an honored grave near the Colorado National Guard hangar at the north end of the Denver airport Wednesday night, as officers and men of the 120th Observation Squadron held last rites for Mike, their mongrel mascot.

Mike died Tuesday in a veterinary hospital, victim of old age and double pneumonia. The squad buried him with military honors, wrapped in a guidon of his squadron. Mike showed up one day, a starved, homeless black and tan pup, so weak he had to be lifted from under an officer's car where he had crawled exhausted. Milk and kind words worked wonders. In no time, he was the life of the outfit. He had his own blanket with the squadron insignia. He went with the outfit to Fort Sill, to Boise and on practice flights here and there.

*Rocky Mountain News, 1930s*

Again there were requests for locating lost airplanes and flying mercy missions. At the same time, the Colorado Air Guard was often called upon to help dedicate airfields, celebrate rodeos and other events, and assist in other special activities.

After several days of intensive searching in April 1947, Lt. Col. Ralph Baird, 120th Fighter Squadron commander, located an Air Force C-45 lost on a radio check-flight from Denver to Grand Junction. Baird was the same pilot who rode out his flaming P-51 to an emergency landing the winter before at the then

**Canine capers:** Whitey, Mike and Belcher in their O-47 (above); Duke (front row, third from left) with squadron members (below). Both photos Biggs Field, 1940s.



## Duke

Although owned by squadron assistant gunnery officer Lt. Moffitt, "Duke" was in all respects a squadron dog, whelped at the hangar in Denver and raised by the officers and the men of the squadron. Duke arrived several weeks after the squadron had been established at Biggs Field with a limp he received from an auto accident just prior to activation which he always retained, spirits none the less dampened. Duke always recognized the men of the 120th, yet others in civilian clothes were given ample warning that they were on a military reservation. Duke's moment of the day was at the morning drill. He obeyed every command and knew the platoon movements as well as the toughest drill sergeant.

*Fort Bliss Cavalcade  
Feb. 28, 1941*

Buckley ANG Base, rather than abandon it over a residential area north of Lowry Field. Baird was at 12,000 feet on a test flight when a "muffled explosion" ripped away part of his Mustang's engine cowling, touching off flames beneath the instrument panel. Rather than bail out, the lieutenant colonel swung the ship into a steep dive toward the Buckley runway, making an emergency landing. Baird's flying suit, goggles, helmet and oxygen mask protected him from the blaze when he leaped from the cockpit with the wheels still rolling. Thirty seconds later the craft was engulfed in flames from nose to tail . . . a total loss.

Army officials said Baird's split-second decision to stick with his plane may have saved many lives and homes. The Colorado Air Guard pilot was recognized in the *Denver Post's* "Gallery of Fame" for his heroic deed.

In another example of the many types of missions performed, Capt. Philip Packer spotted in May 1948 the wreckage of a Civil Aeronautics Administration C-47 at the foot of 13,000-foot Nav-

ajo Peak, northwest of Nederland. The two-engine transport plane with three men aboard had been missing since January. 1st Lt. Bruce Cameron was co-pilot on the flight and MSgt. Lloyd Summer served as Capt. Packer's engineer.

More than 500 officers and enlisted men of the 86th Fighter Wing conducted summer camp at Denver Naval Air Station in 1948. Commander Col. Moffitt complimented the troops: "I am proud of the men of the 86th Fighter Wing for their general good spirit and efficiency in training during the two-week camp period, and I feel that the people of Colorado can also feel justly proud of this important element of our state and national defense program." Adj. Gen. Irving Schaefer called the air and ground troop encampment "a howling success."

The camp ended with an air show for more than 8,000 spectators (Gov. W. Lee Knous included) at Denver Naval Air Station, held in conjunction with the Naval Air Reserve to celebrate the second anniversary of both organizations. P-51 *Mustangs* and A-26 attack bombers were flown in simulated combat; radar and aircraft maintenance equipment was demonstrated in Guard hangars. The public was invited to view displays of cutaway jet engines, Link Trainers and support aircraft.

Later in the year, the wing performed at Lowry's first birthday celebration for the USAF. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was among the 18,000 witnesses of the impressive display of air might at Air Force Day. Air Guard *Mustangs* thrilled the crowd with slow rolls, loops and barrel rolls. Other aircraft flew in tight formation, wing tips a scant dozen feet apart, as they came in at low level. A November air show in Canon City demonstrated similar formation flying, precision aerobatics and aerial races before 15,000 people — the largest crowd in Fremont County history.

A-26 aircraft were also used to tow targets for air-to-air gunnery missions in the late '40s and early '50s. In order to modify the A-26 for tow work, a reel was installed inside the fuselage just to the rear of the bomb-bay doors.

Towing missions were usually routine affairs, but occasional inflight emergencies occurred. During 1950 field training at Camp Grayling, Mich., Capt. Alban J. Schmidt's tow-reel operator informed him of a small fire in the A-26 radio compartment. Showing strong composure, the captain asked the operator if the fire incident warranted declaring an emergency. The operator replied that it wasn't too large and he'd try to extinguish it. After landing, Schmidt went to the radio compartment to survey the damage. The fuselage was blackened from floor to ceiling over an extensive area; it was obvious the tow-reel operator must have had a harrowing experience trying to put it out.

"It must have been a raging inferno," Schmidt said later. "Had I known the seriousness of the fire, I would not have wasted time requesting landing instructions, and going through the normal landing procedure of turning base and final."

Aircraft control and warning squadrons at the University of Colorado, University of Denver and NAS Denver had radar equipment to detect and locate approaching aircraft and to vector defending fighters to them. In late 1948, a \$50,000 radar training building for the 138th AC&W Squadron was put in operation in south Denver at a site leased from the University of Denver. Many squadron personnel under the command of Maj. Phillip M. Harris were students at the university.

On another state assistance mission after a devastating blizzard in January 1949, the Guard used their C-47s to drop hay to stranded and starving livestock throughout the Rocky Mountain region. Snow had buried roads, submerged farm buildings

and farmhouses, and locked in rural families who needed fuel, medical care and livestock feed.

Colorado's snowstorms created the need for a Disaster Relief Office in the Denver Armory. Headed by Col. Joe C. Moffitt, 86th Fighter Wing commander, the office was manned on a 24-hour basis. Newspaper and radio broadcasts resulted in emergency calls being channeled through the Disaster Relief Office; relief missions were promptly dispatched. Colorado Air Guard F-51s and A-26s flew 10 reconnaissance missions during the emergency. C-47s flew 17 hay-lift missions and dropped tons of hay, saving thousands of cattle and wild animals.

Demonstrated anew was the Air Guard's readiness to fulfill a primary peacetime mission. Its ability, developed through long experience, to tie in with regular Army and Air Force units, Red Cross and other relief agencies, was tested . . . as was the adaptability of its personnel and military equipment to function during a civilian emergency.

### General Temple remembers . . .

I remember when I joined the California National Guard back in 1947. My buddy Victor Ramos asked me to come down to the armory to check out something interesting. Little did I know he was on a body count — 50 cents for each new Guard member recruited. He said the Guard paid every night. Victor also said I could get out anytime I wanted. He tended to embellish things a little bit. Anyway, I went down and joined up, but I didn't take it too seriously. I missed a few drills and finally one day stepped out of line and asked the sergeant if I could speak with him. I told him I was ready to move on and wanted to say goodbye to the guys. Well, after some pretty rude language I was told to get the hell back in line and shut up. He scared me so badly I never did leave the Guard. Even then, I didn't take the Guard too seriously until my commanding officer took me aside and told me he was going to make me the unit supply sergeant. He gave me a key and said that drill couldn't begin until I got there and unlocked the equipment and that no one could go home until I inventoried the supplies and locked everything up. I never missed a drill from that day on. We have the same responsibility today . . . make activities interesting, challenging and exciting. If we give our people responsibility they will respond.

*Lt. Gen. Herbert R. Temple  
Chief, National Guard Bureau*

