scotch placed between every other person. There was no ice, but they did serve warm Cokes, ginger ale and water to complement the whiskey. Hors d'oeuvres were served. We found out later they were fried cow blood, along with more edible items.

The following day, the *Minute Men* put on their air show. Many Nicaraguans had walked up to five miles to see the show. Wynn Coomer got things started by breaking the sonic barrier. No sooner had the boom hit the field than the rest of the Redeye team came exploding in at treetop level, with smoke streaming and jet engines screaming. For the next 25 minutes the crowd witnessed a flawless demonstration of precision flying. It was a dynamite air show that thrilled all beholders, from Gen. Somoza down to the youngest kids in the audience. From that point forward, the *Minute Men* were the toast of Managua. Wherever they went crowds of people were cheering "Viva Americanos!" Managua headlines read, "Six Supersonic Aircraft Amaze the Citizens," and "Minute Men in a Fantastic Display!"

The following day, the team departed for Guatemala, spending the night at Guatemala City and departing the next day for Mexico City. Although the team did not put on an official show in Guatemala, their low-level arrival passes more than announced their presence.

No official air show was scheduled for Mexico City either, but several low passes were authorized as a calling card from the team. The *Minute Men* did fly a show, but due to Mexican political pressure they could not schedule it and had to get tower clearance before each individual maneuver. They flew almost an entire show that way. They left the following day for the States, but not without problems.

The F-86s had been refueled with low quality JP-1 fuel and getting the birds started was a challenge. After some difficulty, Williams got his plane fired up along with three others. Coomer and Cherry were still trying to start their birds after Williams' cell had departed. Coomer finally got his *Sabre* going after adding alcohol de-ice fluid to the fuel. Coomer pulled in front of Cherry's plane and the jet blast from his aircraft turned the other engine fast enough for Cherry to get an "air start." To compound the problem, Coomer's airplane had no cockpit pressure, so he and Bob Cherry had to fly at low altitude and land with absolute minimum fuel. The maintenance team was exhausted by the time they left in the C-119.

The team stayed the night at Kelly AFB, Texas, and flew on to Denver the following day, landing at Denver Naval Air Station in freezing weather right behind a snowstorm. Happy to be back, we knew we had served an important role as American goodwill ambassadors. The tour was not only a tribute to the ability of the team, but a recognition of the ANG's capabilities. It was some trip!

Capt. Edgar N. Schaeffer

Which way did they go?

We took off from Howard AFB to perform an air show at Albrook AS in Panama and nobody could locate John France. He made his first pass — a spectacular low level — over Howard (the wrong base) to the delight of our maintenance team and few others. John finally caught up with the team after the Albrook show began.

Brig. Gen. Wynn Coomer

Jet setters: Albrook Air Station diamond fly-by, Panama City, Panama, 1959; *Minute Men* patch (upper left); Brig. Gen. Moffitt, Lt. Col. Williams, Maj. Curran, Capt. Cherry, Capt. Ferrier and Maj. Coomer in Hawaii, April 1957 (above). The official Air National Guard precision flying unit's F-86s and support C-47 on the ramp at Buckley, 1950s (below).

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It should look like this: *Minute Men* Arch Curran, right wing; Walt Williams, leader; John Ferrier, slot; and Bob Cherry, left wing. Capt. Ferrier died in a Dayton, Ohio, air show crash in June 1958 after guiding his F-86 away from a densely populated residential area in a final courageous act.

Sly and cunning

John France is sly and cunning and bears watching. After completion of an air show in the late 1950s, he asked to return to Buckley via Las Vegas. I said fine, but he would have to be back in two days because of another air show. Next day the phone rang and it was John with a burned-out starter and a "what shall I do?" query. I told him to find someone with an F-86E or "F" to pull in front and give him an "air start" the way Wynn Coomer started me in Mexico City. John found a Guard pilot with an F-86H — a plane totally incompatible with the mission at hand; it just didn't line up with France's bird. After the canopy had melted down around his ears, John called off the start. Col. Tom Barfoot flew our C-47 into Las Vegas to retrieve the canopy; we took it to the storage facility at Tucson and, under cover of darkness, traded it for a new one. We returned in haste; the canopy and a starter were installed and the next air show flown. I believe Dick Beaufils and Ken Balkenbush were on the "procurement" mission as well as Mo Etter and Tom Linam.

Col. Bob Cherry

White-knuckle visual approach

Walt Williams was, in my opinion, the consummate fighter pilot. One day, when I was leading the *Minute Men* and Walt was flying solo for the team, we arrived at San Antonio without enough fuel to return to our alternate base at Abilene. Just as I started the approach, all my instruments quit due to a shorted power inverter. I called Walt instantly and his cockpit turned white as books and maps began flying about. In one short turn he had the approach chart in hand and had started down with five very nervous pilots. We hit 300 feet with nothing to see but clouds. At 200 feet, flashes of ground could be seen. We hit the runway together and all landed in very tight formation. We were out of fuel and one engine quit during shut-down. I quite frankly don't know of anyone else who could have accomplished that approach on such short notice. I don't even think I could have done it.

Col. Bob Cherry

the number of complex acrobatics. They started by incorporating change-over maneuvers, the six-G, 360-degree turn and, finally, their own creation — the "corkscrew" — a maneuver wherein the two wingmen did slow rolls, at low altitudes, around the lead and slot aircraft.

By 1955, the team was well established in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region. As their fame spread, air shows were scheduled further and further from Colorado.

During June 1955 at Casper National County Airport, the four pilots flew a very credible performance, witnessed by several dignitaries from the National Guard Bureau. Although practice time had been extremely limited and the aircraft were not yet equipped with smoke, word spread rapidly following the performance. The team continued to perform at functions within Colorado, whenever time would permit.

Harvey submitted his resignation to the Colorado ANG in January 1956; Capt. Robert "Bob" Cherry was offered a position with the team. Hueholt moved to the vacated left wing position and Cherry moved into the slot. Then fate smiled upon Williams' brainchild.

NGB had acquired a new director of operations in 1955 — Col. Jack Blanchard — a regular Air Force officer. He had seen the show at Casper and was favorably impressed. When the Nevada ANG asked him for assistance in obtaining an aerobatic team for an open house in April 1956, he suggested they contact Williams to see if the Colorado team was available. The show in Reno that year was the first "officially sanctioned" demonstration for the team, even though the team was still unofficial.

The Reno show was a great success. As additional requests poured in, Williams began inquiring about a name for the team. Hueholt suggested *Minute Men* to represent the citizen-soldier of Colonial days and to honor the Guard's proud heritage as militiamen. The call sign *"Redeye"* was adopted at this time, also.

Hueholt left the team in June 1956 for a test pilot job with a major aircraft company. Cherry moved to left wing and Capt. John T. Ferrier became the new slot man. Maj. Wynn Coomer became a solo performer with Capt. Ronald Jankovsky as back-up solo. Maj. Ed Mack Miller became narrator and

Reaching for the skies: The *Minute Men* were international newsmakers.

High Flying

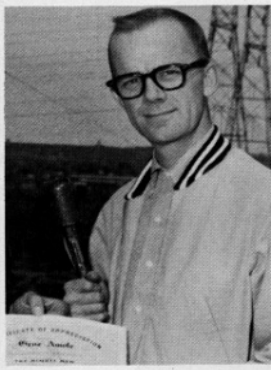
He was Waldo Pepper, Don Rickles and just a little bit of Ernest Hemingway all wrapped into one. Ed Mack Miller could fly anything from a glider to the big jumbo jets. He called me one Sunday morning just at dawn: "Wake up, Gene! This is Ed Mack Miller. Take a shower. I want you to be out at Ruby Hill at precisely 9 o'clock."

Ruby Hill was the location of the old KDEN where I worked. I got there about five minutes before 9 a.m. There was Ed, dressed in his ANG major's uniform, 100-mission crush hat, silver wings, the works. We talked for a few minutes and then he pointed up toward the northern sky. I couldn't believe it . . . but here they came, the *Minute Men* precision jet flying team of the Colorado ANG. They were screaming overhead, and as they were right over Ruby Hill, they wrote the word "GENE" in smoke. Incredible! I couldn't speak.

Miller hardly looked up. And then, in his most off-hand way, he said, "That's it. Gotta be getting along. See yuh." Then he got in his car and drove away, leaving me standing there with my name in smoke, breaking up in the morning breezes.

Gene Amole, Rocky Mountain News columnist

Miller, Amole



advance man. The distinctive red-and-silver-painted aircraft were equipped with smoke for greater spectator interest by this time. Requests for shows came in from, and were flown in all parts of the country, including a very fateful National Guard Association performance in Spokane, Wash., Oct. 10, witnessed by Secretary of the Air Force Donald Quarles. A few days later, the team was designated the official ANG demonstration team. The *Minute Men* were jubilant; Col. Williams' carefully nurtured dream of an official acrobatic team was finally a reality.

With official recognition, some badly needed support was provided. An old C-47 support aircraft, a primary support pilot and back-up narrator — Maj. William R. Koger — and mechanics were added to support the team. The following weeks and months were extremely busy and improvements continued, although practice time was limited. The "corkscrew roll" soon became the signature maneuver of the *Minute Men.* The roll was an example of Williams' showmanship ability and, to date, has not been duplicated by any other aerial team.

During the summer of 1957, Curran's tour of duty came to an end and Lt. Robert W. "Bo" Odle assumed the right wing position. Later in 1957, the *Minute Men* were the first jet acrobatic team to perform in the Hawaiian Islands. In early 1958, word was received that F-86 *Sabre Jets* were being assigned to the team. The transition time into the new planes was short; in three months, the team was on the show circuit again. The new planes enhanced an already-spectacular demonstration.

On June 8, 1958, at Dayton, Ohio, the team suffered its only accident. The climax of the *Minute Men's* air show at Wright Patterson AFB was the "bomb burst." As the team pulled over the top of the maneuver, the ailerons became jammed on slot man John Ferrier's plane, throwing it into an uncontrolled roll at 6,500 feet. To prevent a tragic loss of life to innocent people, Capt. Ferrier stayed with his plane until it crashed in a tiny open space in a crowded residential area. He died on his 33rd birthday. His motives for staying with the doomed aircraft were described as "one of the finest acts of heroism in the annals of the Air National Guard." Ferrier was awarded the Distin-

Redeye pride

The *Minute Men* were the greatest. I worked in supply and believe me, whenever the Redeye team needed something — anything — we dropped everything to help them. But when they flew . . . what thrills they gave us. We would stand out and watch with tears in our eyes. They made us all so proud to be a part of the Colorado Air National Guard.

Vee Reid

Bond of trust: Top-notch maintenance efforts distinguished the team . . . (front) Dick Beaufils, Vern Marshall and Dick Cutshall; (back) Moe Etter, Leroy Williams, Kennard Johnson, Tony Lucero and Don Smith.

guished Flying Cross, posthumously.

Although the tragic event was fresh in everyone's mind, many show commitments remained on the schedule. Capt. Gobel D. James moved into the slot and flew his first show, June 19, only 11 days after the accident. While this change was taking place, a double solo was added with both Coomer and Jankovsky performing. Coomer joined the formation on occasion, making five-ship maneuvers possible.

In December 1958, Williams left the team to devote time to the increasing requirements of the 140th TFW. 1st Lt. John L. France began intensive training in the F-86. France replaced Jankovsky as solo in January 1959, participating in an extensive Central American goodwill tour in February. After completing the tour, Williams turned the team over to Maj. Cherry, team operations officer, and France moved to the vacated left wing position. Coomer resigned to resume his duties as 120th FIS commander.

Because of the possibility of the team being disbanded due to Air Force and ANG budget cuts, no new solo performer was added. However, Williams flew solo (when available) to keep up with show commitments. Cherry had introduced the "Eiffel Tower" maneuver and Williams was the only pilot to fly the "Elevator" maneuver for the Tower. In May 1959, the team presented an air show in Anchorage to help celebrate Alaskan statehood.

Early June 1959 brought official word that the *Minute Men*

A spectator's view

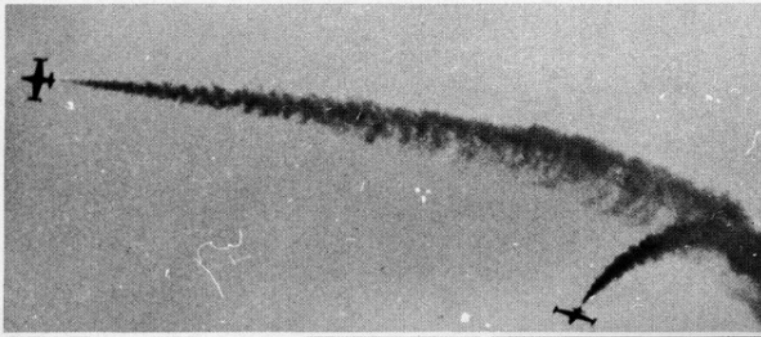
Four F-86s would line up on the runway in a fingertip formation, while a fifth aircraft would quietly radio "Power now." The brakes were released and the red and silver *Sabre Jets* slowly began their jet noise. By the time they were simultaneously airborne, the momentous roar became a crescendo, but at speeds of 500 mph, the noice soon dissipated and the jets were lost to view.

The audience searched the sky for a glimpse of the unseen aircraft. The narrator called the crowd's attention to a single jet off to their right, performing "Split S's." Suddenly, the red F-86 would roll, turn and dive toward the airfield, flashing at eye-level in front of the audience with white smoke streaming from its tail. With the crowd's eyes still glued to this jet, the other four *Sabres,* in a tight diamond formation, would pass close to the crowd from behind and pull straight up in an incredible rush of sound and speed. The smoke would flow from the airplanes, leaving a white trail along their looping arc.

Once the air show was in full swing, the pace quickened, progressing from the change-over loop to the diamond-roll, from a 360-degree turn to the corkscrew, and finally to the most beautiful of all maneuvers, the bomb burst. Four aircraft broke in four different directions and in long, diving turns headed toward the ground. The airplanes raced at each other at 500 mph from the four points of the compass and crossed over an exact spot only 20 feet off the deck, directly in front of the audience. Then the team leader gave a few quick puffs of smoke and the others rejoined him for a loop into the traffic pattern and a four-ship landing. A thunderous ovation would erupt from the audience, applauding the magnificent spectacle of the *one and only Minute Men* team.

Capt. Edgar N. Schaeffer

Danger and delight, the delicate balance: Precision flying is one of aviation's most exciting experiences and perhaps flight's most adventurous form. *Minute Men* maneuvers from the mid-1950s: F-80 *Shooting Star* corkscrew (above), bomb burst (below) and diamond roll (lower left). F-86 *Sabre Jet* bomb burst approach (lower right).



would be disbanded June 30. Still, a commitment had been made to fly a show in July. So, unofficially — just as it all began — the *Minute Men* performed their last demonstration in mid-July 1959, at Grand Junction, Colo.

No story of this unique team would be complete without an understanding of the "citizen-soldier" aspect of its members. Every ANG unit has a few full-time employees who "make it all work," but the majority hold other jobs. With this in mind, an occupational listing of the team in the 1950s follows:

Officers

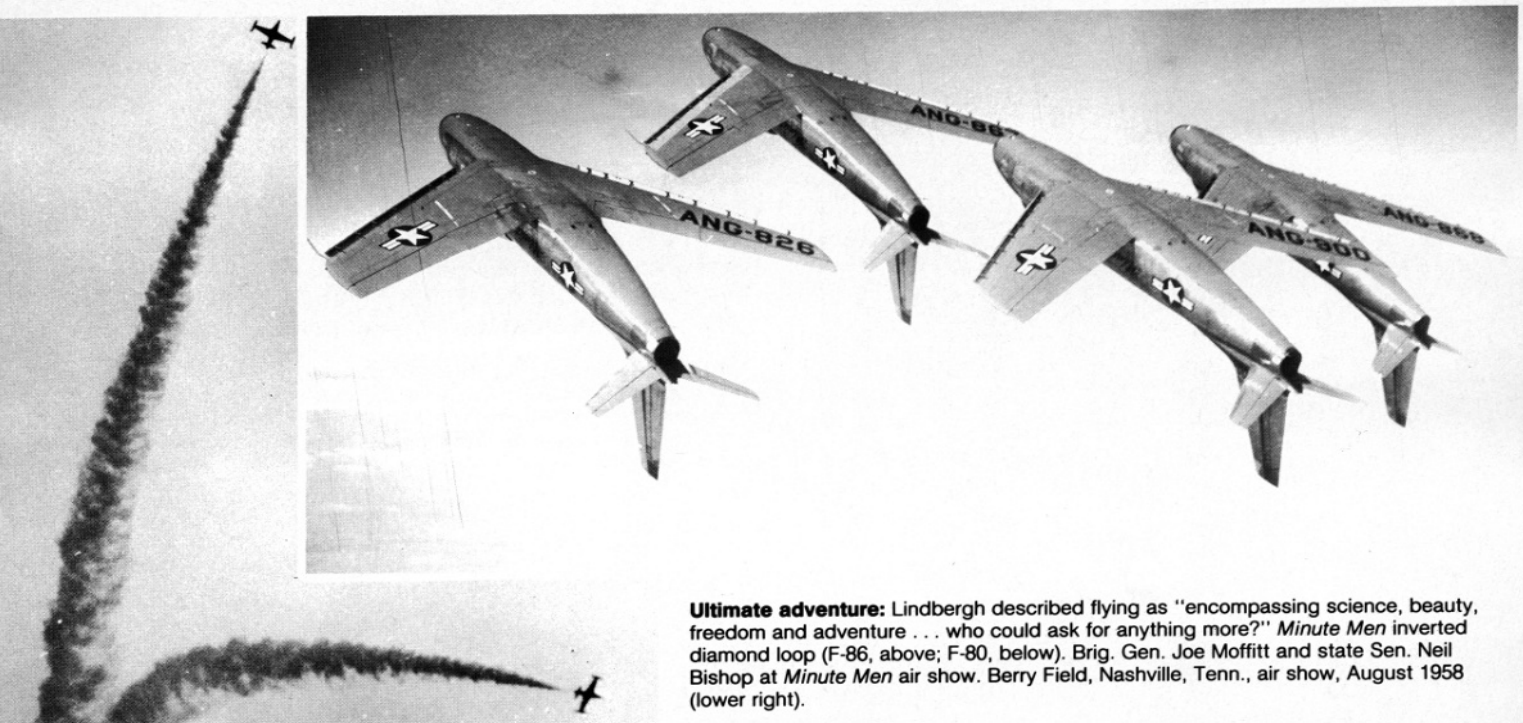
Lt. Col. Walter E. Williams — full-time COANG flight operations officer
Maj. Winett A. Coomer — United Airlines pilot
Maj. Arthur R. "Arch" Curran — USAF advisor assigned to the COANG
Maj. Warren P. "Satch" Harvey — full-time COANG flying training instructor
Maj. Ed Mack Miller — United Airlines pilot, aviation writer and instructor
Capt. Robert C. Cherry — full-time COANG flying training instructor
Capt. John T. Ferrier — United Airlines pilot
Capt. Gobel D. James — aeronautical engineer
Capt. Ronald L. Jankovsky — United Airlines pilot
Capt. William R. Koger — Denver attorney at law
1st Lt. Richard Hueholt — Univ. of Colorado aero. engineering student
1st Lt. John L. France — University of Denver law student
1st Lt. Robert W. "Bo" Odle — full-time COANG radar controller

Ground crew

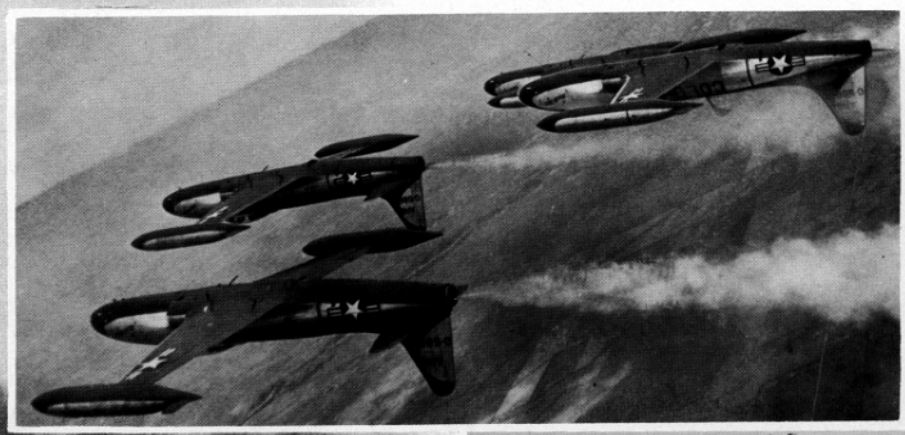
SMSgt. Kennard Johnson
MSgt. Tony Lucero (Radio)
TSgt. Marvin O. "Moe" Etter
TSgt. Vern Marshall
TSgt. Henry M. Meis, Jr.
TSgt. Fred A. Thebado
SSgt. Richard Beaufils
SSgt. Donald Cutshall
SSgt. John Pollard
SSgt. Lee Skinner
SSgt. Leroy Williams
SSgt. Robert Woods
SSgt. Donald Zdunczyk
Sgt. Duane Cowger
Sgt. Donald E. Smith

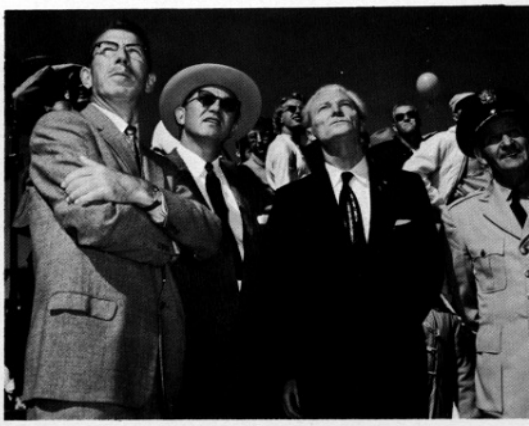
Support, though minimal compared with other acrobatic teams, was of the highest quality. One flight chief, six crew chiefs, and one radio man comprised the ground crew at the air shows. The primary C-47 support pilot went to all shows, but the co-pilot was usually a matter of who was available.

The credit for creation of the team and its eventual success belongs to Walt Williams. From their official recognition in 1956, until disbanding in 1959, the *Minute Men* achieved a formidable record. They performed before more than three million people in 47 states (including Hawaii and Alaska) and five foreign countries. In all, the team traveled an estimated 135,000 miles — the equivalent of six-and-one-half times around the earth. Quite an achievement for a team of part-time pilots.



Ultimate adventure: Lindbergh described flying as "encompassing science, beauty, freedom and adventure . . . who could ask for anything more?" *Minute Men* inverted diamond loop (F-86, above; F-80, below). Brig. Gen. Joe Moffitt and state Sen. Neil Bishop at *Minute Men* air show. Berry Field, Nashville, Tenn., air show, August 1958 (lower right).





138th AC&W Squadron reorganized

In August 1956, the 138th AC&W Squadron was given a new Table of Organization and unit equipment list. The equipment change from World War II-era TPSE 1-D radar gear to FPS-8 fixed-radar-search equipment, began the unit's progression to a 24-hour operational Air Defense Direction Center, one of the foremost detection sites in the 34th Air Division.

Much of the rehabilitation of World War II buildings at Buckley Field and construction of a radar tower began within a couple of months. By April 1957, the tower and much of the building rehabilitation had been completed.

The squadron's GCI station came on the air in July, starting with an eight-hour operations day. One month after coming on

Joe Moffitt

The enlisted man's general and father of the modern Colorado Air Guard

How do you explain your renown in Colorado military and civilian circles?
I've always believed in giving my utmost. Starting as a buck private and finishing my career as a general officer, I hope I was able to help bridge the gap between the enlisted and officer corps.

You enlisted in 1932. Why?
Most kids of that time idolized Charles Lindbergh, after he flew the Atlantic. He had, also, been a National Guardsman and airplanes were coming into their own. I was raised on a farm in an area now known as the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. The Guard *Jennies* flew over the farm periodically, and that intrigued me. In those days there weren't very many airplanes. Then, I heard about the National Guard and found out they had a program where you could get a rating through civil aviation. So, I joined.

Did you consider doing things other than joining the National Guard?
I was basically a farmer; however, after I joined the National Guard, I was employed full time as an air technician. I started as a night watchman and, later, was transferred into the day crew. That was during the depression years and, at $90 a month, it was a pretty god job.

Then came World War II. What was your involvement?
I was in the Guard and went into World War II as a second lieutenant. Having been involved in the technician, aircraft maintenance, parachute packing and gunnery business, I had pretty broad experience, especially in those days when we only had a few technicians. Because of this experience, I was appointed to the engineering officer position at Biggs Field in El Paso, Texas. I pretty much remained in related fields all the way through my WWII active duty tour, going to the China-Burma-India Theater in 1945.

The 120th Observation Squadron was called to active duty as a unit?
Yes. We were called to active duty and attached to the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Bliss. Our mission was air observation and we were, primarily, an artillery fire-control unit. We also towed targets for Army anti-aircraft units assigned to Fort Bliss. It wasn't very long after our activation that Pearl Harbor was attacked. There were many rumors concerning a possible invasion of this country from the south; so, we were detailed to fly observation along the Mexican border . . . from Douglas, Ariz., right down to the Big Bend country. We flew the border, day in and day out. The 1st Cav. had command posts along the route and we reported to them.

You said you served some time in India and China?
Yes, but that was much later. I was transferred from the 120th in 1943, to the Second Tactical Air Division. My assignment was division technical inspector at Barksdale Field, Shreveport, La., primarily doing prior-to-overseas-movement inspections.

When did you go overseas?
Not until 1945. I went to Calcutta, India; from Calcutta to Kunming, China; and from Kunming to Shanghai. As a result of the atom bomb drop and the Japanese surrender, I was only gone for six months.

After the war, with the military scale-down and other alternatives to select from, why did you choose to stay in?
I came back from overseas and my first assignment was at Buckley Field with a photo reconnaissance unit that was going to be transferred to Alaska. That didn't sound too appealing to me. However, I had a chance to go to Clovis, N.M., to a B-17 outfit and I opted for that. In the meantime, I had a business opportunity to come back to Denver in a real estate partnership with Frederick Bonfils, of the *Denver Post*. We later sold the business and I returned to full time status in 1946 with the Colorado National Guard as the base detachment commander.

What are your thoughts about Brig. Gen. Gregory?
Stan Gregory was a wonderful man. In my opinion, if it hadn't been for him, we may not have had a wing organization assigned to Colorado. He returned from WWII, was assigned to Lowry Field and spent much time between here and Washington, D.C., to get the Colorado ANG organized. We went from a squadron, in 1941, to a wing-base organization, in 1946.

You became the wing commander for the 140th Fighter Wing. What were some of your major achievements?
Building the organization was of primary concern. In addition to the wing, we had a radar group and other communication units in the process of organization.

What are your thoughts about the Korean recall?
We were alerted that we were going to be called, but we didn't know if we were going to George AFB, Calif., or Clovis, N.M. We went to Clovis, a decommissioned WWII base that hadn't had a thing done to it in years. They had grain stored in the hangars and sheep manure everywhere. It was a mess! Capt. Rio Lucas was in charge of rehabilitation, and through his efforts it wasn't long until we were flying a full schedule.

Thinking of the *Minute Men*, taking on a new role and the risks, how did you feel about that?
We had been doing a lot of things with the Civil Air Patrol and participated in many air demonstrations throughout the state, before the *Minute Men*, per se, were formed. That was back in the old P-51 days. People back in Washington, like Winston P. Wilson, National Guard Bureau chief, said, why don't we make this an

line, the station entered a 16-hour operations day. By Sept. 1, the unit was operating around the clock. In 1958, the site received a height-finding FPS-6 radar unit to further augment their capabilities.

The GCI station remained under the jurisdiction of the 34th Air Division until Jan. 1, 1959, when both the wing and the 138th were gained by the 29th Air Division. Several months later, the 138th was designated a master direction center.

Maj. Gen. Joe Moffitt's reflections on the 1950s included a very descriptive passage of "life inside" the GCI operations center (following page).

Overall, the effectiveness of the GCI station during its earliest days was outstanding. An August 1957 statistic indicated that the station had rendered emergency assistance to some

ANG team? They supported us. Before that, we were doing it on our own. It cost a lot of money and used up a lot of our local resources.

Did you have a favorite aircraft?
I suppose the old T-33 and P-80 were my favorite aircraft. I've never flown any of the newer jets. But then the B-25 and the A-26 were good to me, and I should not omit the C-47, the old reliable *Gooneybird.*

How do you feel about the way aircraft have evolved?
Well, to me, an airplane is an airplane. Pilots need a lot more technical experience today than you did when I was flying. It takes a different type of individual. You've got to have a lot more know-how in some respects, and, in others, you don't need as much because things are so computerized.

People have lost their lives, either through their own errors or mechanical failures; that had to be one of the darker parts of the job you had as a wing commander and as adjutant general. How did you handle that?
I didn't deal with it very well. I've shed tears when someone was killed in one of our airplanes. There was always the question in my mind . . . was lack of supervision a contributing cause?

Did you ever have any times when you thought your number was up?
I suppose any pilot, who has flown very long, has experienced moments of terror. As I never flew combat, mine were limited to either mechanical problems, my own human failure, or weather, particularly thunderstorms and icing. But, I smartened up and soon learned that a 180-degree turn was a smart maneuver in severe weather.

Who are some of the people that have influenced you or made indelible impressions?
A lot of people made an impression on me. Sen. Ed C. Johnson was really a strong booster of the Colorado Guard. Militarily, I've been fortunate to serve under leaders

Maj. Gen. Joe C. Moffitt served as commander of the 86th Fighter Wing, 140th Fighter Wing, 140th Fighter-Bomber Wing, 140th Fighter Interceptor Wing and the 140th Air Defense Wing from February 1948 until April 1960, when he was appointed as adjutant general of the state of Colorado. Interview conducted by CMSgt. Joseph R. Ashby.

like General Joe Cannon of TAC, General Ted Timberlake of 9th Air Force, and General Paul Williams of 10th Air Force.

How about governors?
I was fortunate to serve under three very fine governors, who were all supporters of the Guard. John Love, during the 1960s, was my favorite. I suppose, however, that opinion might be influenced by the turmoil of that decade when the sign of the times for the Guard was more critical due to the protests of the Vietnam War and civil rights problems.

In retrospect, what do you think about the changing role of the ANG?
I believe, as a result of the Air Guard's proven performance, that we are fully capable of accepting the support mission assigned by the regular establishment.

Do you think there's a limit to reliance upon the Guard and Reserve?
As I see it, the Guard and Reserve are limited only by their ability to obtain qualified replacements from the civilian population. The reservoir of combat veterans is rapidly becoming history. Training more technically qualified young personnel is a *must* to fill the ranks of the future.

To what do you attribute the success of the Colorado ANG?
Placement of people. By that, I mean putting the round peg in the round hole. We've always had some top-notch people in command and leadership positions. That's the crux. And, we have a group of dedicated technicians who have worked their hearts out for years and years, gaining tremendously valuable experience in the process.

Why was placement of people the key to our success?
I always found it to be true . . . you need someone who can get communications up and down the line. It was easy enough for Joe Moffitt to get communications down, but what about the poor guy out there working in the snow when things go wrong? Somebody has to fix it, so that person can get communications up to somebody at command level who can do something about his problem. Unless someone listens carefully to the support personnel, you're bound to have problems.

You were very active in the community, weren't you?
I was always involved in the community. To name some, I was the American Legion Man of the Year, Charter Member of the Aurora Rotary, Aurora Man of the Year, Chairman of the Board of Highlander Boys, received the El Jebel Shrine Citation of Merit, and was awarded a life membership in the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, the VFW and American Legion. I am past president of the Colorado Aviation Historical Society and the Denver Pilots Club, and past governor of Quiet Birdmen.

Your community activities truly exemplify the citizen-airman concept.
It's the one thing that I miss most today — the community involvement.

Early days in early warning

An interceptor controller sits in the darkened direction center (above), watching a labyrinth of red, yellow and white tracks on a transparent plotting board. He turns to the telephone, throws a switch giving him a direct line to fighter operations and states, 120th Ops, this is Anagram, scramble two Fox 86 Lima, vector zero-seven-zero, angels four-one, go-gate, contact Anagram Echo channel, easy Mike out." Within a matter of minutes two jet fighters are airborne seeking a distant aircraft target in a vast sky . . . a pinpoint on the radar screen. Without radar, the scrambled aircraft would search for hours with little hope of finding its unknown target, but with a ground control intercept station, the target's direction, speed and altitude could be determined within minutes. The concept of scrambling aircraft and controlling them to the target so that an identification could be made had become a reality in the Colorado Air National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Joe C. Moffitt

The enlisted man's general

It's always been a great organization, but the old days were the most fun. I joined in 1950 and started working as a technician in 1953. There were only about 75 of us in the beginning. It was really a close-knit family. Gen. Moffitt was, well, one of a kind. What a memory for names. I think he knew the first name of every member of every Guard family. *He was the enlisted man's general.*

SMSgt. Herman Klap

35 aircraft; all airplanes landed safely at their destination.

In 1959 and 1960, two 138th controllers, Capt. Phillip De Gregory and 1st Lt. Phillip Gaudet, received the "We Point with Pride" Air Defense Command (ADC) award for the excellent manner in which they controlled disabled aircraft. The efficiency and capability of the 138th AC&W Squadron was a great testimonial to the value of the Air National Guard to the ADC and the United States.

Further reorganization of the 140th

The 140th had converted to a fighter interceptor wing in July 1955 with little change in the organizational structure. However, on July 1, 1957, the wing was reorganized and redesignated the 140th Air Defense Wing (ADW).

The change reduced the number of authorized personnel and, although their function did not change, all units became squadrons assigned to the 140th Fighter Group. The new orga-

Casper, Wyo.: COANG F-80 fighters on the ramp (left) during a July 1954 Colorado-New Mexico-Wyoming encampment.

Home away from home

I remember leaving for Casper, Wyo., aboard the C-47 at 0600 hours for gunnery training. There was a sheet of ice on the ground when I stepped off the aircraft and I promptly fell on my can. We had fun anyway and accomplished the mission. Growing with the Colorado Guard from that flying club to what it is today has really made for some changes. This has been my life.

SMSgt. Kenneth Krumpelmann

Midair

Back in the mid-50s, Elmer Reed and Norm Minear had a midair collision in their F-80s and lost both aircraft. Norm bellied his damaged F-80 in the "boonies." Ray Schmidt was airborne in the C-45 at the time. He headed down to the accident site 20 miles southeast of Buckley, picked up Norm and hauled him back to Buckley. They patched him up at Fitzsimons. Elmer Reed didn't make it out. He was a good man and a friend.

Lt. Col. Bill Axton

Just bidin' my time

Dolph Sloan bailed out of an F-80 in 1955. Even though we spotted the wreck, we couldn't find Dolph. We finally located him in a farmhouse chatting with a farmer's daughter several hours later. He had walked out and was just relaxing a bit . . . waiting for us to come get him.

CMSgt. Tom Linam

nizations included: Headquarters, 140th ADW; Headquarters, 140th Fighter Group (AD); 140th Air Base Squadron; 140th Materiel Squadron, 140th USAF Dispensary; and the 120th FIS.

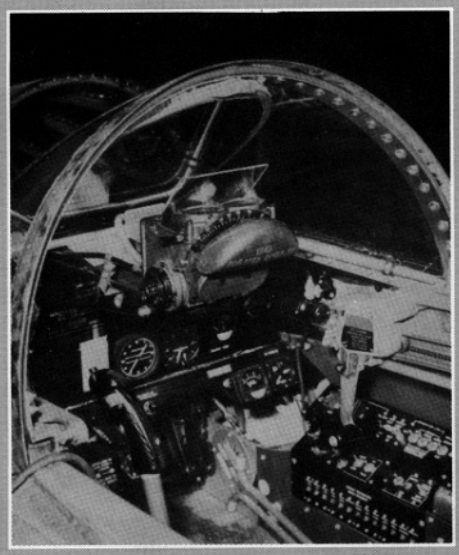
Before a year had elapsed, an additional reorganization of maintenance responsibilities took place. In April 1958, the materiel squadron was reorganized and redesignated the 140th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. All aircraft maintenance activities in the 120th were transferred to the new

Flightline duty: Ernie Westlake, Casper, Wyo., 1958.

Nice choice but . . .

Thirty-odd years ago Bill Axton was giving me a combination instrument/proficiency check (we allowed for a few short-cuts in those days) in the T-6. Somewhere over southeastern Colorado he told me to come out from under the rear seat hood, then promptly said, "Engine out, forced landing." I scanned all 360 degrees of the horizon, eventually settling on a distant wheat field with the shortest stubble and the fewest ravines. I made a nice approach with gear and flaps down, but as Bill took over just before touch-down and applied go-round power, he advised, "OK, Koger, but I would have chosen that flying-farmer strip we were directly over when I called the emergency . . ."

Lt. Col. Bill Koger



Wrong handle

There are always familiarity problems when you transition from one plane to another. The F-80 was a whole new generation of aircraft. I should have known better than to pull the dumb stunt of accidentally blowing my canopy and I'm still ashamed of it. There were handles on the floor for both the gunnery sleeve and the canopy release. I unfortunately pulled the wrong one. Dave Simmon was on the radio and he helped me stay with the plane and land it . . . only to feel the *Wrath of God* in the form of Walt Williams. Col. Williams and Gen. Moffitt met me as I climbed out. Col. Williams was spitting mad when he asked me what the hell had happened. When I told him I had pulled the wrong handle he got even madder and his face started to turn bright red. He calmed down a bit when Gen. Moffitt took him aside and said, "He's dumb all right Walt, but at least he's honest."

Lt. Col. Ronald Jankovsky

Bill Axton: Buckley, 1953.

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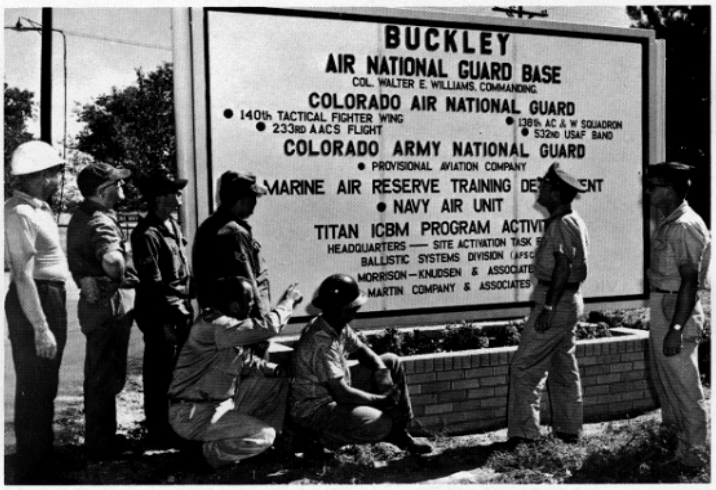
Changing of the Guard: Buckley Naval Air Station — Denver poster and Tenth Anniversary, September 1957 (above). The COANG assumed responsibility in a change of command ceremony at Buckley NAS on June 30, 1959 (lower left). Buckley ANG Field (left) became Buckley ANG Base (below) in April 1960.



organization, leaving the 120th with an authorized strength of 35 officers and 19 airmen.

The Colorado Air Guard began the transition from F-80s to the all-weather, F-86D jet interceptor in 1957. Pilots and maintenance personnel were trained by an F-86D mobile detachment and were ready for the *Sabre Jets* when they arrived; the airplane required many more hours of maintenance duty than the wing's earlier aircraft.

By the end of 1958's field training at Casper, all but two squadron pilots had finished their F-86D transition phase. There was still much to be accomplished before the pilots could be considered combat ready; radar trail, day and night profiles, night intercepts, airborne intercepts, and, of course, firing live rockets at a tow target all required familiarization. All aspects of training, except rocket firing, had been completed by the time field training began the following year. The necessary firing training was subsequently accomplished during the second week of 1959's summer camp. With pilots fully qualified and combat ready, the Colorado ANG was placed on alert status Jan. 1, 1959.

By the following year, pilots and aircraft in the 120th were standing 14-hour runway alerts, seven days a week. Two pilots on alert in four-hour shifts could man their aircraft and become airborne in five minutes. Pilots were under Air Defense Control for a total of 1,418 hours, completing 562 scrambles and over 1,000 successful intercepts, during this period. Only two scramble requests were delayed; there were only eight aborts.

ANG assumes command of Buckley

In late 1958 the U.S. Navy announced they were going to close their Naval Air Station at Buckley Field by June 30, 1959. By February 1959, discussions were being held between the Navy, the National Guard Bureau, the Colorado Air National Guard, the Ballistic Missiles Division, Air Material Command, Corps of Engineers, Lowry Air Force Base and Headquarters USAF to determine the future of the field. It was finally decided that the Air National Guard would assume command of the base when the Navy relinquished command, with the Ballistic Missiles Division, Air Material Command and Corps of Engineers as tenants.

As the Navy began closing their facilities, more and more of their personnel were transferred to other naval stations, and by April the Guard had taken over many "housekeeping" activities. The Navy officially decommissioned Denver Naval Air Station in ceremonies at Buckley Field on June 30, 1959. In the fall

Scroungers: MSgts. Hank Meis, Moe Etter and Dale Price.

The ultimate scrounger

Mo Etter was a Guardsman all the way . . . certainly one of the best crew chiefs we ever had. He was the epitome of the aircraft maintenance career field. Airplanes were his life. He would stay up all night just to fix a broken aircraft. In true ANG tradition, he had parts stored everywhere and could scrounge anything, anytime!

SMSgt. Jim Sanford

of 1959, negotiations were started between Lowry Air Force Base officials and the Colorado Air Guard for transferring transition flying training from Lowry to Buckley. The USAF officially designated the installation as Buckley Air National Guard Base in late April 1960.

It was estimated that some 3,000 people were stationed at Buckley at the close of the decade. Over 340 air technicians and service personnel were employed by the Colorado Air National Guard. Their combined annual salaries totaled $1,589,120, quite a contrast to the eight caretakers employed in 1935 earning a total payroll of $15,000. It was interesting to note that the 120th had 17 caretakers in 1940 and only 20 by 1946. Postwar reorganization built the caretaker force up to 75 in 1948. The nearly 400 permanent-party employees at the end of the 1950s represented a 20-fold increase over a two-decade

Medicine Bow napalm run

In 1956, a commercial airliner crashed into the east face of a sheer rock wall, just south of Medicine Bow Peak in Wyoming, dropping wreckage on a small plateau at the base of the wall. After recovery operations had been completed, curiosity seekers were climbing the mountain, taking wreckage pieces for souvenirs. Fearing injury and legal complications, the airline company requested assistance to destroy the wreckage.

NGB directed the Colorado ANG to napalm the debris, a difficult flying mission due to the vertical rock wall immediately west of the wreckage. Guard pilots flew directly toward the face of the cliff, releasing their napalm as they neared the site. Immediately pulling up after the drop, the F-80s hit strong westerly winds that subjected them to fierce down-drafts off the mountain. Lt. Col. Walt Williams led the flight, which scored 14 direct hits on a very difficult and unusual target.

Col. Bob Cherry

Wild Bill Koger

Who was the most unusual character I ran across in the Guard? They were all pretty unusual. Bill Koger always wore his cowboy boots in the P-51, used to land our T-6 at his family farm in Kansas and was noted for being able to balance a water glass full of wine on his head — after stabilizing himself with a few.

Lt. Col. Bill Axton

period.

In late 1959, Gen Moffitt briefly summarized the decade of the 1950s and the preceding years . . .

"In its brief existence — at least brief compared to Guard units that served in the Revolution, the Civil War and World War I — the Colorado Air National Guard has established quite a record. Since 1923, the organization has flown thousands of hours of mercy missions, transported injured and sick persons to modern hospitals, dropped hay to stranded cattle, and searched for many missing persons and aircraft. To their everlasting credit, men of the Colorado Air National Guard created their own aerial demonstration team, won a national gunnery meet, and amassed a noteworthy record in both World War II and Korea. The pattern which they have established in their brief years of existence can be summed up in one thought: *'Invaluable in peace; superlative in war'.*"

A decade of remarkable achievement

On May 1, 1957, I drove through Buckley's main gate to the 138th area (Bubble Farm now) to view for the first time the tarpaper shacks that made up the 138th AC&W Squadron. It looked like an early World War I camp. In the next 10 years the unit compiled a remarkable record under the leadership of Maj. Dick Saltmarsh, while moving to the Navy Club facility and, subsequently, to Longmont and Greeley. It was the first non-flying ANG Unit to be presented with the USAF Outstanding Unit Award, Air Defense Command "A" Award and Air Force Association Citation of Honor. The squadron assisted active Air Force AC&W squadrons and, also, evaluated their performance on two separate occasions — unheard of before this time. In 1963, the squadron won the "Maj. Gen. Clinton D. Vincent Trophy" as the outstanding control team at "William Tell." In 1967 our small Guard squadron possessed more *Masters of Air Defense* designations than the active Air Force had in its entire system. Our people made the difference; it was one of the finest AC&W squadrons ever.

Edmund D. Morrisey

Known far and wide

People that had never heard of the Air Guard now know us, our missions and our capability.

Brig. Gen. Walter Williams, commenting on the success of the Minute Men

Contrails: F-86L *Sabre Jet* at Buckley ANGB, 1960. Activated in 1961 for the Berlin Crisis and in 1968 for Vietnam, the Colorado Air National Guard earned a worldwide reputation in the 1960s.

The Sixties . . . historical overview

The beginning of the 1960s was characterized by a growing population, advancing technology and a hastening pace to America's lifestyle. For the first time, presidential candidates met face-to-face in televised debates. The charisma of the Democatic candidate, John F. Kennedy, swayed voting viewers away from the Republican ticket led by Vice President Richard M. Nixon. In a close election, Kennedy, at 43, became the youngest man ever elected president.

In an attempt to overthrow Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, a band of exiles launched the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961. Castro crushed the invasion. In June, the Soviet Union insisted Western powers withdraw from East Berlin. Thousands of East Germans fled to the Western sector. To stop the exodus, the East Germans erected the infamous Berlin Wall. President Kennedy promised U.S. defense and support to West Berlin.

On Oct. 22, 1962, another Cuban crisis involving the Soviet construction of missile sites brought the U.S. and Russia to the brink of an open confrontation. The president ordered the U.S. Navy to blockade Soviet ships carrying offensive arms. U.S. forces were alerted and, for a week, war seemed imminent; then Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev backed down and ordered the missiles removed.

The situation in Southeast Asia became more critical after South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem was assassinated in 1963. The U.S. supported the new South Vietnamese government and became more involved in their conflict, moving from an "advisory" status to full participation, eventually involving more than 500,000 military personnel. Peace negotiations met with little success. The U.S. commitment in Southeast Asia strained the patience of the American public, deeply affecting the economic, political and social structure of the nation.

Also in 1963, the U.S., Great Britain, the Soviet Union and more than 100 other countries signed a test-ban treaty restricting all but underground nuclear testing.

For the first time in history, more than 70 million Americans had jobs and only five percent of the working force remained unemployed.

John H. Glenn, Jr. became the first American to orbit the earth in 1962. An expanded space program (projected for 1970) was fulfilled in August 1969, when Apollo II landed on the moon with astronauts Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin Aldrin, Jr. on board.

On November 22, 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. During his short administration, Kennedy established the Peace Corps and the Alliance for Progress and gave Americans a glimpse of "Camelot" in his unfulfilled term in office. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson assumed office and was re-elected in 1964 by a large margin.

The leading domestic issue of the 1960s was the civil rights movement. Civil rights demonstrations often erupted into riots with violence involved. In August 1963, about 200,000 people under the leadership of civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., staged a "Freedom March" on Washington, D.C. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 helped legislate many equal opportunity programs. In 1968, both Dr. King and Sen. Robert Kennedy, brother of John Kennedy, were assassinated.

President Johnson's "War on Poverty" program was authorized with the passage of the 1964 Economic Opportunities Act. Much progressive domestic legislation occurred during Johnson's administration, including Medicare, a health plan for the aged, a cut in excise taxes, increased federal aid to education and the establishment of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Faced with continued anti-Vietnam war sentiment, President Johnson chose not to seek re-election in 1968. The Republican candidate Richard M. Nixon — appealing to a nation dissatisfied with the Vietnam War, a growing urban crisis, poverty, racial strife and other domestic issues — was victorious.

The 1960s ended as a decade of great accomplishment and growth coupled with many serious problems and troubles.

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'Don't Fence Us In'

Super Sabre: Acquired in 1961, the F-100C took the COANG to Vietnam in 1968, proving the Air Guard's combat readiness and capability. Aggressive leadership, two activations and many successful exercises helped Colorado fill the decade with ANG "famous firsts," including the *first* overseas deployment (Puerto Rico) and the *first* squadron committed to combat as a unit (Phan Rang AB, Vietnam).

The Sixties

The "Turbulent Sixties," a decade of controversy and change, saw the building of the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis, a presidential assassination, civil rights marches and the war in Vietnam. The era caught the Colorado Air National Guard in its vortex of change as the Guard again assumed control of Buckley, acquired new aircraft and missions — including an important refueling capability — and served two tours of active duty.

Buckley Air National Guard Base

When the Navy decommissioned its Denver Naval Air Station, the installation again became the property of the Air Force. Licensed to the state of Colorado, the base was operationally assigned to a former tenant, the Air National Guard. On April 18, 1960, the installation took on a new, yet familiar name — Buckley Air National Guard Base. With Brig. Gen. Joe C. Moffitt commanding, it was the first base assigned to and operated by a Guard unit.

The 3,738-acre base also became home for several tenant activities, including the Air Force Ballistic Missiles Division Field Office, Air Material Command Contract Management Office, Army Corps of Engineers, Glen L. Martin Co., Morrison-Knudson Co., plus numerous other subcontractors involved with the Titan Missile complex construction on the old Lowry bombing range. The Navy, Marines and Colorado Army National Guard maintained small detachments, as well.

The Colorado Air National Guard was comprised of the following organizations and commanders: Headquarters, Colorado Air National Guard (COANG), Maj. Gen. Stanford W. Gregory, chief of staff; 140th Air Defense Wing (ADW), Brig. Gen. Joe C. Moffitt; 138th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron (ACWS), Lt. Col. Richard E. Saltmarsh; 233rd Airways and Air Communications Service Flight (Mobile), Capt. Thomas J. Florea; 532nd Air Force Band, CWO Donald A. Kramer; 140th Fighter Group (Air Defense), Lt. Col. Marion P. Barnwell; 140th Air Base Squadron (ABS), Lt. Col. Harry A. Beck; 140th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (CAMS), Maj. Edward J. Villano; 140th USAF Dispensary, Lt. Col. Thomas A. Witten; and 120th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS), Maj. Winett A. Coomer.

The 140th ADW's span of operational control also included the 150th Fighter Group, Albuquerque, Maj. Clay O. Keen com-

manding; 151st Fighter Group, Salt Lake City, Lt. Col. Roland R. Wright; and the 153rd Fighter Group, Cheyenne, Maj. Gerald T. Rowley.

Joe C. Moffitt . . . they broke the mold

The 140th ADW Commander, Brig. Gen. Moffitt, was honored as Aurora's Man of the Year at an annual Chamber of Commerce and Jaycee banquet in January 1960. His was a tremendous success story — one of farm boy to pilot, biplanes to jets, and, sergeant's stripes to general's star in nine years.

Moffitt anticipated Aurora's rapid eastward expansion long before there was an Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone program. Largely due to his efforts, Denver radio station KOA's two transmitting towers (485 feet and 265 feet) off Buckley's north-south runway were purchased in March 1960 by the state for $160,000. The obstacles were razed, eliminating the possibility of a catastrophe. Ongoing negotiations concerning a four-mile buffer zone adjacent to the base, particularly at runway ends, carried over into "General Joe's" tenure as Colorado's adjutant general.

Promoted to major general in May 1960, Moffitt replaced Maj. Gen. Robert D. Charlton, Army National Guard, and became the nation's first rated Air Guardsman appointed adjutant general.

Supersonic air warrior: The first fighter to attain level supersonic flight, the F-100 was North American's improvement on the F-86 design, an evolution mandated by the Soviet MiG-15's ability to fly higher and outclimb, outturn and outaccelerate the *Sabre* in the Korean War.

Aviation Perspective

By 1960, it was apparent the ballistic missile and space programs had grown into large, distinct entities, no longer effectively managed within the existing framework. So, April 1, 1961, the Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) and the Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) were created from the former Air Research and Development Command and Air Material Command.

Even as *Minuteman I* missiles were being installed in underground silos (1962), the Air Force was enhancing their effectiveness; and the Force Modernization Program was initiated in 1964 to replace all *Minuteman I* missiles with the *Minuteman II.* Then, Aug. 16, 1968, the first *Minuteman III* was launched from Cape Canaveral, capable of carrying three Multiple Independently-targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRV).

Late in 1961, President John F. Kennedy sent military advisers to South Vietnam, including an Air Force Special Air Warfare Unit called "Farmgate," flying T-28s, AC-47s, and A-26s. Between 1962 and 1964, AIE aircraft arrived to supplement the initial Farmgate force. Also in 1962, the first USAF combat unit, the 509th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, arrived in South Vietnam.

American participation was limited to an advisory and defensive role until 1964. In retaliation for North Vietnam PT boat attacks on two U.S. Navy destroyers stationed in the Gulf of Tonkin, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered air strikes on North Vietnam in August 1964. F-100s and, later, F-4s flew the bulk of the air support missions, aided in target location and identification by Forward Air Controllers (FACs) flying O-1 *Bird Dogs,* OV-10 *Broncos,* and the O-2. C-130, C-123, and C-7 "trash haulers" supported Army operations, braving intense enemy fire to resupply isolated or surrounded outposts like Khe Sanh and An Loc.

In February 1965, the United States launched "Operation Rolling Thunder," an aerial campaign against North Vietnam that was to last until 1968. It was calculated to end the war by striking selected targets and driving the North Vietnamese to the treaty table. By 1966, the focus of American attacks became the Red River Valley, stretching some 120 miles with the capital city of Hanoi as the hub. For the first five years, the Republic F-105 *Thunderchief* bore the brunt of the air war against the North, flying 75 percent of the missions. The F-4, F-111, and B-52 supplanted the *"Thud."* The first Air Force MiG kill of the war was by an F-4C, July 10, 1965.

Playing a deadly game of cat and mouse with enemy radar sites, two-seat F-105s, known as *"Wild Weasels,"* were assigned the responsibility for surface-to-air-missile (SAM) suppression. Rolling Thunder did not force a peace conference. Its piecemeal nature enabled the North Vietnamese to build up the most sophisticated air defense network ever faced in combat.

Walter E. Williams . . . a shining star

The leader of the *Minute Men,* Col. Williams, stepped out of the cockpit and into Moffitt's 140th ADW commander's chair June 4, 1960. Promoted to colonel at age 33, Williams' decorations included the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal (14 oak leaf clusters), American Campaign Medal and seven other special citations. A Denver native, he learned to fly as a civilian in 1941, and entered aviation cadet training in 1943. Williams received his flight training at Thunderbird Field and Williams Field, both in Phoenix, Ariz., and at Minter Field in Bakersfield, Calif. He flew 87 P-47 *Thunderbolt* combat missions from southern England during World War II, with one confirmed kill. Following the war, he joined the 120th Fighter Squadron, commanding the unit from late 1948 until 1951 when he was activated and sent to Korea to fly F-86s. Williams added three more Air Medals in 51 missions in "MiG Alley."

During his command of the wing, Williams faced the challenge of a changing Air Guard with increasing mission requirements and a marked increased in air traffic . . . from approximately 400 to 2,000 take-offs and landings a month, due to the curtailment of air operations at Lowry. Transitional flights from Lowry to Buckley also included controversial airline touch-and-go landings while Stapleton was converting from props to jets.

New command, new aircraft

On New Year's Day, 1961, the Colorado ANG converted from the Air Defense Command to the Tactical Air Command (TAC), becoming the 140th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW). Nine days later, they took delivery of the first of 25 F-100C *Super Sabres.*

Predicting the 40 pilots of the redesignated 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) would be combat ready by May, Williams stated, "We're honored to receive this highly capable aircraft and be upgraded to the supersonic category."

Under the new command came changes in structuring. In addition to the 120th TFS, the wing picked up the 127th TFS, Wichita, Kan., and the 174th TFS, Sioux City, Iowa. The new units replaced the 150th, 151st and 153rd Fighter Groups. The 140th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (CAMS) and the 233rd Air Traffic Control Flight also came about as part of the restructuring.

The last two F-86Ls were scheduled to leave May 3, 1961, but a late-spring Canadian cold front stopped them from departing on time. This last delay prompted the "Ode to An F-86L," appearing in the May 12th issue of *Contrails*:

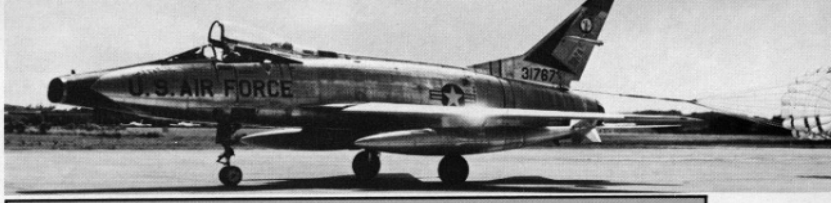
Ode to an F-86L

Not long ago, she was the latest thing in fighters. People were wanting to fly her, true she had limitations, true she was a descendant of the "Dog," but modifications had made her a passable airplane.

When you first came it was like a crowd of rowdy, likable but unannounced relatives dropping in for dinner. The only thing was that you liked what was on the table so well you decided to stay for a week or two.

It is with mixed feelings that we watch the Ls leave. It was an airplane and a mission that caused problems, but it also was a stepping stone to better things . . . new airplanes, new problems, and new challenges now face the wing.

So rather than an ending, let's just say it is a beginning as we go on to other ideas, new horizons. So long, F-86L, it's been good to know ya!



An F-100 love affair

The first time I saw the world's first supersonic fighter sitting on our ramp, my impression was that they were ugly and mean looking. In flight, however, they were a thing of beauty; that afterburner sent goose bumps down your spine. It was then the love affair began. The North American F-100C *Super Sabre* was certainly one of the more difficult jet fighters in the inventory to fly, before or since. Once you mastered its eccentricities, real fighter pilots loved it. Unstable in both yaw and pitch, it was almost impossible to trim for sustained hands-off flight. The "C" had a margin of speed and performance over the later "D" models and came without flaps, making for some interesting high-speed landings at the mile-high elevation of Buckley. On a hot day, our landing speed would exceed 200 mph. There was usually a sigh of relief when you felt the decelerating tug and heard the tower call, "Good chute."

Col. Jack Wilhite

Progress sometimes comes at a high price. Lt. Col. Coomer came close to paying that price in June 1961, as the first COANG pilot to crash in the newly acquired F-100C. The 120th TFS commander was taking off on Buckley's north-south runway when his *Super Sabre* suffered an afterburner blowout. The plane hit the ground at approximately 180 mph, knocking off its landing gear. His aircraft crashed through two fences and careened off three small knolls before coming to a flaming halt two miles from the field.

Coomer, a former *Minute Men* team member (nicknamed "Kane Pupule" — Hawaiian for "Crazy Man"), described the accident: "When I first smacked the ground, I remember wondering 'Is this the day I buy the farm?' Then I didn't do anymore thinking; the ride was too rough. It was a grinding, jarring ride. My head kept moving around so much I couldn't see." A veteran of 19 years flying, Coomer considered himself "just lucky."

On a happier note, the first Charles A. Foster trophy was awarded to SMSgt. Donald W. Pettigrew, 138th AC&W squadron, by Maj. Gen. Gregory, June 24, 1961. The inscription on the trophy, named after a former maintenance NCO and F-86L pilot who lost his life in a training flight in December 1960, cited Pettigrew as the COANG's Outstanding Airman of the Year.

120th FIS: On wing, left to right . . . Layton, Fleming, Mathias, Odle and Kowal; Standing . . . Walsh, Craver, Neuens, Jankovsky, Simmon, Mills, Parker, Frey, Pahs, Sherman, Johnson and Wilson; Kneeling . . . France, James, Morton, Millard, Brown, Horner, Wilson and Boucher; Sitting . . . Weidman, Coomer, Cherry, Foster and Zdunczyk, June 1960.

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"Half-second" computers

The "Hun" was one of the last fighters where pure pilot technique was more important than how well the computers were working or how well you could interpret them. Gunnery was where you could prove your ability without question. One of the reasons the 140th always did well in gunnery competition (and for real in Vietnam) was the intense competition between our pilots. There was the "Top Gun" board standing (which quarterly posted the cumulative averages) and, even more serious, the nickel-a-hole, 10-cents-a-foot, or even higher, bets for the high rollers — made on each flight to the "Airburst" range at Fort Carson.

Since there was no magic black box computing airspeed, altitude, dive angle, range, "G" forces, wind correction and release point, the pilot had to observe and assess all these parameters, level the wings, eliminate yaw, put the pipper on the proper aiming spot and pull the trigger or hit the bomb button at the precise instant. But then, you had lots of time — at least a half second. When you were hot there were lots of 20mm holes in the rag, your bombs were on the bull and you collected the cash. Needless to say, it made your day!

Col. Jack Wilhite

Mooring at the Buckley slip

Back in the 1960s, we would have an average of 100, sometimes 150, transient aircraft at Buckley on weekends. It's always been a convenient and popular cross-country stop. And since Buckley was at one time a Navy base, lots of Navy fliers came back to the base for "rest and relaxation." We were loaded every weekend.

MSgt. J.C. Parsons

June week: F-101s, F-106s, T-33s, T-38s, F-104s, F-105s and Colorado F-100s (top) at Buckley for USAFA ceremonies, 1961.

Ike: The president often vacationed here with Denverite wife Mamie, sometimes fishing Colorado's trout streams.

Ike visits

In the summer of 1960, President Dwight Eisenhower made his annual sojourn to Colorado, landing and departing from Buckley ANG Base. On his departure, he was accorded a formal ceremony to which the public was invited. Col. Walt Williams was the ceremonial commander and ANG air technicians were used for automobile and crowd control. It was an exciting day for all involved.

Capt. Edgar N. Schaeffer

Berlin Crisis call-up

Recalled to active duty Oct. 1, 1961, for the Berlin Crisis, the 120th TFS, with 35 officers and 65 enlisted, was augmented by 27 officers and 405 enlisted personnel from wing resources. The 120th had been officially assigned to the 113th TFW, District of Columbia ANG, Andrews AFB, Md., when alerted two months prior.

Aircrew training was intensified. For three weeks, tactical pilots fired air-to-ground gunnery at Fort Carson on a daily basis. Capt. Jack Wilhite, range officer, qualified in his first mission with a 37 percent accuracy rate. After more practice and training, he and the other pilots were firing upwards of 70 percent. While standing by as a Ready Reserve unit under TAC's 12th Air Force, a depleted 140th TFW passed its first Operational Readiness Inspection flying the F-100C.

Gooney tales

While taking off from Salt Lake City Municipal Airport, in early 1961, Lt. Col. Al Schmidt and his crew experienced a left engine failure. They had just become airborne when the aircraft shuddered and its gauges indicated a definite loss of power. Schmidt feathered the engine, deciding to stay on course to Hill AFB, 25 miles away. The *Gooney* had some difficulty climbing to 500 feet, the difference in altitude between Salt Lake and Hill. Upon landing the crew made a check of the left engine and found that it had swallowed a valve.

Nine months earlier, Schmidt and crew were flying from Buckley to Wendover AFB, Utah, when the right engine quit. Not responding to feathering, the airplane's propeller began to windmill, creating excessive drag with a loss of power and altitude. Spotting a stretch of dirt road, Schmidt put the *Gooney* down safely.

Giving new meaning to the term "field maintenance," the C-47 was repaired where it landed. The following week, Maj. Perry and I were sent in to rescue the "old girl." Maintenance mission completed, we flew the *Gooney* off the lonely road in a sea of Wyoming prairie.

Lt. Col. Bill Axton

Fifty to one ratio

It was during the Berlin Crisis active duty tour that the 120th and 113th TFS (D.C. ANG) were responsible for a major change in USAF thinking about air combat training. TAC's rules of engagement for air combat maneuvering (ACM) made the mission secondary to safety, and this resultant de-emphasis on "realistic" air-to-air combat training left the RAFSOBs at the mercy of our Guard units (well stocked with Korean War-trained "win or die" fighter pilots). During a two-week exercise flown out of Savannah, Ga., our two Guard squadrons were the "bad guys" in a closely monitored and documented air-to-air combat scenario. When the results were in, we had a "kill" ratio of over 50 to 1 against the regulars. These results probably were instrumental in bringing back more realistic ACM training for the regulars and the birth of "Red Flag" and "Aggressor" squadrons.

Col. Jack Wilhite

Berlin Crisis deactivation: 120th TFS, August 1962. Kneeling . . . Harp, James, France, Simmon, Liddle, Mills and Robinson; Middle Row . . . Rice, Reed, unidentified, Fields, Odle, Craver, Millard, Wilson, Parker, Horner, Zdunczyk, Neuens, Ecklund, Boucher and Barnwell; On Wing . . . Wilson, Johnson, Morton, Littlefield, Benedict, Brown, Kowal, Mathias, Carter, Buchanan, Wilhite, Pahs and Layton.

Debriefing: SSgt. Gene Schroeder and 120th TFS Commander, Col. Marion P. Barnwell.

Lt. Col. Barnwell, an experienced military and civilian airline pilot, well known for his even dozen dependents (11 children and his wife), assumed command of the augmented squadron in place of the injured Coomer. Many of the ANG units recalled for the crisis were deployed overseas or to the zone of interior bases. The 120th spent the remaining 10 months of activation at home base, with the exception of about 90 days spent at George AFB, Calif., while Buckley's runways were being repaired.

At the time, there were 587 personnel on standby reserve to further augment those already on active duty should the need arise. The maintenance of base utilities and roads, as well as the servicing of all transient military air traffic, was conducted by 176 air service employees.

Members of the 120th TFS continued honing flying skills and combat capabilities in a variety of exercises conducted

Ground forces "attack": "Bristle Cone I," George AFB, Calif., March 1962. F-100 photo appeared on the front cover of *The Air Reservist* in August 1962.

Every 10 years: 120th TFS deactivation fly-by over Colfax Avenue, Denver, August 1962 (activations occurred in '41, '51 and '61).

Mule burst

We used to love to fly air shows. I thought we could fly them better than anybody, just by following one simple rule of thumb . . . fly fast and be noisy as hell. We flew the Fairplay-to-Leadville Mule Races one year and popped our afterburners simultaneously as we made our pass. I remember looking down and seeing about 47 mules running in 47 directions. They never invited us back, as I recall.

Col. Jack Wilhite

throughout their activation (Oct. 1, 1961-Aug. 24, 1962). Exercises included: firepower demonstrations at Fort Sill, Okla.; "Falcon 62," George AFB, Calif.; "Bristle Cone," Camp Irwin, Calif.; "Clear Lake," Brookley AFB, Ala.; and "Swift Strike II' in the Carolinas.

All work and no play . . .

Eight months of volunteer work ended when the Buckley Recreation Area opened in June 1962. Built entirely with ANG recreation funds, the one-time wasteland, located at the extreme north end of the base, was turned into a family funland. Approximately 300 people were present for the grand opening festivities. Williams gave boat rides to Guard members' children on the base lake, while others explored the delights of

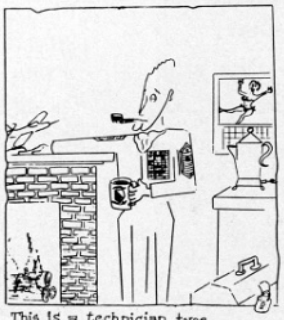
Buckley Coloring Book

The *Buckley Coloring Book* poked a little good-natured fun at everybody. When it came out in the early 1960s, nobody stepped forward to take credit; to this day, its origin is a bit of a mystery. It was sold at the passenger service store to help raise recruiting dollars. Several of the book's anonymous sponsors thought they could increase circulation by spreading the rumor that it had been banned. Before they could spread the rumor, it *was* banned. There aren't too many copies left today.

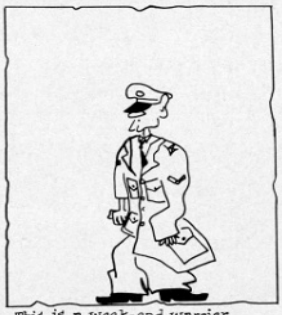
Capt. Stan Morris

This is the Colonel.
And also the Major.
Color the Colonel's nose hard.
Color the Major's nose brown.

These are GENERALS!!!
They are very impressive.
They are very wise.
Color their eagle eyes clear blue.
Color their curley hair dignified
Color their rears like iron.



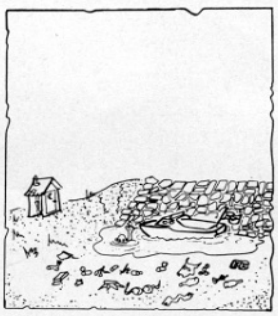
This is a technician type.
He has his own desk.
He has his own tools.
He has his own coffee mug.
He runs the show.
He knows all the right answers.
Color him most very, very carefully.



This is a week-end warrior.
He pulls weeds.
He mops floors.
He scrubs latrines.
Ask him his AFSC.
He doesn't know.
Color on him any way you like.

This is an A.P.
He lives at the main gate.
He waves friendly greetings.
As you leave the base for lunch.
Color his heart black.

This is the supply sgt.
He supplies us with request forms.
He supplies us with static.
He never supplies us with supplies.
Color him greedy green.



This is not the Riveria.
The yacht does not belong to Princess Grace.
(You know very well what it is!)
Color the water brown.
Color the submarines blue.
Color the magnificent club house small.

ANG training has started many civilian careers.
Take this man on OJT, for instance.
He is a corporation attorney.
Color his thoughts black.

This Lt. Col. is going to a staff meeting.
His 41st for the day.
Personnel can't seem to catch him.
He's been surplus for 8 years.
Color him old and grey.

These are jet-fighter pilots.
Eagles of the sky...mach busters.
Intrepid guardians of the peace.
Color their songs colorful.
Color their flight-psy green.
Color their eyeballs red.
Color their hangovers big.

Buckley Coloring Book: Excerpts from the infamous banned book. After all these years, can you identify DeMooy, Williams, Gregory, Moffitt, Ulrich, Lake Williams, France and Pahs, among others?