

vice VIPs and general officers. Ground TACS in the ANG was growing in size, scope and recognition.

## Many other exercises, challenges

Maj. Charles Parnell replaced Lt. Col. Dana Anderson as senior Air Force adviser to the group in November 1977. Two months later, Lt. Col. Jack Abercrombie moved from director of operations to become the third group commander.

154th TCG units then provided the entire TACS for "Brave Shield XVIII" at Peterson AFB. Tent cities were home for two weeks. Realism in training was one of the primary objectives of the exercise; infiltrators, gas attacks and very strict security procedures gave the troops an idea of what to expect in a TACS battle environment.

In March 1979, the group successfully passed another general inspection and received the USAF Outstanding Unit Award for the period beginning in January 1977.

More exercises were planned and executed, including cold weather operations such as "Empire Glacier" (New York) and "Jack Frost 79" (Alaska). "Brave Shield XX" in August 1979 at Fort Lewis, Wash., was the last JCS exercise for the group that used the classical TACS structure. Future exercises would be more limited in scope and reduced to one or two radar elements. Further changes in fine-tuning of the TACS presented challenges stretching into the '80s.

In September 1979, the TACS was again restructured. The Tactical Air Control Center as a functional entity was eliminated, resulting in the deactivation of the 153rd TACC; the Control and Reporting Center (CRC) in Portland, Ore., picked up the workload and personnel.

All previous JCS exercises were with 12th Air Force and the 602nd Tactical Air Control Wing (TAIRCW). An invitation to provide radar units for a series of "Bold Eagle" exercises provided the opportunity to share ideas with 9th Air Force and the 507th TAIRCW. The 154th's best people were chosen to work with and train ANG TACS units from the East and Southeast Gulf Coast areas.

## "Checkered Flag" training

With the implementation of a program called "Checkered Flag," overseas deployments became a special-interest item in 1979. Checkered Flag was designed to familiarize and actually deploy personnel to their overseas operating locations. Area studies expanded to include familiarization with the people, culture, religions, customs, language and geography of the new locations. Besides serving as an excellent training scenario, the program became a powerful motivational force, creating improvements in recruiting, retention, morale and enthusiasm. "Let's Train Like We're Going to Fight" and similar slogans appeared; specialized bulletin boards, films, language teach-

**Memories:** Col. Abercrombie accepts AFOUA from Maj. Gen. M.E. Ryan, vice commander, 12th AF (below left); Col. Abercrombie, MSgt. Palm, Maj. Hess, MSgt. Lilja and MSgt. Johnson honoring 154th TACC deactivation, March 1976 (below right); controller Capt. Memy and SSgt. Schneider monitoring F-100 sorties, 1974, Greeley, (right).



**Aircraft position plotting:** 138th Tactical Control Flight, 1970s.

ing aids and posters were created. TACS thinking at all levels had reached global proportions.

The group's first overseas operating location was Turkey. Capt. Don Michels collected information and kept enthusiasm for the program at a high level even though no group personnel were able to visit the country.

The 154th TCG could look back at an extremely productive decade, one in which they established their organization, accepted many challenges and made their mark in the nation's Tactical Air Control System.

**Cutaway view:** Received in the mid-1970s, the TPS-43 mobile radar enhanced the 154th TCG's abilities to control air traffic from different operating locations.



### Moonlight becomes you

"Full Moon" takes on a whole new meaning when you talk about J.B. Stone (right). A shy and humble A-7 pilot, and somewhat of a contortionist, he actually removed his harness, flight suit and G-suit while flying to Merzifon, Turkey, via Spain in the cockpit of an A-7! The entire formation, tankers and all, can attest to this singular accomplishment, since they noticed the rising of J.B. "Moon-Stone" during that '79-'80 deployment. His accomplishment, by the way, has never been eclipsed. We came close once, when "Capt. Marvel" Ralston was mooned on landing at Buckley by several of his "friends." Somewhat "moonstruck," Marvel called the base fire department, swearing he had observed 10 people by the runway on fire and desperately trying to remove their pants.

Maj. Mike Paradise

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### Colorado Corsairs over Turkey

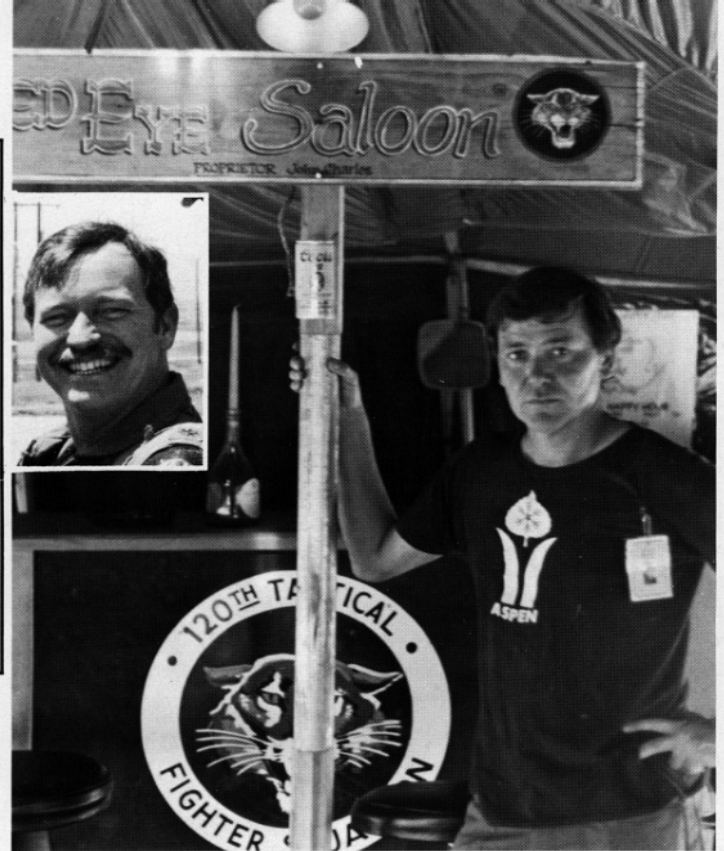
Lt. Col. John "J.B." Stone, a Vietnam F-4 pilot and "Operations Bolo" participant, took command of the 120th TFS in 1979. The wing deployed 485 people and 18 A-7Ds to Merzifon, Turkey, in September and October of that year to participate in NATO exercise "Display Determination." Part of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe "Autumn Forge" series of exercises, support troops traveled by C-141 to Incirlik, Turkey, and then by C-130 to Merzifon.

The annual exercise promoted coordination of multi-national forces assigned to Allied Forces Southern Europe and demonstrated NATO's readiness to deter aggression, as well as reinforce and resupply the Southern European region using air, land, naval and amphibious forces. Units from Italy, Portugal, Turkey, the U.K. and the U.S. participated. "Coronet Rider" was the nickname given to the part played by the 140th TFW in the massive exercise.

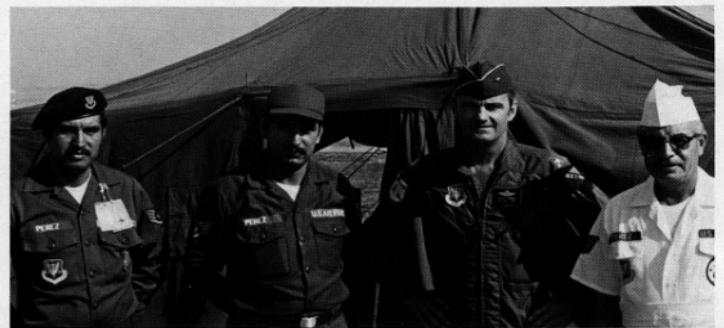
The 9,000-mile A-7 deployment phase consisted of two legs. The first was a non-stop flight from Buckley ANGB to Torrejon AB, Spain. Aircraft were deployed in three flights of six with six air refuelings for the 10-hour flight. After crew rest at Torrejon, the deployment was completed with a five-hour flight to Merzifon, employing two air refuelings.

On arrival of the A-7s, Maj. Gen. Kenneth D. Burns, commander, U.S. Logistics Group (TUSLOG), sent a message saying, "Looking superbly precise and sharp, 18 A-7s from the 140th TFW, Buckley ANGB, Colo., led by their commander, Brig. Gen. John L. France, landed *on time* at Merzifon AB. The jubilation of the aircrews and their support elements in the wake of such a long and successful deployment is exceeded

**Merzifon AB tent city:** Cold water shave.



**"Red Eye" all-ranks saloon:** MSgt. John Charles in command, Merzifon AB, Turkey. Inset: J.B. Stone.

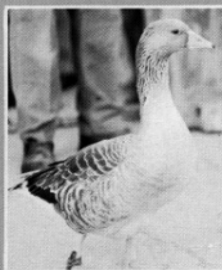


**Family:** Brothers Herman and Joe with Uncle Juan Perez and Brig. Gen. France at Merzifon AB.

### Cooks' toast

Joe Thomas has a way of saying a lot in a few words. When we went to Turkey in 1979, the pilots had a party for the cooks. Toasting the cooks, Joe said, "You don't eat, you don't fly; you don't fly, you don't win." It was a pretty nice deal.

SMSgt. John D. Steele



### Turkey goose

Coz, a goose we bought at the Merzifon open market during our 1978 deployment, became a sort of pet (left). The cooks were going to butcher him the last day of the deployment, but so many people were upset, we went back to town and gave Coz to an old man in the market place. He probably cooked Coz a few hours later.

MSgt. Jimmy Skrbina

only by the unit's enthusiasm for the task at hand."

While deployed to Merzifon, the 140th flew 475 sorties totaling 1,169 hours. A mission-capable rate of 94 percent was achieved by maintenance personnel. Twenty-eight missions were amphibious operations, flown in the Saros Bay area in support of the 6th Fleet. Eleven tactical air support-maritime operations missions were flown over the Aegean Sea, where 140th pilots made attacks on simulated enemy convoys. The balance of the missions were training sorties to Konya Range, simulating low-level interdiction. During the three-day, surge-flying period the 140th sustained a 2.5 sortie rate.

Although the NGB said the 140th was not the first ANG unit to go "bare base," they did admit that — with only a runway and water supply provided — Colorado could lay claim to having operated under the most austere field conditions encountered by any Air Guard unit. Living under bare-base conditions was a new experience for the majority of the Guardsmen. But most adapted quickly and became accustomed to outdoor slit trench latrines, living in tents with no heaters with temperatures below 30 degrees and shaving outside . . . using cold water.

### "Cihanda Suhl"

One positive aspect of the deployment was the interaction of the Air Guardsman with their Turkish military hosts and with the civilians they met while touring the surrounding country.

To prepare for their deployment, Guardsmen attended a 10-week course on the Turkish language as well as culture and political sensitivities — from Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's impact on westernizing Turkey in the 1920s, to the current political situation — presented at Buckley by staff members of the Air Force Academy. The lessons, particularly the use of Turkish courtesy phrases, proved extremely helpful in forming an instant rapport with the Turks. Combined with Turkish hospitality, COANG preparations made for excellent relations during the entire deployment. The 20,000-mile round trip deployment proved the oft-proposed concept of deploying an ANG unit to a NATO "bare base," having it operational in a matter of hours, and turning air support missions as soon as possible, was not rhetoric, but indeed possible. As with other wing international exercises, Coronet Rider finished in a blaze of friendship and goodwill.

The trip home for the Colorado visitors included stops at Torrejon AB and Rickenbacker ANGB, Ohio, before eventually touching down at Buckley ANGB — 19 flying hours in three days.

A flying milestone also occurred during the exercise. A 1.25-hour flight clocked a total of 25,000 hours for A-7 No. 001, one of the unit's oldest *Corsairs*. Aircraft 001 gained a Turkish name, "Cihanda Suhl," in the process. Coined years before by Turkish patriot Ataturk, the translation "Peace in the World"

**Welcome ride home:** Redeployment from Turkey, 1979.



**"Cihanda Suhl" milestone:** John France's No. 001 clocks 25,000 hours over Turkey's Konya Range, 1979.

served the exercise well.

After logging the 25,000-hour mark with 001's crew chief, MSgt. Charles Hoffman, pilot France said, "The 25,000 hours truly represent a great team effort. We have the finest maintenance team around and their abilities, along with our support people's efforts, speak well for us today. We now have made three ocean crossings with the aircraft — Holland, Panama and Turkey. The A-7 is one fine bird and will continue to serve us well."

Indeed it would in the decade to come . . . as the Colorado ANG looked forward to more international deployments and increased mission requirements in the 1980s. Looming on the horizon was the first tactical aircraft worldwide gunnery meet in almost two decades, a competition that would thrust the COANG into the limelight as the "World's Best."



**Outstanding ANG Airman of the Year:** ANG chief Brig. Gen. Conaway presented the award to MSgt. Jim Evans in May 1979.

### Evans' effort

Capt. Jim Evans was out on medical leave — due to back surgery — during the 1981 ORI. I was the acting liaison between Col. Neary and Evans. I traveled from the base to Evans home, where he continued to work on the mobility section of the inspection. The unit received a very high rating for mobility . . . and I'll never forget Jim's dedication to the mission.

*TSgt. Ronald G. Hilst*

**Against all odds:** Following its successful overseas deployments in the late 1970s, Colorado's A-7s were poised to soon make gunnery competition history at "Gunsmoke '81."





**Corsair II:** The A-7 is the third Vought aircraft to carry the *Corsair* nom de guerre. Developed as a result of the Navy's Sea Based Strike Study in the 1960s, even the Air Force version of the *Corsair* sported foldaway wings.

# The Eighties . . . historical overview

As the decade opened, national attention focused on the Iran hostage crisis and the stumbling U.S. economy. An abortive attempt to rescue the hostages ended in death and despair in the Iranian desert in April 1980. Then America boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow to protest the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. This decision was especially difficult because of the U.S. hockey team's thrilling gold medal victory in the 1980 Winter Games in February. In November, conservative, tough-talking and politically polished Ronald Reagan led a sweeping Republican victory, promising change around the corner.

1981 began with the inauguration of our 40th president and the release of the American hostages from Iran. When Reagan survived a would-be assassin's bullet just two months later, the nation rallied around him. In April the space shuttle *Columbia* became the world's first reusable spacecraft. In August, a determined President Reagan firmly warned and then fired nearly 13,000 air traffic controllers for illegally going out on strike. The country had a tough new leader and the future was looking brighter.

Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman Supreme Court Justice in September 1981 and Sally K. Ride became America's first woman in space in 1983. When the U.S. led the invasion of the Caribbean island of Grenada in October 1983 to oust the Cuban-backed Communist regime, most Americans responded with pride at the country's "get-tough" approach to foreign affairs.

In 1984 Los Angeles hosted the commercially successful, but Soviet boycotted, Summer Olympic Games, and in December, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was unveiled honoring the veterans and victims of that controversial war. Overall unemployment was falling and runaway inflation had been curbed. The country responded by re-electing President Reagan and Vice President George Bush in an overwhelming landslide victory over Democratic candidate Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro.

The early '80s also witnessed tragedy and death. In October 1981, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was slain and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated in October 1984. In April 1983, 241 U.S. Marines and sailors died when a lone suicide terrorist drove an explosives-laden truck into the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. In December 1984, a toxic gas leak

in Bhopal, India, killed 2,500 people, injuring 150,000 others. Events in Latin America, Italy and Northern Ireland and the raging war between Iran and Iraq threatened world peace. Acts of terrorism increased throughout the Middle East and the U.S. expanded its presence in the Persian Gulf. And, on Jan. 28, 1986, the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded just 74 seconds after liftoff, killing all seven crew members.

In spite of these events, the middle years of the decade offered new signs of stability and peace. In the mid-'80s President Reagan began a cautious warming of relations with the

Soviet Union. These gestures were received first by Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and later by Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, who rose to power in March 1985. In the Philippines, President Ferdinand Marcos was ousted and Corazon Aquino was elected president in early 1986. In April the U.S. forcibly shut down Libya's active role in international terrorism with a lightning-quick bombing raid on Tripoli and other targets.

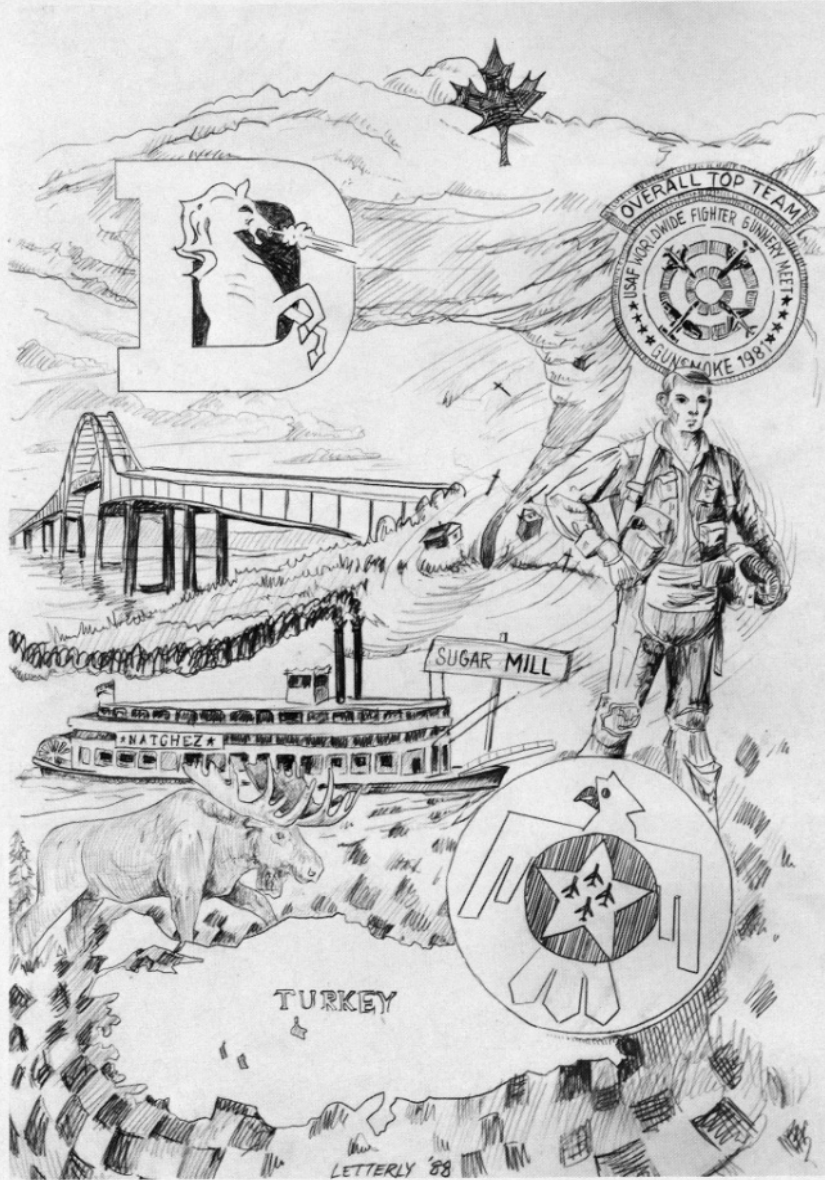
The self-centeredness of the "yuppie" years seemed to be fading and huge charitable fundraising events were staged around the world. The powerful regimes in China and the Soviet Union were reaching out to the Western world for food, technology and cultural patterns.

Errors led to two tragedies in the Persian Gulf. In May 1987, an Iraqi jet mistakenly fired a missile into the frigate *USS Stark*, killing 37 U.S. sailors. Then in July 1988, the cruiser *USS Vincennes* fired two missiles at a plane thought to be attacking it. The plane, an Iranian airliner, was destroyed, killing all 290 aboard.

In 1988, the first-ever elimination of an entire class of nuclear weapons

became a reality with approval of the INF Treaty, and the bloody Iran-Iraq war appeared to be drawing to a close. The incident-free 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea brought most nations together for the first time in 12 years, and the nation elected Republican candidates George Bush and Dan Quayle in November, bringing the Reagan era to a close.

A 1989 peaceful demonstration by students in Beijing's Tiananmen Square was subdued violently by Chinese troops, illustrating the decade's global movement toward Western ideals and democratic freedoms.



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# REAGAN EASILY BEATS CARTER



## BLIZZARD OF '82

### Half-second from dying in disabled plane



**NATIONAL GUARD**  
MARCH 1988



### Guard unit flying for 61 years

from biplanes to jets, fighter wing's history colorful

## Dam bursts near Estes

### I feared dead, 1 lost



### State legislators ask for F-16s for Colo. Air Guard

Legislature recently passed bill to buy 10 F-16s for the Air Force

## 'We Mourn Seven Heroes'

### Top guns bag 3 trophies



### Gov. Romer praises skill in flying Guard jet fighter

Gov. Romer praised the skill of the Colorado Air National Guard's 140th Tactical Fighter Wing in flying its F-16s.

## BUSH IS ELECTED



### Crews battling state's largest forest inferno

Firefighters are battling the largest forest fire in Colorado's history.

## 1,900 U.S. TROOPS, INVADE GRENADA



## A-7D team wins 'Gunsmoke' competition.



### Air guard heads for Turkey with state mementos

The Colorado Air National Guard's 140th Tactical Fighter Wing is heading to Turkey with state mementos.

## 'Good Kill! Good Kill!'





**Rocky Mountain High:** By the time the 140th TFW won 1981's *Gunsmoke* worldwide air-to-ground gunnery competition, the venerable A-7 had been flying for 16 years! A remarkable triumph for the A-7 and Colorado, the vintage aircraft continues to serve the COANG, regularly deploying to Central America for "Coronet Cove" and supplementing NATO forces in "Display Determination" exercises.

## The Eighties

**B**y the beginning of the 1980s, the Colorado ANG was well on its way to creating the type of organization required to meet the objectives of the Total Force concept.

First proposed in 1973 to fully integrate the Guard and Reserve into the day-to-day operations of national defense, Total Force was, by 1980, a DoD policy. With its Holland, Turkey and Panama deployments the previous decade, the Colorado ANG had helped prove the concept would work. The task now would be to increase and improve training to sustain the new policy.

### Key Individuals face variety of missions

In command, Brig. Gen. John L. France still held the adjutant general post, but wore a second hat as 140th TFW commander. Day-to-day operations were handled by his vice Lt. Col. Donald O. Neary. The headquarters, COANG commander and deputy adjutant general for air, Brig. Gen. Monroe G. Mathias, was settling into the position he had assumed in October 1979 from retiring Brig. Gen. Harry Serra. Col. Jack D. Abercrombie, 154th TCG, and Col. Stanley C. Wood, OL-AA and Buckley base commander, would play key roles in preparing for the tasks ahead.

Operations began the decade by taking a more aggressive training stance. The 120th TFS hosted a composite-force training exercise in March dubbed "Sentry Aspen Flag I." More than 80 ground crew members and two dozen aircraft, including F-15s, F-111s and A-7s, took part in the two-day exercise, flying more than 150 sorties. The training placed maximum emphasis on sortie generation as well as close-air support, ordnance delivery and dissimilar-air combat training.

That same month, the 140th CEF deployed to Howard AFB,

Panama, for their annual training. Not part of "Coronet Cove," their independent training assisted USAF civil engineers with structural remodeling and repair.

The following May, Buckley came into the international spotlight as the only Guard or Reserve activity visited by 26 members of the Peoples Republic of China during their full week stay in the U.S. With the help of the U.S. Air Force Academy, France, their host, gave a welcoming speech, painstakingly rehearsed in Mandarin Chinese. The academy also produced signs labeling everything in Chinese — from tactical operations to restrooms.

In June, the 120th TFS returned to Panama for another Coronet Cove rotation; the unit again found itself hosting Far Eastern visitors. More than 24 Japanese naval officers visiting Howard AFB were escorted and briefed by detachment commander Lt. Col. J.B. Stone.

At home, the crash of a four-passenger light airplane in Colorado's Roosevelt National Forest began a fire that scorched more than 2,500 acres of forest by the time Guardsmen were called to state active duty. In the early morning hours of June 15, Army and Air Guardsmen responded with both heavy trucks and communications equipment to augment Forest Service volunteers. Within three days, Guard personnel and firefighters had brought the blaze in the Red Feather Lakes region under control.

### Third AFOUA

July 1980 saw more than 3,000 Air Guardsmen and family members at a special wing review. During the ceremony, the 140th TFW received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its highly successful 1977 deployment to Gilze-Rijen Air Base, Holland. At the time, the award made the 140th the only Air

Guard unit to hold three such honors, including one with a "V" device (for valor) from Vietnam.

In the fall, the wing prepared for a second "Sentry Aspen Flag" exercise, this time with more than 20 USAF and ANG units from across the nation. On Buckley's ramp more than 66 aircraft, including F-111s, F-105s, F-15s, F-16s, A-10s, A-7s, KC-135s, C-130s and an E-3A, were assembled. Nearly 300 visiting pilots and ground crew personnel participated. By the end of the two-day exercise, more than 220 sorties had been flown in less than 16 hours.

A highlight of Sentry Aspen Flag II was an F-15 orientation ride for Gov. Dick Lamm. As everyone watched on the ramp, the F-15 pilot flipped on his afterburner, holding the airplane in check by its brakes; then, seeming to buck forward, the *Eagle*

was "wheels up" before it reached the runway intersection. The pilot continued to fly the airplane the length of the runway, four feet off the ground, and then stood the bird on end, sending it straight up, until it disappeared into the clouds. For the governor, it was a trip and a half!

The Air Guard moved into 1981 by looking back at 1941. On Jan. 6, 120th Observation Squadron members returned to Buckley for their 40-year reunion. The veterans received VIP treatment, including tours of the fighter and maintenance areas (photos on page 338).

Later that same month, Mathias and Abercrombie mustered a combined staff of 49 COANG people from the 140th TFW and 154th TCG to head north to Alaska for "Brim Frost '81." Mathias commanded the opposition air forces — "the bad



**In the Buckley bay:** First acquired in 1979, Det. 1's T-43 moves DoD dignitaries, civilian VIPs, USAF Academy cadets and just plain folks throughout the world in support of the academy's Airmanship Program and the Military Airlift Command's transportation needs.

### Aviation Perspective

Aircraft technology far surpassed production in the 1980s. Speculation of new tactical mission aircraft, like the F-16 *Fighting Falcon*, replacing the 140th TFW's A-7 persisted throughout the decade. Only a few fortunate Air Guard and Reserve units received the state-of-the-art aircraft, however. In addition to a new generation of fighters, the Air Force took delivery of its first B-1B and *Stealth* bombers and the Air Force's Space Command came into being in 1982 at Peterson AFB, Colo.

Nellis AFB, Nev., "Home of the Air Force Fighter Pilot," continued to host its annual "Red Flag" air-to-air training exercises and biennial "Gunsmoke" air-to-ground tactical gunnery competition throughout the decade. The 1981 Gunsmoke meet, won by the Colorado ANG, was the first in 19 years, reviving a tradition.

MAC and TAC increased their worldwide commitment during the decade. MAC dropped Army paratroopers from C-130 and C-141 military transports and airlifted American civilians to safety, while TAC's AC-130 *Spectre Gunships* laid down a barrage on enemy gun positions during the 1983 Grenada invasion.

TAC's combat capability was further demonstrated in 1986 when F-111s launched an air attack on Libya from their

base at RAF Lakenheath, England, in retaliation for Libyan-sponsored acts of terrorism against U.S. citizens. The Libya strike, like the Grenada mission, was successful, although one bomber's two-man crew was lost to ground defenses. Then in early 1989, USN F-14 *Tomcats*, using Sparrow and Sidewinder missiles, downed two Libyan MiG-23s after avoidance tactics failed.

The world turned its attention to the 1988 Moscow Summit as a long-awaited ratification of the INF treaty was signed by the U.S. and Soviet Union, limiting the number of short-and-intermediate-range missiles. With the shift away from strategic nuclear warfare, many national defense commentators said there would now be a mandate for the U.S. to increase its conventional defense.

With emphasis on the Total Force policy projected into the 1990s, USAF Chief of Staff Gen. Larry D. Welch, envisioned the continued modernization of existing forces: "We're absorbing a severe budget cut for 1989 and expect another in 1990," he said. "But one thing is for certain, we will opt to maintain the quality of our forces and look out for future requirements, so that we have a ready Air Force five and 10 years from now . . . a very Total Force."





**Total Force:** Colorado A-7 Corsair IIs are an important component of TAC and DoD mission requirements.

guys" — in the biennial exercise designed to test the readiness of U.S. Army and Air Force personnel and equipment against Soviet attack. Working closely with his opposition army counterparts, Mathias coordinated attacks against U.S. military forces. The bad guys lost; but not without teaching the "good guys" valuable lessons.

January ended with the departure of "The Shadow," Col. Raymond M. Viscarra, 140th TFW Air Force adviser. He was replaced by former 12th Air Force inspector, Lt. Col. Dwight F. "Crow" Wilson.

June blew in with an ill wind, as residents of Thornton, Colo., could attest. Several tornadoes swept through the Denver suburb causing extensive damage and several injuries. Within hours, Guard security personnel were protecting the hardest-hit area against looters.

On June 13, near the end of a Saturday drill, the Marine Corps landed at Buckley . . . unscheduled and hard. An F-4 from USMC Station Yuma, Ariz., was making its final touch and go from the west when something went wrong. Out of control, time and ideas, the backseat pilot ejected both fliers.

They say it's hard to keep leathernecks down; apparently, the same goes for their airframes. With no one at the controls, the F-4 continued down the east-west runway, into a field of weeds, across the active north-south runway and again into the



**Chief of Staff:** An assistant adjutant general for air, Brig. Gen. Monroe Mathias retired in 1984 after 32 ANG years.

### This is your general speaking

Following their 1982 annual training, the main contingent of Guardsmen left Gulfport via a Continental Airlines charter from New Orleans. In the left seat of the DC-10 was Continental pilot, Brig. Gen. Monroe G. Mathias, COANG chief of staff and adjutant general for air.

*Capt. Tom Schultz*

weeds before hitting a berm and going airborne once again. As stunned control tower operators watched, the *Phantom* arched within a few feet of them, rolled over onto its back, and crashed in an open field behind the tower. Debris from the F-4 covered a three-acre section. The crew, though shaken, was only slightly injured.

Then, along came a blackbird . . . an SR-71 *Blackbird*. The long-range strategic reconnaissance aircraft was forced to land at Buckley because of electrical problems. Repaired by a maintenance team from its home base at Beale AFB, Calif., the SR-71's three-day visit in June caused quite a stir within the news media and military aviation communities.

In July, the wing lost the 150th TFG, Kirtland AFB, N.M., to the Ohio Air Guard's 121st TFW as part of the rapid deployment forces restructuring.

### Lean mean Guard machine

Joyce Saitta is one tough cookie. In 1985, she had eight ribs broken, her skull fractured and suffered a damaged pelvis when a truck ran over her. Joyce was up and going six months later. There was an enlisted vs. officer softball game a few years ago and as the story goes, Maj. Gen. John L. France was pitching and Joyce was on first base. A "big-pilot-type" second baseman was hassling all the runners, particularly the ladies . . . holding onto them, so they couldn't advance to third, etc. Not about to let this happen to her, Joyce headed for second with a full head of steam. The pilot was covering the bag (literally and figuratively), waving his arms. Joyce never slowed down to slide . . . she just ran into the guy, picked him up over her shoulders and dropped him off to the side. Safe at second! She would not be denied . . . and still won't.

*Maj. Chuck Whitley*

**Most valuable player:** Joyce Saitta in the box.



### Man in the know

Whenever I needed the correct answers out of any of the dozens of Guard and Air Force regulations, I went to Don David. He had a steel-trap mind for that sort of thing.

*Brig. Gen. George A. Franzen*

**Eagle ride:** Maj. Gen. France advises Colorado Gov. Dick Lamm prior to his F-15 orientation flight, 1980.



# GUNSMOKE '81

But the year's, and possibly decade's, high point was the 140th TFW's stunning triumph in "Gunsmoke '81" at Nellis AFB, Nev. This amazing but true tale is a major chapter in the COANG legend . . . it deserves its own separate story.

In COANG history, legend sums up the stories that surround Gunsmoke '81. And, though there would be return trips to Nellis, nothing can compare to the 1981 victory.

As a tactical air-to-ground gunnery meet, Gunsmoke is designed to test the best units in the USAF, Air Force Reserve and ANG in head-to-head competition. Winning is a total team effort. Much of the media coverage focuses on the pilots, but the performance of munitions and maintenance crews contribute just as much toward a team's final standing.

The decision for the Colorado ANG to participate in Gunsmoke '81 was a big one — they had just finished an ORI and had aircraft scheduled to deploy to a Canadian "Maple Flag" exercise. The 140th entered the Nellis AFB tactical fighter aircraft "Super Bowl" in the hot, sweltering days of September 1981 — the first time a contest of its type had been held since 1962. Colorado was one of the 12 teams — flying either A-7s, A-10s or F-4s — to have successfully battled its way through regional shootoffs for a Gunsmoke berth. Competing teams were from the Pacific Air Command, U.S. Air Forces Europe, Alaskan Air Command, Tactical Air Command, the USAFR and ANG.

The competitors endured a desert sandstorm and temperatures of 105 degrees. With humidity at zero, the heat became a great equalizer. On the frying-pan surface of the Nellis flightline, maintenance team NCOIC SMSgt. Moe Etter noted, "Keeping our A-7s in shape is much more difficult when it's

**Winners:** *Top Gun* Lt. Col. Wayne "Scoots" Schultz, Maj. Joseph "Jose" Thomas, Capt. Larry "Snake" Sadler, Capt. Lawrence "Bud" Sittig (third place) and Capt. Charles "Leroy" Betts.

three-degrees-cooler-than-hell on the ramp."

Wing maintenance and munitions efforts kept the flying competition close. As one observer noted, "Some of the aircrews are so accurate — hitting inside one-and-a-half and two meters — they don't need high explosives to destroy a target. Bear in mind, these are not 'smart' weapons. They're not precision, laser-guided weapons; they're free-fall bombs that aircrews are putting directly on target."

When the smoke had cleared, Colorado won the *Top Team* award, amassing 8,800 out of a possible 10,000 points. The second-place team, the 23rd TFW, was 39.5 points behind, but the closest any of the other 10 teams could come was more than 300 points behind the winning score! The 140th claimed the award as best A-7 team as well.

## Final Team Standings

<i>Top Team</i>		<i>Points</i>
1. 140th TFW, Buckley ANGB, Colo. (ANG, A-7)		<b>8,800.0</b>
2. 23rd TFW, England AFB, La. (A-10)		8,760.5
3. 4th TFW, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C. (F-4)		8,412.0
4. 81st TFW, RAF Bentwaters, England (A-10)		8,263.0
5. 174th TFW, Hancock Field, N.Y. (ANG, A-10)		8,096.0
6. 121st TFW, Rickenbacker AFB, Ohio (ANG, A-7)		7,993.5
7. 917th TFW, Barksdale AFB, La. (AFRES, A-10)		7,962.5
8. 347th TFW, Moody AFB, Ga. (F-4)		7,945.5
9. 21st TFW, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska (F-4)		7,361.0
10. 497th TFW, Taegu AB, Korea (F-4)		6,806.0
11. 482nd TFW, Homestead AFB, Fla. (AFRES, F-4)		6,788.0
12. 183rd TFG, Springfield, Ill. (ANG, F-4)		6,775.0

Individually, Lt. Col. Wayne L. Schultz and Capt. Lawrence "Bud" Sittig took first and third places respectively in the *Top Gun* competition. Just as squadron aircraft are painted with the "World Champion" logo to this day, Schultz will carry the *World Top Gun* title throughout his career.



## What we're all about

For two weeks, our team will be pitted against top fighter pilots, weapons loaders and maintenance troops in an intense, fast-paced competition, fully testing their combat skills. Short of war itself, it is the epitome of what we in the fighter business are all about. Our 1981 Gunsmoke team will represent hundreds of other Colorado Air Guardsmen and thousands of hours of their hard work to prepare our team.

*Maj. Gen. John L. France*

**Best of the best:** They were the team that couldn't lose (below). How many of them do you remember? Back to front, left to right . . . Klusman, Rasmussen, Mullins, Lovison, Edgerton, Hansen, Hales, Rossow, Flanagan, Hatchett, Disney, Quinn, Carter, Waltz, Nishiki, Schreeve, Inscho, Wright, Hays, Gaer, Etter, Paul, Gitzen, Surprenant, Phillips, Antonio, Schneider, Smith, Spahr, Thomas, Sittig, Sadler, Thomas, Betts, Schultz and Kruse.

From the pilots' lounge at Nellis AFB, Nev.  
"Home of the Fighter Pilot"

"Reach out and touch someone"  
and  
"If you ain't having fun,  
You ain't doin' it right"





It's a shack! Colorado cheerleaders ("Gunsmoke '83" photo).

### Cheerleaders

Everybody knows about the *Top Gun* award we won in '81. Fewer know that we definitely won the (informal) "Noisy Cheerleading Contest," as well. Between the hangar maintenance bays were some rooms set up with closed-circuit TV. As soon as our birds were airworthy, the support troops (above) would hightail it to one of the viewing areas to watch the live action on the range and root for the home team. As we started our climb to the top, the "WHAM, BAM, *Batman*" noise from the 140th got louder and louder. Nobody outshouted the Red Eye unit that year.

*MSgt. John Paul*

### A-7 "Coors'-air

There was a real sense of state pride at the Gunsmoke '81 victory banquet, right down to the centerpiece on the tables . . . Coors bottles with miniature Colorado flags in them.

*TSgt. Kenneth Morales*

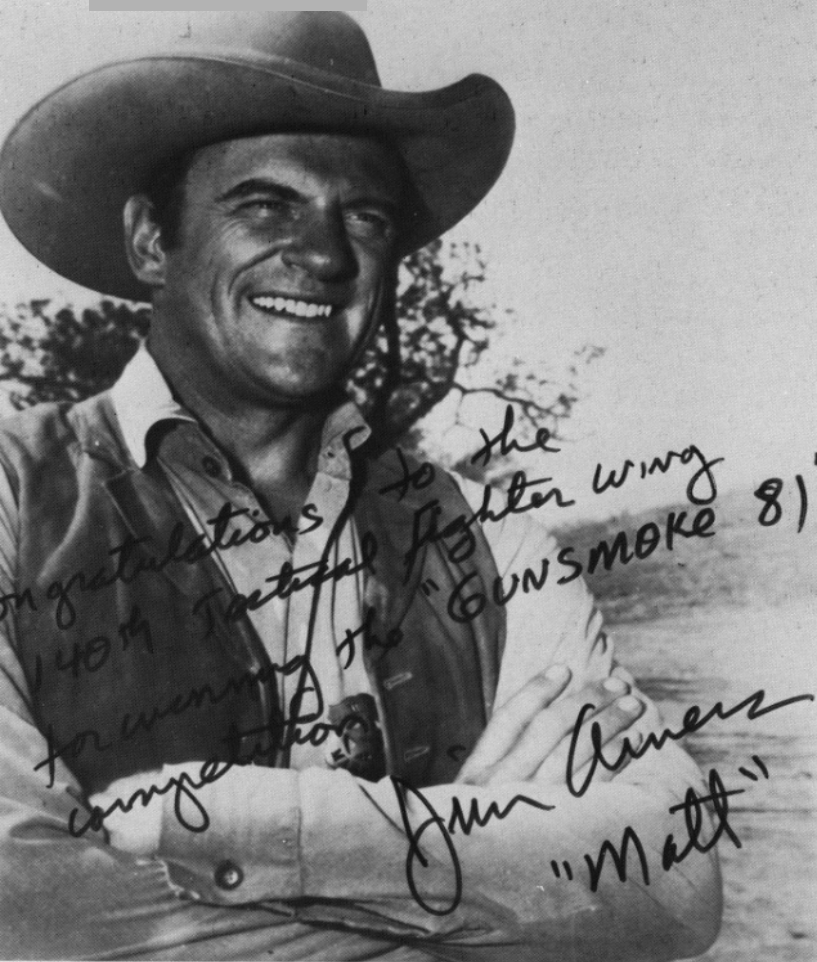
### Wayne Shultz

If the great Claire Chennault could have his pick of any fighter pilots in the world, I have no doubt one would be Lt. Col. Wayne L. Schultz.

*Maj. Gen. John L. France  
at the 1982 Air Force Association Convention*



**Top Gun:** After the dust had settled, the scores were tallied and the large lady sang, "Scoots" came out on top, scoring an impressive 2,279 points to beat the best pilots in the ANG, AFRes and USAF.



**Top Gun from another "Gunsmoke":** Dodge City's Matt Dillon, played by James Arness.

**Fastest gun**

I thought Matt Dillon had the fastest gun in the West, but you guys put him to shame.

*James Arness, after Gunsmoke '81*



## Final Top Gun Standings

<i>Pilots</i>	<i>Points</i>
<b>1. Lt. Col. Wayne Schultz, 140th TFW</b>	<b>2,279*</b>
2. Capt. Tim Rush, Capt. Dan Snead, 347th TFW	2,279*
<b>3. Capt. Lawrence Sittig, 140th TFW</b>	<b>2,273.5</b>
4. Capt. Tom Spada, 23rd TFW	2,261
5. Maj. Al Brown, 81st TFW	2,231.5

\*Tie broken by scores in second conventional and tactical bombing events.

In addition to Schultz and Sittig, other members of the flying team included Maj. Joseph M. Thomas, Capt. Charles C. Betts and Capt. Larry R. Sadler as back-up pilot. Other team members were:

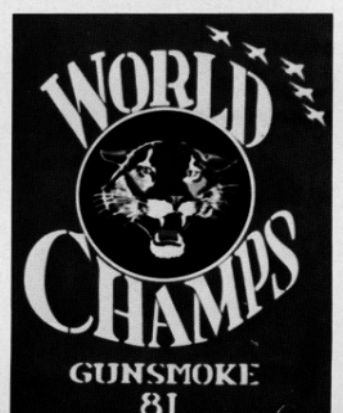
- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Maj. Larry Peters       | TSgt. Dale Hansen      |
| Capt. Donald Lovison    | TSgt. Terry Hatchett   |
| SMSgt. Frank Mullins    | TSgt. David Hays       |
| SMSgt. Moe Etter        | TSgt. Glen Nishiki     |
| MSgt. Robert Hales      | TSgt. Gary Phillips    |
| MSgt. Charles Hoffman   | TSgt. Robert Quinn     |
| MSgt. Elton Klusman     | TSgt. Ronald Wright    |
| MSgt. John Paul         | SSgt. Anthony Carter   |
| MSgt. Eldon Rosso       | SSgt. Marvin Kruse     |
| MSgt. Thomas Surprenant | SSgt. Mark Inscho      |
| MSgt. Robert Waltz      | SSgt. James Rasmussen  |
| TSgt. Nick Antonio      | SSgt. Eddie Shreeve    |
| TSgt. Charlie Caballer  | SSgt. David Smith      |
| TSgt. James Disney      | SSgt. Steve Spahr      |
| TSgt. Craig Edgerton    | SSgt. Larry Sutherland |
| TSgt. Steve Flanagan    | SSgt. Michael Thomas   |
| TSgt. Terry Gaer        | SSgt. Thomas Walther   |
| TSgt. Mike Gitzen       | A1C. Delles Schneider  |

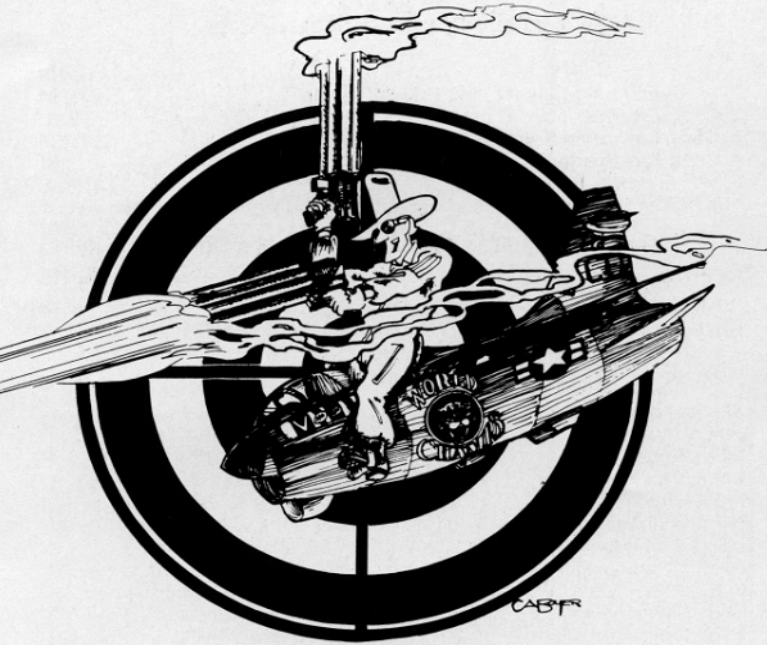
The impact of Gunsmoke '81 reverberated throughout the military fighter community and continues to echo today. The status of the ANG fighter squadron — pilots and crew — took a giant boost. They were professional . . . *on time and on target*. They were more than good; they were *the best!* In all future competitions, contestants would be gunning for the 140th, and "checking six" for other ANG pros.



**The "Right Stuff":** Colorado brought home a bundle of trophies, including *Top Team* and *Top Gun* awards.

**Team effort:** *Top Team* crew chiefs, left to right, front to back . . . MSgt. Eldon Rossow, SMSgt. Moe Etter, MSgt. Chuck Hoffman, Sgt. Terry Hatchett, SSgt. Mike Thomas, TSgt. Mike Gitzen, SSgt. Eddie Shreeve and SSgt. Steve Spahr.





**Simultaneous deployment:** Canadian Forces F-104 Starfighter at Cold Lake, Canada, October 1981.

### Two at a time

One of my proudest moments as Deputy Commander for Maintenance was Gunsmoke '81. In addition to supporting and winning the Worldwide Gunnery Meet, we had 12 aircraft on a deployment in Canada at the same time. We were the only Gunsmoke participant that dared take on two major deployments simultaneously.

*Col. Arvey Mason*

### A continuing success story . . .

At the same time as Gunsmoke, more than 150 Colorado Air Guard people, 12 A-7s, and assorted support equipment were at Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake, Alberta. The 140th TFW was the main strike force for the first two weeks of monthlong joint forces exercise, "Maple Flag '81." Missions were flown in weather and terrain remarkably similar to Northern Europe.

In December 1981, Col. Stanley C. Wood relinquished command of Buckley, retiring after 27 years. He was replaced by Chief of Safety, Lt. Col. Don R. Shields. Before leaving, Wood officiated at the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award ceremonies held at Buckley Dec. 10. This honor, equivalent in significance to the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, recognized the outstanding contributions of the civilian employees who maintain day-to-day operations at Buckley as well as the superior flying record of the T-43s.

In the 140th, Col. George A. Franzen assumed command of the wing from Brig. Gen. John L. France, who had held command since 1974 and was now devoting his full attention to the adjutant general position. Franzen also became the air commander from a technician standpoint.

A veteran of two Vietnam tours of duty (Da Nang and Phu Cat ABs) and a total of 237 F-100 SEA combat missions, Franzen had previously served with both the Iowa ANG and Michigan ANG. He had joined the Colorado Air Guard in 1974 as the wing's chief of standardization/evaluation and monitored the unit's F-100 program through the A-7D transition. A command pilot with more than 5,000 hours in fighter aircraft, Franzen had filled both the 120th TFS operations officer and 140th TFW DCO positions before being named wing commander in

### High-level briefing

Easy Ed (Ahearn) was giving a particularly visual briefing to the Canadian and American commanders at Maple Flag one year. Several general officers were present, and he drew one of the aerial-maneuverings-toward-target maps with extra flair — making big loops and dips on the board. When his briefing was completed, the final product looked exactly like a clenched fist with the middle finger protruding. Must have been a coincidence.

*Maj. David Lee Gaw*

December 1981. He was promoted to brigadier general in June 1983.

A sobering note concluded the year. While flying dissimilar-air combat tactics near New Raymer, Colo., Maj. Thomas Nicholson ejected from his A-7 after it developed control difficulties. The *Corsair* crashed in a barren farm field and Nicholson escaped with injuries to a shoulder and knee, returning to fly a few months later.

Gunsmoke '81 accolades carried over into 1982 as the 140th TFW was honored with a tribute sponsored by State Sens. Dan Schaefer (later U.S. representative) and Fred E. Anderson. "The 140th TFW has been invaluable to the state of Colorado in times of disaster and has successfully deployed when needed across the United States and Canada," the tribute read. Colorado's General Assembly thanked the COANG "for the honor they have brought themselves and Colorado."

In their third Coronet Cove deployment since 1978, nearly

**Working women:** Telephone supervisor Flo Wilhelm, operator Mava Dilley (below); commanders' secretaries: Juanita Thibault, Arliss Guerrero and Teresa Morgan (bottom).



**New commander:** Vietnam F-100 pilot Col. George A. Franzen, Jr. assumed 140th TFW command in December 1981, and was promoted to brigadier general in June 1983.

### Along came a Blackbird

The SR-71 Blackbird landed at Buckley in the early 1980s, staying several days for repairs. The day it left, it was pulled quietly out of the hangar and onto the ramp. The whole base turned out to watch it take off. When it got airborne, it was anything but inconspicuous . . . with a ball of fire about 80 feet long behind it, after the pilot kicked in the afterburner. A split second later it was over the mountains and gone.

*TSgt. William Pelletier*

120 Air Guard men and women rotated to Panama in March to assume responsibility for the defense of the Panama Canal. Nearly 450 Guardsmen — one third of the state's ANG force — performed their annual training in Gulfport, Miss., in May. It marked the second time in as many years that the 140th had deployed to the coastal ANG training site.

In the state capitol's executive chambers, Gov. Richard Lamm pinned on France's second star in June. It made France the second Colorado Air Guardsman, after Maj. Gen. Joe Moffitt, to achieve that rank. July found the wing in a 12th Air Force ORI. Excellent preparation and hard work paid off; the wing received high marks.

### Estes Park flood

No sooner had the inspectors left than COANG's 140th Weapons Systems Security Flight (WSSF) faced a real-life emergency. When 80-year-old Lawn Lake's earthen dam broke early on the morning of July 15, 260 million gallons of water came rushing through Rocky Mountain National Park into the city of Estes Park 3,000 feet below. Within hours after the eight-foot wall of water had washed through the city's streets, 60

### Women

The Colorado Air National Guard owes a tremendous debt to the civilian women employees who through the years worked long and hard in our behalf. From Maxine Pilcher, Vee Reid, Maxine Merten and Flo Wilhelm to Teresa Morgan, Arliss Guerrero, Alana Lendvay, Mary Lou Robinson and our other female employees today, these ladies deserve our most sincere thank you.

*Brig. Gen. Donald David*

## Tall tales from the north

When we deployed to Alaska, a lot of us tried its touted great fishing. The only person in our group who failed to catch a fish was Don David. Of course, David — always very clever — strategically positioned himself in the photos of all of us with our strings of fish. I finally gave him those photos years later at his retirement ceremony. Now he has bragging rights.

*Brig. Gen. Jerry Bowling*



**Alaskan salmon:** 120th TFS pilots John Painter, Mark Meyer and Bud Sittig relaxing during a "Midnight Sun" deployment.

Army and Air Guard personnel were activated to assist in relief efforts and secure the town's main business district against looters. After nearly three days, the Guardsmen were sent home, only to be called back a week later. This time, however, there was no disaster — only the citizens celebrating rebuilding efforts and thanking the Colorado Guard for its help.

In August 1982, the 140th TFW deployed to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, for a four-day, mini-deployment, "Operation Midnight Sun," completely funded out of unit resources. The same month saw the first-ever ANG A-7D Munitions Loading Competition at Buckley, "Loadeo '82," hosted by the 140th CAMS. Lt. Col. Arvey E. Mason, CAMS commander, saw the need for the contest following preparations for the previous year's Gunsmoke competition.

"We needed an ongoing competition within the Air Guard A-7D community as a means of honing the competition edge for all units," Mason said. His goal was for the ANG A-7D fleet to dominate all areas of Gunsmoke competition, air and ground, for years to come. The home team made up of MSgt. Kenneth Findlay, TSgt. Michael Brennan and TSgt. Robert Quinn took second place out of the 13 units in the contest — behind the 121st TFW, Rickenbacker ANG Base, Ohio.

In September, the 140th gained an A-7K, a two-seat version of the D-model. The fully combat-capable aircraft's purpose was to enhance pilot training. The aircraft was given up by the unit early in 1987 and sent to Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

In October 1982, a new base supply complex was dedicated at Buckley. The 35,000-square-foot facility, powered partially with solar energy, was dedicated to CMSgt. John R. Plunkett, a retired supply technician with 38 years of federal service. (Plunkett died in November 1987.)

The Buckley NCO Club board of governors, seeking a name

**Future president visits:** Vice President George Bush, April 1985.



that better reflected the diverse clientele served by the establishment, held a contest in October 1982, won by TSgt. Jim Holland, 140th CAMS. The new title "The CAMANA Club" was selected as an acronym for Civilian, Air Force, Marines, Army, Navy and Air National Guard.

The year closed out in a big way for the Colorado Guard. On December 23, already-heavy snows were followed by what became known as the "Blizzard of '82," a storm that dumped an average of two feet of snow across Denver and the northern portion of the Front Range. Both Army and Air National Guard units were activated by the state for the emergency. When all other airfields in the Denver Metro area closed because of the storm, Buckley officially remained open.

## Busy year

Maintaining its reputation as one of the finest tactical fighter units in the ANG, the 140th TFW and 120th TFS took part in numerous deployments throughout 1983, including trips to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, as part of a second "Operation Midnight Sun" exercise; another Coronet Cove rotation to Panama in August; and two trips to Nellis AFB, Nev. The first deployment to Nellis saw the unit go into "Gunsmoke '83" to defend its world champion title against 15 of the best units in the ANG, AFRES and USAF. Colorado placed fifth overall, but was the highest ranked Guard or Reserve unit in the competition; Capt. Charlie Betts won the A-7 "Top Gun" title.

The wing returned to Nellis after the Gunsmoke competition

## "Coronet Bridegroom"

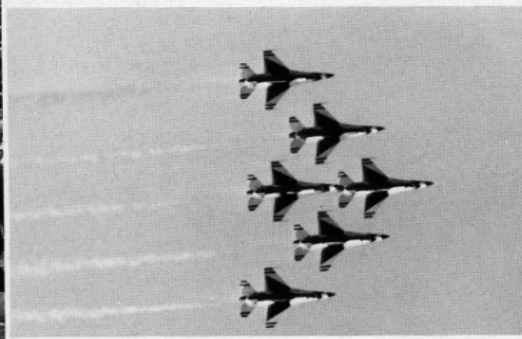
Don Neary's plans took our wing all over the world. He always had contingencies and often referred to the project at hand from his football playing perspective: "Coming from behind," "Never quitting," and "Playing the fourth quarter all the way, until it's over." A planner's planner, his concern for detail was all absorbing. He even wrote a plan for his wedding day.

*Brig. Gen. George A. Franzen*

## A great listener

D.O. Neary was a tremendous asset to the Colorado ANG . . . he's one of our great people persons. He has a patient, soothing quality and has that often-forgotten talent of being able to listen. He's helped many of our people through difficult times and problems. Whenever I got a little disgusted over things and needed a little friendly advice, I went to Col. Neary. His ear was always available.

*Lt. Col. Ken Kimber*



**Open house:** More than 300,000 people, the largest attendance at any one-day event in the state's history, saw the USAF Thunderbirds at a Buckley open house, August 1983.

to take part in "Red Flag 84-1" in November. More than 80 pilots, maintenance and support personnel generated a variety of missions including escort, interdiction, suppression of enemy air defenses and dissimilar-air combat training and live ordnance drops.

1983 also saw the creation of a new unit in the Colorado Air Guard. In July, following a reorganization of HQ COANG, Operating Location-AA, the T-43 flying mission in support of the U.S. Air Force Academy became a separate and distinct responsibility of Operating Location-BB under the command of Lt. Col. Mel Walden.

Aside from supporting every major deployment for the 140th TFW — exercises like Coronet Cove, Red Flag and Gunsmoke — the 140th CAMS recorded several noteworthy events in 1983. The squadron commander, Lt. Col. Arvey Mason, left the unit after more than nine years at the helm to become Buckley's base commander (replacing Lt. Col. Don R. Shields). His successor was Maj. Donald S. Lovisone, who had spent his entire Air Guard career, as both enlisted and officer, assigned to the

### The thrill of flight

I was on my third or fourth flight in the A-7K Model, behind Charlie Betts, doing some low-level flying over the Sand Dunes in southern Colorado. I remember we were heading straight for the Sangre de Cristo mountains — real low and real fast. I kept saying to myself, he'll pull up, he'll pull up. Finally, I couldn't bear the anxiety and yelled out, "Charlie, you're headed right into the damn mountain!" He turned his head ever so slightly, and nonchalantly replied, "Mountain, what mountain?" Right then . . . at the absolute last second of my life, Charlie banked the aircraft, pulled hard and flew gracefully through a small notch in the cliffs. After we landed and I changed my underwear, he said, "Gee, Doc, I wasn't trying to scare you. I've flown through that pretty valley so many times, I just thought you'd like to see it yourself."

*Lt. Col. (Dr.) Demerick "Space Doc" Fradl*

**Top Gun:** There are old pilots . . . and bold pilots . . . and a few old, bold ones like Maj. Charlie Betts.

### Rendezvous

In the 1800's they called it a rendezvous. Now we call it "Gunsmoke." They came from hundreds of miles by boat, on foot and horseback. Now, it's thousands of miles in steel birds. From near and far, they gathered to tell tall tales, drink whiskey and test their skills against each other. Now, we gather to tell tall tales, drink whiskey and test our skills against each other. Back in the old days it was Bowie knives, tomahawks and muskets that fired lead balls at 800 feet per second. Nowadays, it's 20mm bullets, 500-pound bombs and jets that fly at 800 feet per second.

*Maj. Charlie Betts*



**Gunsmoke '83:** In defense of their world title, Colorado advanced to the worldwide gunnery meet, where Charlie Betts took the A-7 *Top Gun* trophy and the team finished fifth, ahead of all other Guard and Reserve teams.

121 TFW					140 TFW					LEADER BOARD					23 TFW				
TEAM TOTAL 8665					TEAM TOTAL 8970					AS OF 12 OCT					TEAM TOTAL 8923				
										OVERALL									
BOX TAC NAV					BOX TAC NAV					TOP TEAM TOP GUN					BOX TAC NAV				
PAT N PAT N ATT K TOTAL					PAT N PAT N ATT K TOTAL					50 TFW KEISZ					PAT N PAT N ATT K TOTAL				
MEYER 804 613 605 2022					BETTS 890 668 731 2289					35 TFW F4 COLE					HENRY 868 569 732 2169				
COHAGAN 919 675 558 2152					SCHULTZ 900 615 600 2115					4 TFW F4BN MURPHY					M'KENNEY 927 684 748 2359				
PAPE 804 658 800 2224					HUTZIG 912 680 690 2402					7 TFW BUIS					FOY 883 637 744 2364				
MARSHALL 800 650 650 2100					GROSS 800 650 650 2100										BRAD 800 650 650 2100				
800 650 650 2100					800 650 650 2100										652 2031				







**Annual training:** CBPO personnel specialists Sally (Hays) Eley, Patsy Steinman, Verchelle (Stephen) Fenner and Consuelo Duran, Shaw AFB, S.C., June 1983.

### An American story

I came to America from Great Britain about eight years ago. Since then, I've become a U.S. citizen. During the Iranian hostage crisis, I felt a need to serve and affiliate myself with America . . . to help preserve our way of life. The Colorado Air Guard reminded me of the British Territorial Army: citizen-soldiers sworn to protect their homes and way of life.

*TSgt. Sally Eley*



**Last ride:** Maj. Whitney, CMSgt. Meis.

same unit. The squadron also bid farewell to more than 100 years of combined experience with the retirement of CMSgts. Hank Meis and John Swenson, SMSgt. Moe Etter and MSGts. Douglas Gill and Donald Carlisle and the death of MSgt. Frederick Thebado.

Lt. Col. William McGaffin, who was named the 140th TFW Resources Manager in 1983, was replaced by Maj. Claude Dutro as 140th RMS commander. McGaffin was also replaced in his technician position as chief of supply by Maj. Charles E. McClanahan.

The 140th CSS's food service section added to its unit's accomplishments in 1983 by sending food service personnel to places like Camp Rilea, Ore., to support 154th Tactical Control Group operations. Other members went to Eglin AFB, Fla., where they took "Prime Ribs" training on operating under combat conditions, including chemical warfare attacks. Other food service members deployed to McGhee Tyson ARPT, Tenn. Still others went overseas to support activities in Suwon and Kimhae, South Korea.

The 240th Civil Engineering Flight experienced "its most productive year since its creation in 1980," according to Maj. Anthony Eden. As one of the three Prime BEEF C-4 teams in the ANG, the flight provided command staff support to major and intermediate level commands in the Air Force. 240th CEF members deployed to such locations as Lincoln ANG Base, Neb.; Great Falls International Airport, Mont.; Bangor ANG Base, Maine; Gowen Field, Idaho; Kirtland AFB, N.M.; and Ramstein AB, Germany, during the year.

In August, the 140th Communications Flight deployed to Incirlik, Turkey, for "Checkered Flag" training and in-country familiarization. For some of the radio/teletype operators and maintenance personnel it was their fourth trip to the country.

In February 1984, Brig. Gen. Monroe G. Mathias closed out a 32-year career with the COANG with his last flight in the A-7K. The Colorado native had spent the last six years of his career

**Moe Etter retires:** Back . . . Joe Reed, Eldon Rossow, Terry Hatchett, unidentified, Sal Martinez, Arlo Sorheim, Rich Bruenig, John Poyer, Art Deberard, unidentified, John Kirkpatrick, Jack Darveau, Gordon Clark and Sam Dewett; Middle . . . Tim Aragon, Leon Duggins, Ben Benedict, Eddie Schreeve, Lenard Jansen, Chuck Hoffman, Tony Burczyk, Jim Holland, Dario Rybal, Ernie Davis and Dan Gay; Kneeling . . . Pete McDermott, Mike Gitzen, Jim Greco, Don Pipkin, **Moe Etter**, Fred Wade, Don Palmer, Ron Erickson, Dave Moos, Larry Mayo and Steve Spahr.

### Merzifon warm-up

Hank Meis came to my rescue many times. One spine-chilling, snot-dripping, blustery, northern Mediterranean day in Turkey, I was walking on the flightline with my hands buried in my pockets, freezing to death. Hank called me over to help him out. He pulled out a bottle of Schnapps, tossed away the cap and, lo and behold, 45 minutes later, I was warm for the first time in 10 days.

*Lt. Col. Buck Rennick*

revitalizing the state headquarters as assistant adjutant general (air). The general's vacant billet was filled by state staff director of operations, Col. Jack M. Rosamond.

### Air Guard Experience

May 1984 saw Hollywood at Buckley for two weeks of filming. National Guard Bureau was producing a new recruiting film, *The Air Guard Experience*, and they were looking for the best unit to star in the production. Maj. Ken Kimber, head of ANG recruiting publicity and a Colorado Guardsman, suggested Buckley and the COANG. Story line and concept meetings began in early February with several production meetings following involving the Colorado ANG, National Guard Bureau, Needham Harper Worldwide (the advertising agency), William Livingstone Productions (the film crew) and Simpson/Flint Inc. (the still photo crew).

By the time shooting began, nearly 90 percent of the film was scheduled for shooting in and around Buckley and involved most of the full-time force. The results were worthy of the COANG legacy; the film won an impressive (and unprecedented) array of awards: in the 1985 U.S. Industrial Film Festival (1,100 entrants) it took four of 38 awards, capturing three Gold Camera Awards for best training film, best educational film and best recruiting film and a certificate for creative achievement in the best advertising film category; the U.S. Inter-Departmental

**Colorado Room:** Construction work crew at McGhee-Tyson, Tenn. Front row . . . B.J. Nanney, Goldie Coons and "Sully" Sullivan; Back row . . . Wayne Hawley, Joe Ashby, Bill Knippprath, Gary Plendl and Don Lucke. Maj. Gen. John France right.



committee on Visual and Auditory Material awarded it first place in international competition for the 1985 Golden Eagles Award; in the 24th International Documentary Awards competition in Milan, Italy (1985), it took first place in the military film category for aviation; and in the November 1986 "CINDY" Awards competition, the Association for Visual Communications gave it the special achievement award for photography and writing

and selected it as one of four films in the Blue Ribbon round of judging, where it took the silver award.

Said production coordinator and COANG public affairs director Capt. Bruce A. Collins in a subsequent *Contrails* article: "... all of our people, behind the camera and in front of it, had so much spirit and just downright pride in who we are and what we do, that it literally jumps out at you from the screen.

## George Franzen

### Two tours in Vietnam, problem solver, fifth COANG commander in the modern era

#### What got you interested in the military?

Well, I don't have a very distinguished family military background. I have a grandfather who deserted from the Russian Army in 1913 (which did show good judgment). My father was a supervisor over building parts for the B-26. So, he wasn't in World War II. When I went to Ohio State, a land grant school, there was a requirement to take one of two courses — military or air science. I selected air science. Well, air science was another way of saying Air Force ROTC, so, I ended up in a blue suit. My motivational turning point came when an advanced ROTC dormitory counselor brought home some movies of the F-102 and the F-100. They were doing night takeoffs with their afterburners, and right then I said, "That's what I want to do!"

#### You joined the Air Force at that point?

I finished ROTC as the wing cadet commander and commander of Arnold Air Society. After graduation in 1962, I went to pilot training at Vance AFB, ending up high enough in my class to be able to select the F-100. My first assignment was to Cannon AFB, then a short tour in Vietnam, over to RAF Woodbridge in England and back to Vietnam in 1968.

#### What do you remember about your first assignment?

As a second lieutenant, you don't really get to do a lot. Besides flying, you're usually the snack bar officer or something like that until a lower ranking officer comes along. I was asked to look into a gun camera film problem. Our film was jamming — only 15 percent of it was getting back and being printed in an acceptable form. I took all our film packs, tore them apart and found out where the weak links were. After a lot of inspection procedures were established, we got the success rate up to 90 percent. I ended up on inspection

teams, working in stan eval, and was designated as an IP and flight examiner as a first lieutenant. I kind of had a reputation as a guy who could find the problem and fix it.

#### Your two tours in Vietnam, flying 237 combat missions . . . what were your thoughts about going into combat?

Well, I guess I never really did think about it. The first time I went, I had sort of a nonchalant attitude about combat — that's what I was trained to do. The only thing I thought about was how I would react when I first saw the tracers coming up at me. Within the first couple of missions, I found out you don't do anything. There wasn't anything you *could* do about it, because you had already started down the chute.

#### Was the last mission of those 237 any different from the rest?

I think the more experience you have in combat, the better you get and the fewer mistakes you make. With the F-100, knowing that I was able to put the bombs on the target made me feel I really performed the mission well.

#### After Vietnam, you made a decision to get out of the Air Force and join the ANG. How did that transition take place?

I flew for a year with Northwest Orient Airlines and made a decision to get into the lowa ANG, flying with them for about 18 months. The Michigan ANG was transitioning to the F-100 and needed an instructor pilot. I was selected to start in the technician business and became the chief of stan eval. They weren't used to standardization, because each pilot did it his own way. So, there were a lot of opportunities to develop a unit. Later, I interviewed with Brig. Gen. Walt Williams for the safety officer position in Colorado. Capt. Wayne Schultz got the job. About

three months later, Gen. Williams called and asked if I still wanted to come to Colorado. I said, "You bet I do." Jerry Glade had been injured in an ejection and was going to have to retire. I was hired again as the chief of stan eval. I guess I was sort of a rebel, bringing in new ideas, thoughts and concepts. Ever since then, I've been doing that kind of thing . . . trying to improve, to change, to develop, to plan for the future.

#### The A-7 arrived in Colorado about the same time you did. Was there any connection?

No, not really. Actually, I ran the F-100 program out to its termination and was one of the last pilots to check out in the A-7. It was a coincidence with the conversion, but I wasn't really connected to the A-7D transition.

#### The transition from the F-100 to the A-7, can you describe it?

The A-7 is a very easy aircraft to fly. The transition from the F-100 to the A-7, since the mission was exactly the same, was relatively easy. The greatest difference between the airplanes was the A-7's status as one of the new generation of "magic" jets, with computer, heads-up-display, totally integrated systems . . . plus, the automatic bombing system.

#### How about vendor support; the F-100 was made by North American and the A-7 by LTV, did that change anything?

No, I think the lesson we learned from the F-100s was that we didn't want the A-7 to become a Guard-unique aircraft. Air Force interest in the supply system, parts and procurement just wasn't there with the F-100. I heard many TAC commanders state: "We don't ever want that to happen again, because it becomes a real supply problem." Sure enough, the same thing happened to the A-7.

They really deserve a major part of the credit for these awards, they were Oscar-winners, every one."

The 140th TFW made three major deployments in 1984. The first occurred May 12-26, when 460 people went to the ANG's permanent field training site at Gulfport, Miss., to conduct an Operational Readiness Exercise. With the help of advisers from the Air Force's 27th TFW, Cannon AFB, N.M., and working

under combat conditions in chemical warfare scenarios (during days when the heat and humidity were usually in the high 80s), the wing was put through the paces for a successful ORI.

On the heels of the Gulfport deployment came the fifth Coronet Cove rotation to Panama in June, when 100 Air Guardsmen successfully completed 96 missions during Panama's monsoonlike rainy season.

### **LTV's A-7 modernization efforts (Strikefighter) talk about another 20 years, adding new life to the A-7. How do you feel about that?**

There are as many different opinions about that as there are A-7 fighter pilots. My particular point of view is, sure, I think any of us would prefer to have an F-16 or the A-16, the aircraft that will replace the A-10. However, if the information I have is correct, money is not available for new airplanes to replace the A-7. Then, you have two choices: fly the A-7 like it is for the next 15 to 20 years, or modify it to make it a viable weapons system. Given those conditions, the YA-7F has potential . . . but, even with all that, the YA-7F is not funded and not a "for-sure" aircraft. They are remodeling two aircraft, which they hope to fly in April, 1989. So, until then, it is all guesswork.

### **Will those two aircraft be prototypes for the A-7F?**

The prototypes are primarily the aerodynamics and the new engine, however, the new avionics will not be in those airplanes.

### **With all the flying you've done, especially combat, have there been some close shaves?**

I really didn't have any in combat. The closest call I had was taking off out of Cannon AFB. It was night and we had tanks on, making for a very long takeoff. We got to rotation for lift-off and something happened. I never figured it out; the plane was decelerating and I felt that the burner had blown out. So, I aborted and caught the first barrier, a BAK 6, but was going too fast and too heavy . . . it didn't hold. About the time I was ready to jettison my tanks, I felt the next barrier catch; but, I went through it, also. I ended up about a mile and a half over the end of the runway and across the road, taking out a couple of signs. The airplane was on fire on the right side, from the canopy back. The nose was bent up, but, fortunately, the canopy wasn't jammed and I was able to jump out over the nose.



**Brig. Gen. George A. Franzen, Jr.** has served as commander of the 140th Tactical Fighter Wing since December 1981. Interview conducted by CMSgt. Joseph A. Ashby.

### **Had you jettisoned the tanks?**

No, in fact, that's the thing that saved my life. The tanks kept the nose from actually digging in. I remember running away a certain distance, taking my checklist and throwing it at the airplane . . . I was so damned mad at it. My wife saw the first cell take off, and the subsequent black smoke, knowing I was one of the first two airplanes. That was really tough for her, until I finally got to a phone to let her know I was OK.

### **Some other people haven't been so fortunate.**

There was a period of time with the A-7, about 1974 through 1978, when we lost eight airplanes . . . and too many pilots. There was no consistency, no reason for it. They were all different accidents, mostly pilot error vs. mechanical error. That was a very rough time for me. I was given the air commander job on Dec. 8, 1981, and on Dec. 9, we lost an airplane. Capt. Nicholson got out, but was injured from the force of the ejection.

### **Who are some of the memorable COANG people, the characters?**

It would take all day to do that. Of course, General Williams. When I first came here to interview, his secretary said to speak up, because "he's sort of hard of hearing." Some time later, a pilot told me that Gen. Williams said to him after the interview, "I wonder if there's something wrong with Franzen, he almost was yelling at me." Walt Williams was 100 percent mission oriented. Col. Bob Cherry, a good friend of mine, had one saying, "When we come through the front gate, it's all business." He stuck to that. Of course, everyone here knows about Jack Wilhite . . . you could never get him on time for a briefing. And Bill Wilson . . . you never knew if he was happy or sad, because he seldom smiled. Gen. Neuens . . . a professional officer. Col. D.O. Neary . . . the thing I admired about Don was his ability to focus on the mission and the needs of our people.

### **Where do you see the ANG going?**

The Air Guard has changed from flying airplanes and putting bombs on the target to incorporating all aspects of what we'll have to do . . . if our country has to go to war. This includes working and flying in chemical environments, 24-hour tasking and surviving under combat conditions. I see the Guard continuing its maturity path . . . that's what we've done the past 15 years. A lot of people think we've become more and more Air Force. Perhaps that's true; but, we have a responsibility to be the very best in combat that we can. Therefore, we must do everything we can to train and prepare our people for that job. If that's called maturing, or becoming Air Force, I guess that's the road we're heading down and I don't see that changing. My hope is we only accept those missions we can support in a traditional Guardsman-type environment. Our people — all volunteers — are the best anywhere, and we push them very hard in today's tactical Air Force arena. We can only ask them to do so much. It's time we polish the mission, rather than adding more and more to an already significant load.

## Sahneye Dönüş Kolorado!



## Come Back Colorado!

### A toast

We love peace, just as the founding father of the modern Turkish republic loved peace. But like Mustafa Kemal Atatürk over 50 years ago and the country of Turkey today, we are prepared to fight for our values and our freedom. There is no country we would rather have on our side than Turkey. I toast two great nations — the United States and Turkey.

*Brig. Gen. George A. Franzen,  
during "Coronet Bronco"*

## Coronet Bronco

The third deployment, "Coronet Bronco," took place Sept. 29-Oct. 14, sending a mix of more than 400 Air Guard people from Colorado and Nebraska to Eskisehir Air Base, the headquarters for Turkey's 1st Tactical Air Force. Colorado's contingent numbered 218 persons and 12 A-7D Corsairs.

The Americans participated in a NATO exercise called "Display Determination." The annual exercise was designed to re-emphasize and promote coordination of multinational forces assigned to the commander-in-chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe, and to demonstrate NATO's readiness to deter aggression along its southern flank.

The 401st Civil Engineering Squadron from Torrejon AB, Spain, rehabbed barracks and constructed a temporary city at Eskisehir, complete with dining, recreation, medical, administrative, shower, laundry and latrine facilities. Life in what became known as the Bronco Base Camp was comfortable — but never confused with home. The exercise was highly successful with 120th TFS pilots flying more than 200 sorties.

Turkey's location is especially critical to NATO's ability to deter aggression. There the Turks alone control the crucial sea points through which the entire Soviet Black Sea fleet must pass to reach open ocean. Fully one-third of the Soviet navy must pass through the Bosphorus Straits, past Istanbul and the Sea of Marmara, and finally through the Dardanelles to reach the Mediterranean. Turkey's location on the borders of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Iran, Iraq and Syria also makes it an invaluable site for intelligence collection.



**Ageless transportation:** Competes with automobiles and pedestrians on an Eskisehir street.

The temporary deployment to Eskisehir was part of a larger, continuing program, begun in 1975, in which tactical U.S. air units deploy for short periods to Europe, Alaska and the Pacific to familiarize aircrews and support personnel with the unique aspects of operating outside the continental U.S.

The A-7Ds from Colorado played several roles in the NATO operation, demonstrating their primary function as air-to-surface attack and close-air support aircraft as well as their air-to-air interdiction versatility against "enemy" aircraft. Nebraska's nine RF-4C *Phantom II* aircraft added pre- and post-strike photo reconnaissance capability.

So seriously do the Soviets regard the military capabilities of the Turks and their NATO allies that they permanently station 35 to 40 Soviet and Warsaw Pact combat divisions just across Turkish borders. Like a ball team scouting next week's opponent, the Soviet Union monitored the exercise closely. Aircrews were briefed to expect encounters with Soviet combat and intelligence vessels carrying sophisticated air defense systems.

The Colorado A-7s and Nebraska RF-4Fs deployed from their home bases in Aurora and Lincoln; the 10,000-mile "puddle jump" across the Atlantic helped SAC KC-135 aircrews stay proficient at aerial refueling. MAC cargo planes served as troop and equipment carriers for the almost 24-hour trip to Turkey.

Turkey liaison officer Maj. Erbil Kutay felt that both countries profited from the exercise, saying "It is important for us to fly together. We learn new tactics from you and the American pilots learn more about our procedures, buffer zones, flying restrictions and other flying conditions over Turkish terrain."

With no other A-7s in the European theater there was no nearby source for spare parts. All maintenance and supply resources had to be brought from home in war readiness spares kits.

During Display Determination exercises the second week, Colorado and Nebraska aircrews and maintenance teams were