

132nd FIGHTER WING



LINEAGE

STATIONS

Des Moines, IA

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

F-100

A-7

F-16

Support Aircraft

C-47A

C-45H

C-54G

U-3A

T-29D

C-131B

C-12J

COMMANDERS

Col James Holmes, Nov 1950

Col Reginald Vance, May 1952

LTC Frank Berlin, Feb 1953

Col Roger Gilbert, Feb 1957

Col Paul Thompson, Jul 1979

Col Donald W Armington, #1993

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

On a shield sky blue, within a narrow border yellow, a knight on horseback with visors closed, completely armed, carrying in his right hand a tilting spear with streamers and on his left arm a shield thereon arched lines radiating from the upper right of the shield to lower left of the shield; the horse with all armorial appurtenances, in a charging position, all yellow shaded, his hind feet on a representation of a cloud from the base natural color.

On a shield azure (sky blue) within a diminutive border or, a chevalier completely armed, in his dexter hand a tilting spear, with streamers; on his sinister arm an escutcheon charged with a tierce in gyrons of two bendwise; the horse caparisoned and in full gallop, charging, all or, the horse's hind feet resting on a cloud proper, issuing from the base.

The chevalier, an armored knight on horseback, is symbolic of the honorable profession of arms. The knight through all the ages is symbolic of a champion devoted to the cause of nobly defending his heritage a crusading spirit of gallant service and undying loyalty to truth and right. The blue sky and cloud are symbolic of the overall Air Force theater, where the 132d Fighter Wing accomplishes its mission with courage and bravery.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The Iowa Air National Guard has been a proud resident of the Des Moines International Airport for over 60 years. Officially known as the 132d Fighter Wing, the unit has long been recognized as one of our country's finest Air National Guard organizations. Early efforts to locate an Air Guard unit in Des Moines were led by a citizens' committee, which was formed in May 1940, to arrange for construction of an aircraft hangar and armory building at the Des Moines International Airport. This non-profit committee consisted of local business, civic and military leaders.

Through the work of this committee, which included conferences in Washington DC, and design and financing of the project, an Air Corps squadron for Des Moines was authorized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in January 1941.

Recruiting of members for the new unit began the following month. The 124th Observation Squadron was organized on February 25, 1941 with an allotted strength of 31 officers and 116 enlisted personnel. In September of 1941, the Squadron was called to active service during World War II. After the war, the 124th was combined with the 132nd Fighter Group in an extensive reorganization of the Air National Guard. These units became the 132nd Fighter Wing. The Wing was again called to active service during the Korean conflict and returned to State control in January 1953.

A major reorganization took place on November 1st, 1950. All Fighter Groups were reorganized as Fighter Wings under the "Wing Base" concept which automatically deactivated Nebraska's Air Service Group and the Utility Flight. The support units were reorganized into five squadrons (Headquarters, Communications, Food Service, Air Police and Installations) which comprised an Air Base Group. All of the 132nd Air Base Group squadrons were Federally recognized in November 1950. This Air Base Group was a part of the 132nd Fighter Wing located in Des Moines, Iowa and was the first Air Base Group in the Nation to be located at a separate location from its Wing Headquarters. Lt. Col. John M. Campbell was the Commander of the 132nd Air Base Group

The entire 132nd Fighter Wing (all of the Iowa and Nebraska Air National Guard units) was called into active service on April 1st, 1951 to serve during the Korean Conflict. The units remained in Federal status for twenty-one months and then were released to resume their National Guard role. The units of the Nebraska Air National Guard (also the Iowa Air Guard units) were released from active duty on Dec 31st, 1952 and returned to National Guard status on January 1st, 1953.

The first major task confronting the unit commanders was to rebuild their organizations into full-strength and combat-ready units. Col. John M. Campbell was appointed Chief of Staff for Air in Nebraska. Major Fred H. Bailey, Jr., was released from Active Duty and returned to his previous duties as the Tactical Squadron Commander and also Base Detachment Commander. Major Donald E. Coy returned to Lincoln as the Air Base Group Commander. The 8173rd Utility Flight, commanded by Capt. Elmer E. Herron, was deactivated with the return of the Air Guard Units. This Utility Flight organization had remained in Nebraska throughout the period. The rest of the Air Guard was on Active Duty. They operated and maintained one C-47 Administrative type aircraft which was at the disposal of the Governor and the Adjutant General.

There are four major "Groups" within a Wing. The Group Commanders are responsible for the operation of their respective Groups and report directly to the Wing Commander. The Groups include: The Tactical Flying Group, the Medical Group, the Maintenance and Supply Group and the Air Base Group. The basic difference in Air Force and Air National Guard Wing structure is that often-times the various units within the Wing are located on separate airfields and many times are located in different states. In those cases where the Groups are separated, a small element of each Group is assigned to each Tactical Squadron and are responsible for all support functions for that Squadron.

The Nebraska Air National Guard Units combine with the Iowa Air Guard units to form the 132nd Fighter Interceptor Wing. The 132nd Air Base Group and one of the Fighter Squadrons

(173rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron) within the 132nd Fighter Interceptor Group are located in Lincoln, Nebraska. The 173rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron is augmented with three elements from the Maintenance and Supply Group and one element from the Medical Group. The remainder of the Wing making up the Iowa Air National Guard. The Wing Headquarters is located in Des Moines, Iowa.

The 132nd Air Base Group has the responsibility of supporting the Fighter Squadron and keeping the Air Base in operation. Its Food Service Squadron prepares and serves the meals for all personnel. The Communications Squadron operates and maintains the ground communications systems. The Air Police Squadron provides security for the military installation and all of the equipment. The Installations Squadron builds, repairs and maintains all real property, operates crash rescue equipment and performs many other functions. The Headquarters Squadron provides administrative assistance and liaison between the various Squadrons and the Air Base Group Commander. The Headquarters Squadron also provides overall personnel services such as operation of the theater, mail service, Service Club, Officer's and Airmen's Club, Base Operations, Photography Laboratory and others. These activities and many more are essential in the operation of an Air Base and every reasonable effort is expended in keeping the personnel mentally and physically capable of performing their assigned duties.

The new organization consisted of the 132d Fighter Wing, Col John H. Holmes, Commander; the 124th Fighter Squadron, Maj Donald E. Songer, Commander; the 132d Maintenance and Supply Group, Lt Col John H. Strand, Commander; and the former 124th Observation Squadron Flight Surgeon, Lt Col Byron M. Merkel, was named Medical Group Commander.

In January 1952, the 132d was redesignated the 132d Fighter Bomber Wing and assigned to the Tactical Air Command. After this transfer, many Guardsmen were transferred to other TAC units world-wide and the unit again assumed the role of an RTU. The wing also was tasked to frequent fire power demonstrations from Maine to Florida.

The early 1950's arrival of the "Jet Age" in military aviation had a dramatic impact on the Air Guard and the Des Moines Airport. Due to the pending arrival of F-80 at the Air National Guard, over one million dollars of federally funded improvements were added to the airport. The work included the addition of 1,800 feet to the main runway and 3,480 feet of taxiways to accommodate the Guard fighter jets. These improvements facilitated the arrival of commercial jet service in Des Moines.

The Wing organization in 1961 consisted of the 132d Fighter Group (AD), the 155th Fighter Group (AD) Lincoln, Nebraska with F-86Ds. and the 114th Fighter Group (AD) Sioux Falls. South Dakota with F-89Js. But each group functioned basically as a separate unit; aircraft and missions were not very compatible.

From 1996 to 2004, the 132nd Fighter Wing stepped to center stage on the world scene and validated the Air Expeditionary Force concept with an unprecedented six overseas contingency deployments to patrol the No-Fly Zone over Iraq in Operations Northern and Southern Watch. Two of the six contingency deployments occurred within a ten-month period attesting to the unit's professionalism and high state of readiness. The 132nd Fighter Wing is engaged in the

Homeland Defense mission. Immediately following the events of September 11, 2001, the 132nd Fighter Wing's F-16s, pilots, and maintenance members were placed on alert, poised to defend Iowans and all Americans against any possible attacks. Additionally the Wing has accomplished the Air Sovereignty Alert mission three times since September 11, 2001. During these periods, the unit's F-16s were prepared to launch within minutes in the event of a "scramble" order – 24/7. The unit has also provided continuous Combat Air Patrols during Presidential visits. The 132d Fighter Wing is currently an "alert capable" base fully ready and able to execute this mission.

The Wing was validated as the "Best of the Best" following its Operation Readiness Inspection, in 2004, by Air Combat Command (ACC). Seventy-three percent of 154 rated areas graded as Outstanding or Excellent. The "Excellent" received in each of the four major rated areas of Initial Response, Employment, Mission Support, and Ability to Survive and Operate, was a precedent that had not been accomplished by a fighter wing in recent inspections. The 132nd Fighter Wing's rating was one of the highest achieved by an Active Duty, Air Reserve, or Air National Guard wing in the last several years. In addition, the Logistics Readiness Squadron received the 2005 Air Reserve Component Base Logistics Activity of the Year Award and the Maintenance Group received the 2005 Air National Guard's Maintenance Effectiveness Award. As a result of its outstanding efforts and commitment to excellence, the Wing was awarded its seventh Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. The unit deployed to Al Udeid AB, Qatar in 2005 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Wing performed in an exceptional manner, exhibiting an impressive array of capabilities. Outstanding leadership and superb aircraft maintenance skills produced 456 sorties and 3145 flying hours in austere conditions. Total flying hours during this contingency equaled to over three-fourths of a year's normal flying allocation in only 52 days.

Less than a week after the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, 12 members of the 132nd Medical Group teamed up with 19 members of the Sioux City 185th Air Refueling Wing and headed south bringing aid to those injured or sick because of the storm. The team treated 80 to 100 patients a day with ailments ranging from minor cuts to dehydration and acute skin infections caused by exposure to bacteria laden sewer water. Ninety six Airmen deployed to enhance US border security with Operation Jump Start (OJS). They built 1.5 miles of fence, a record for a 30 day deployment. Four hundred and seventy five Airmen deployed for a total of 34,541 days in 2008 for AEF/ECS operations at USAFCENT and USAFE bases in support of the Global War on Terror. This included the first ever AEF deployment to Balad Air Base, Iraq. These Airmen filled key leadership roles, maintained combat aircraft, provided integrated base defense, conducted essential base services, and flew operational sorties in direct support of coalition forces. At home, during the AEF, the 132d Fighter Wing participated in a full scale state mobilization to assist in the response and recovery operations from killer tornadoes and record floods. It was the largest Iowa mobilization since the Civil War. The 132d Fighter Wing again demonstrated its commitment to excellence by its incredible performance in the February 2009 Air Combat Command Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI). Of the 543 areas inspected, 380 areas were validated as fully in compliance with standards. This report with 70% "complies" far exceeds most Air Force and Air National Guard reports. Additionally, only nine areas, or 1.6%, were found to be non-compliant. This remarkably low number is far below the number in most Air Force and Air National Guard reports. The 132d Fighter Wing received the Air Force

Outstanding Unit Award in 2009. It was the eighth time the unit was the recipient of this prestigious award.

With budgets shrinking, military leaders are looking for new, innovative and cost-effective ways to keep our airmen trained. One such innovation is occurring right here in Iowa. The 132nd Fighter Wing, Detachment 1, Distributed Training Operations Center (DTOC) is electronically connecting pilots from across the country. This one-of-a-kind operation provides realistic simulation training opportunities all over the world. This is accomplished by establishing and maintaining a network that connects simulators across the country, thus the term "distributed". The staff at the center is able to create enhanced virtual battlefields that challenge pilots with realistic and demanding scenarios. The end result is that pilots and command and control operators from all over the United States can participate and collaborate in high fidelity mission training events in the virtual environment without ever leaving their home bases. The unit is capable of employing Precision Guided Munitions and Inertially Aided Munitions day and night using Night Vision Goggles. A number of the unit's pilots are also trained to accomplish the challenging Combat Search and Rescue Mission. Through the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closing) process, the Department of Defense recommended that the 132nd Fighter Wing exchange its 15 Block 42 F-16s for 18 Block 30 F-16s. This transition, which began in January 2007 and involved the retraining of one-third of the Maintenance Group personnel, was ongoing during the AEF deployment to Iraq. Today, serving our country as a member of the Air National Guard involves much more than simply attending "drill" two days a month and training two weeks a year. Serving often involves missions around the globe as part of Expeditionary Combat Support (ECS) deployments. Whether deployed as individuals or as groups, members from all squadrons of the 132nd have accepted the challenge to support the Global War on Terrorism as well as participating in various humanitarian missions. Unit members have participated in missions to the following countries: Antarctica, Belize, England, France, Guatemala, Germany, Iraq, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, Peru, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela. The Wing's involvement in the local community ranges from programs mentoring youth to support of employers of our airmen. The school-to-work internship program with Des Moines Central Campus' Aviation Technology program began in 1998. The program is one of four such programs in the United States and the only one with an internship component at an Air National Guard base. The internship rotation occurs during the student's senior year in high school. For 16 weeks, students work with Air Guard personnel on actual F-16.

C-47A 42- 664 "Gooney Bird June 1949 - May 1966 - 22 seat, twin engine propeller. 28th June 1949 when C-47A "664" was assigned. The "Gooney Bird" so named after the alternate name given by sailors in days of yore to the Albatross; known for its graceful flight and questionable ground agility upon landing), was manufactured by Douglas, Long Beach, California. This aircraft, also known as "664," was originally delivered to the United States Army Air Force on 20th Nov 1943, and started its career on loan to the 58th Bomb Wing, Marietta, GA. "664" had a series of short assignments between 17 Jan 1944 and 1 Mar 1946 ... including Bauer Army Airfield (AAFld) NC, Wright AAFld, OH, and Davis Monthan AAFld, AZ for storage. It remained there until 9 Mar 1949, when it was flown to Van Nuys, CA for refurbishment. 28th June 1949 brought 664, the "Gooney Bird," to the 124th Fighter Squadron. It served the 124th

for seventeen years, accumulating over 12, 000 flying hours, and performing a variety of support missions. The Gooney Bird continued in service until 31 May 1966, when it was transferred to the 934th Troop Carrier Group (Air Force Reserves), Minneapolis - St. Paul Airport MN. The Civil Air Patrol acquired "664" a year later. They kept her until she was finally dropped from inventory on 1st October 1970.

C- 45H, tail # 52 -10811 During its seventeen years of service with the 124th & 132d, the C-47 did have some help. This came in the form of the C- 45H, tail # 52 -10811, manufactured by Beech at Wichita, KS, and was delivered as new (Zero Time) to the 132d TFW. Its purpose - to function as Special Administrative Support for the Air National Guard Headquarters, the State House, and the units at Sioux City and Fort Dodge ... in other words ... take the load off the "Gooney Bird's" schedule as this plane was better suited for smaller administrative trips. This continued from 14 June 1954 until 28 June 1960, when, due to authorization loss, the C-45H was delivered to Davis Monthan AFB for storage. A couple of years later, on 6 Mar 1962, this plane was dropped from inventory as excess and sold.

VC-54G 0-50633 The "Bug Smasher Nov 1966 - Jan 1972 - 46 seat (refurbished), four engine propeller. Named after its proficiency in killing massive amounts of bugs, mostly during our local night flying pattern work. This beauty appeared to us on the 16 Nov 1966, but the excitement cooled as we took a closer look at our newly arrived steed. As a cowboy would say about his horse "Rode hard and put away wet" almost described her! It was indeed a VC-54G, but the VC interior was ripped, torn, and ... smelled bad!! The support aircraft pilots and crew chief/flight engineers had several gaps in their careers during which they had nothing to fly per se. The departure of the C-47 brought about the first of these voids, one of which lasted from 31 May 66 until 16 Nov that year. Early fall buzzed with rumors of a VC-54G ... yes it was a VC (VC indicates VIP) which was interesting enough ... but the G meant something more-a late model C-54. True, this bird was a G model... but had accrued ; high number of flying hours in her career (High Time) ... seems she spent the late 40s and early 50s as an airliner on the US West Coast - not uncommon for such an aircraft in the wake of World War II. Apparently, in December 1953, she was returned to Air Force inventory and put into storage at Norton AFB CA. It wasn't until a year later that she was put back into military service after being refurbished and designated as VC-54G 45-633 at Chino, CA. So what was the story behind this mysterious newcomer to the unit? Let's take a look at her life before she came to us. During the closing stages of WWII, Douglas of Santa Monica, CA manufactured the C-54G 45-0633 and delivered her to the Army Air Force (AAF) on 24 Oct 1945. A week later, on 30 Oct, Hamilton Army Airfield (AAFld), CA became 633's first home station, where 633 stayed until 11 Dec 1946, completing several short overseas tours. A commercial airline had her on loan from the US Air Force, where she did her West Coast stint. In December 1953, the aircraft was returned to the Air Force, and placed in storage until the following December. She received a depot overhaul including an interior refurbishment. All this took several months, and, on 8 February 1955, the C-54 was redesignated a VC-54G and assigned to Eglin AFB FL. After staying at Eglin until 22 July 1958, she was reassigned to Tachikawa AB Japan (Pacific Air Forces, PACAF), providing VIP service throughout PACAF. During this tour, the bird was sent to Hong Kong several times for an "IRAN" (Inspect and Repair As Needed ... now known as depot maintenance). The 132d TFW accepted the VC-54G 45-0633 on 16 November 1966. She flew with us for just a short time, and then went into Phase Inspection and complete interior replacement. Originally, there was a full galley, office, VIP lounge, lavatory, and only 18 passenger seats. After our

maintenance personnel finished their restoration work on this new arrival, she was full of airliner seats, two lavatories, a small galley, and several bunks. Mechanically, this plane was almost rebuilt; with three new engines installed and the exterior painted and polished ... I have to say this bird was a beauty when she finally rolled out of the hangar. The "Bug Smasher" served the 132d, the community, and nation in an outstanding manner. This was during the Viet Nam war. Stateside "in country" airlift was in short supply, so 633 served a wide range of needs. I have to say this bird was a beauty when she finally rolled out of the hangar." On 7 Jan 1972, the C-54 was transferred to Davis Monthan AFB and placed in storage until dropped from USAF inventory.

U-3A 57-5880 "The Blue Canoe" April 1971 - Sept 1972 - 5 seat, twin engine propeller. Just two days before our C-54 went to Davis Monthan, the 132d was assigned yet another aircraft, a U-3A with tail Number 57-5880, a military version of the Cessna 310. This was done for several reasons, plus, the unit needed administrative support and the pilots an aircraft to use in order to maintain their flying proficiency... a military version of the Cessna 310 ... unit needed administrative support..." The "Blue Canoe," so named because of its color and light construction, was built by Cessna at Wichita KS, and delivered to the USAF in support of SAC's missile wings at the following locations; Cook AFB, CA, Vandenberg AFB, CA, Francis Warren AFB, WY, and Beale AFB, CA. After two years at Beale, this bird was transferred to the Air Guard's 182d Tactical Fighter Group, Peoria IL. Iowa's 185th TFG, Sioux City, acquired her on 22 April 1971, where she spent less than a year before coming to the 132d on 5 Jan 1972. "The Blue Canoe" remained with us for only eight months. At that time, the Headquarters & HHD Iowa Army National Guard (ARNG) were authorized a fixed-wing aircraft, and they inherited the U-3. She was transferred to the ARNG on 27 Sept 1972 and housed at the 194th Cavalry, Troop D, Boone, IA ... where upon the "Blue Canoe" turned to Army green. Later, according to an informed source, she was transferred to a technical training school.. Once again the 132d was without a support aircraft... until January 1973.

T-29D 53-3531 - Navigation Trainer. It was the 8th of Jan 1973, smiles were big on support pilots' faces as the newly transferred T- 29D landed and taxied in to the 132d's ramp. This new arrival was quite something compared to her predecessors; pressurized cabin, air conditioning, auto pilot, improved instrumentation...what more could a pilot want! We the maintenance people, did not share their jubilation, because we knew this bird was a fully operational navigation trainer. This meant it would have to be reconfigured into a passenger version. Lots of work lay ahead for us. This aircraft was a bird with an unadventurous history as a trainer. 537 was manufactured by Consolidated Vultee at San Diego, CA, and started its USAF career on 9 July 1955 at Air Training Command, Mather AFB, CA as a navigator trainer ... stuck there for almost eighteen repetitious years of flying around the local area training navigators ... even the required depot work was done on base. When she was sent to 132d on 8th January 1973, her life changed. Some of us were surprised that the Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) didn't hang up at 150 miles, and that the radios would channelize to anything outside Mather's AFB frequency....on 8th January 1973, her life changed. As mentioned before, complete reconfiguration was necessary to make this bird useful to the 132d. These major modifications took months of planning and work for the crew assigned this mammoth task. " ... it would have to be reconfigured into a passenger version. Lots of work lay ahead for us." The aircraft's complete interior was gutted, including part of the cockpit, both engines were torn down and

overhauled.. She was rebuilt and refurbished extensively in and out from the ground up - paint and all! We concluded from various estimations, that some four months and 4,000 lbs lighter - this plane would appear from the hangar as a beautiful new, redesignated VT- 29D and she did! Everyone who'd had a hand in this new plane was extremely pleased and proud of their accomplishments. 537 served the unit superbly until 28th June 1975, when she was transferred (as were her predecessors) to Davis Monthan AFB for storage. Then, three months later, 537 was dropped from inventory .

C-131B 53-7822 - "Bertha" 822 - 28 seat, Jun 1974 - Dec 1987, twin propeller. A number of times in its history, the 132d had two support aircraft assigned at the same time. The C-131B's arrival was one of these periods. The C-131B, tail number 53 -7822, was assigned to the 132d TFW on 23 June 1974. The VT- 29D did not go to Davis Monthan until June of 1975. This indicates an overlap of one year. Many seem to remember an overlap while the C-131B underwent its refurbishment, but don't recall it as being a whole year. But for those of us who worked on the airplanes ... well as you know, "... time flies while you're having fun!" 822 was built by the same company that built the T-29, Consolidated Vultee of San Diego, CA. On 6 Oct, 1955, she was accepted by the USAF. Wright Patterson AFB, OH became her first home. Redesignated as a JC-131B, this plane was used as a test aircraft; the records did not indicate what type of tests were conducted. Throughout her Air Force service, this aircraft was used in the Research and Development Command. It was redesignated between a C-131B and a JC-131B several times. According to records, the bird's assignments were as follows; Oct 55 - Wright Patterson AFB OH, Mar 56 -Consolidated Vultee (test support), July 56 - back to Wright Patterson, Dec 59 - Atlantic Missile Range FL, Jan 63 -back to Wright Patterson, Mar 63 - Air Force Systems Command (Unknown Location), Jan 66 - Air Force Test Center, Edwards AFB, Jan 67 - Hanscom Field, MA, Oct 69 -back to Wright Patterson, Apr 70 - Armament Test Center, Eglin AFB, FL, remaining there until assigned to the 132d on 23 Jun 1974. Not only did 822 serve the 132d, but also the whole of the Iowa Army and Air National Guard. She performed thirteen valiant years as our only primary support aircraft.

C-12J86-0079 19 seat, Jan 1988 - Present, twin engine propeller. The C-12J - Plane Jane ... no nicknames yet -no fun on long hauls! A major milestone in the 132d's Support Aircraft function was the assignment of our current plane, the C-12J. This bird is owned by the USAF, but maintained under contract to Beech Aerospace Services Inc. This applies to most of the Support Aircraft in the USAF today, including Transient Alert Services. Built by Beech Aerospace, Wichita, KS, the C-12J was ready for company check-out by our pilots in early Dec 1987. However, due to weather and flight test problems, cancellations persisted for about a month. This plane was finally checked out, and brought to her new home with the 132d, on 12 Jan 1988. The C-12's maintenance has been outstanding since she came to us three years ago. With an in-commission rate well within the 90% range, most complaints seem to be about the uncomfortable seats .

In closing the Support Aircraft section, we need to explain what happened to the C-47 we talked about earlier. Pike's Peak, CO was the scene of our only accident. At about 1930 hours, 14 October 1947, a lone C-47 with 7 on board went down on the North side of Pike's Peak while making an approach for Lowry AFB, Denver, CO. It was the 132d's Support Aircraft. Three were killed, leaving four survivors. MSgt John (Bill) Knight, Aerial Engineer, was the only one

capable of going for help. He recalls as follows: "We were to land in Lowry and remain overnight (RON), but due to the storm conditions (solid overcast), the tower lost contact with us. Thinking that we were North of the field, when we were actually South, they (the tower) proceeded to give us 'Instrument Let-down'- which brought us to the Northeast side of Pike's Peak. Suddenly, the Co-Pilot saw trees through a break in the overcast... we tried to gain altitude, the aircraft stalled, and we hit the mountain!"

After regaining consciousness (I was unconscious the whole night) ... next morning, of the four survivors, I found I was the only one who could still move. Among them were the pilot and co-pilot, who were trapped in the cockpit. The other, a passenger, was in the rear cabin. They were all severely injured. It was very cold and had apparently snowed during the night. By opening the parachutes (the only means of cover), I made them as comfortable as I could. Although I'd suffered head lacerations and was pretty badly cut up, I had no apparent broken bones. I opened my parachute and cut panels from it with a knife... made wrappings for my feet and head, then swept the snow off the wings so that we could be seen from the air.

"... we tried to gain altitude, the aircraft stalled, and we hit the mountain!"

Not knowing our location, I surveyed the area below the aircraft for possible civilization. Only seeing a lake in the canyon below, I informed the others that I was going for help ... the lake seemed the most logical place to find help, so that's where I headed. Several hours later, and numerous encounters with terrain difficulties which caused me to double back often, I finally reached the lake. There was a road around it, so I followed it although I was exhausted by this time- and in great pain. Suddenly a truck- like vehicle approached me ... I waved my arms so I could be seen ... then passed out.

Later I discovered it was a truck. Two geological surveyors, who happened to be working in the area, picked me up and took me to a nearby rancher's cabin - that's when I regained consciousness and told them what had happened. After I'd pointed out where the downed aircraft was, recovery teams were called in. One thing has always puzzled me; why it took the rescue teams twice as long to get to the aircraft as it took me to get to the road where I was found? We turned out to have crash landed only about six hundred feet or so from a mountain road which goes to the top of the Peak." "... about six hundred feet or so from a mountain road..."

Apparently this C-47 became quite an historic attraction to tourists as it was left where it crashed for quite a few years. Even a few imposters calling themselves Bill Knight visited the scene due to the amount of publicity this caused. When the real Bill Knight went to see the aircraft after the accident, park rangers at the admissions gate to the Pike's Peak road exclaimed, "Not another one!" Upon showing his Air Force ID and a news clipping about the accident, they declared, "This is your mountain."

Editor's note: 4 Oct 91 - The AF Safety Center looked up the tail number of the C-47 which crashed on Pike's Peak on 14 Oct 47. We sent this tail # to Dr. James Kitchens, AF Archivist at Maxwell AFB, AL. The A/C in question was manufactured by Douglas at Long Beach, CA, and was received by the USAAF on 15 Apr 1943. From 1943 to 1946, it was moved to: Daggett Modification Center, CA; Brookly AAFld, Mobile, AL; Twelfth AF, Oran, Algiers; Eighth AF;

1103rd Base Unit, Morrison AAFld, FL; 4197 Base Unit, Greenville, SC; and declared excess at an unknown date between '44-46. On 30 Jan 1946, she was reactivated at Davis Monthan AAFld, AZ, and then on to San Bernardino AAFld, CA. On 27 Mar 1947, the 124 TFS picked her up. She was later transferred to the 132 TFG. On 14 Oct 47, Bill Knight's story is told above. On 23 Oct 47, she was transferred to the 201st Base Unit (SAC), Peterson AFB, CO and dropped from USAF inventory by salvage. Her tail number was 42-23503.

Congress approved the elimination of the Iowa Air National Guard's F-16s, one of the Air Force's proposed force structure adjustments, in the Fiscal 2013 defense authorization act. In this fiscal year, the Air Force is retiring a total of 21 F-16s from the inventory-all of which will come from the 132nd Fighter Wing at Des Moines, explained Col. Jon Thomas, the Air Force's program integration division chief at the Pentagon. Air Force leaders "spent a whole lot of time talking about it," but ultimately the case was clear and "Congress accepted it," he told reporters on Jan. 10 during a media roundtable. The 132nd FW's fighters most recently deployed to Afghanistan last February. Unlike the Air Force's proposal to cut 102 A-10s that Congress scaled back to just 61, the F-16 cut was simpler, said Thomas. "With the A-10s, you were talking about five different squadrons at different locations," he said. With the F-16s "it was just one unit," he added. 2013

The Army issued a \$7.9 million contract to build an MQ-9 Reaper mission control, intelligence, and targeting facility for the Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Wing in Des Moines. The 33,000 square foot center will support the unit's transition from F-16s to the RPA mission and will house 419 combined personnel, according to budget documents. "The installation is configured to support fighter aircraft and requires significant renovation work to convert the installation to the security and operational support needed for the new RPA and targeting missions. The new center will be constructed entirely within an existing structure, incorporating secure communications and datalinks, secured information facilities, and an uninterruptable power supply, according to a project summary. The wing lost its F-16s in 2013 and began flying an RC-26 Condor ISR aircraft last year as a gap-filler mission until its full-up conversion to RPAs. 2015



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