

A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD JULY 1908 - 2008

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27 July 1911. Eugene Ely, a private in the California National Guard Aeronautical Detachment of its 7th Coast Artillery Company and a pioneering civilian aviator, was commissioned.¹

13 July 1916. The First Aero Company, New York National Guard, was mobilized during the border crisis with Mexico precipitated by Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico. This was the first time that a Guard aviation unit was called into federal service. It trained at Mineola, New York but did not deploy to the Mexican border.²

July 1921. Maryland's 104th Squadron received several of its allotted 13 Curtiss JN-4Ds, becoming the first postwar National Guard aviation unit to obtain planes from the Army Air Service.³

2 July 1926. By act of Congress, the Army Air Service became the Army Air Corps. The Air Corps was required to assist and support National Guard aviation units including training them.⁴

14 July 1943. The 111th Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter), formerly of the Texas National Guard, began flying tactical reconnaissance missions from Sicily in direct support of advancing allied troops on that island.⁵

29 July 1946. The 39th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, formerly the 101st Observation Squadron, Massachusetts National Guard, was inactivated at March Field, California. The 39th had flown combat missions in Europe from March to May 1945. It was the last unit carrying a prewar National Guard lineage to leave active federal service after World War II.⁶

20 July 1950. The Continental Air Command requested the mobilization of 20 ANG fighter squadrons to strengthen the air defenses of the United States. The request was denied by Headquarters, U.S. Air Force because the number of Air Force fighter interceptor wings were already scheduled to be increased by four during Fiscal Year 1951.⁷

18 July 1951. Joseph L. Murray, a transfer pilot from the New Mexico ANG assigned to the Air Force's 67th Tactical Fighter Squadron, was killed when his F-51 was shot down during a bomb run in Korea.⁸

9 July 1952. Congress passed the “Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952,” also known as the “Magna Charta” of the reserve components. Designed to rejuvenate the reserve components, it divided them into three categories: ready, standby, and retired. The ready reserve was authorized a strength of 1.5 million. All ANG units were placed in the highest priority category, the ready reserve - a position that they had held in fact, if not law, since 1946. The legislation also allowed individual Guardsmen and Reservists to volunteer for active duty for routine peacetime operations and contingencies thereby avoiding the political and diplomatic risks of mobilizations.⁹

27 July 1953. Representatives of China, North Korea, and the United States signed an armistice ending Korean War hostilities.¹⁰ During those hostilities, 66 of the ANG’s 92 flying squadrons and some 45,000 Air Guardsmen (approximately 80 percent of its personnel) had been called into federal service. In Korea, Guard pilots flew 39, 530 combat sorties, destroyed 39 enemy aircraft, dropped 44,000 bombs, launched 31,000 rockets, and fired over 16,000,000 rounds of machine gun ammunition. 101 Air Guardsmen were listed as either killed or missing in action.¹¹

1 July 1956. Members of the Hawaii Air Guard’s 169th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron and its 109th Aircraft Control and Warning Flight began manning a radar site around-the-clock, seven days a week to maintain constant surveillance of the air approaches to those Pacific islands.¹²

1 July 1957. Air National Guard technicians at two units – Salt Lake City, Utah’s 130th Aircraft Control and Warning Flight and Denver, Colorado’s 138th Aircraft Control and Warning Flight – began operating and maintaining radar sites around-the-clock, seven days a week at each location. The ANG sites were integrated into the Air Defense Command’s radar network.¹³

1 July 1961. Illinois’ 108th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, redesignated the 108th Air Refueling Squadron on this date, became the first ANG unit to be assigned an air refueling role.¹⁴

1 July 1963. Air Guard troop carrier units (originally air resupply units) in California, Maryland, West Virginia, and Rhode Island were redesignated air commando units. That change finally openly acknowledged their special operations role. They were the: 129th Air Commando Group (ACG), California; 130th ACG, West Virginia; 135th ACG, Maryland; and the 143rd ACG, Rhode Island.¹⁵

1 July 1966. Tennessee Air National Guard flight nurses and medical technicians began providing complete teams to serve on Air Force aircraft

performing aeromedical missions in the Pacific theater including Vietnam. They were based at Tachikawa AFB, Japan and had volunteered to help the Air Force overcome a shortage of qualified aeromedical personnel in that theater of operations. The Tennessee Air Guard personnel were sometimes augmented by flight nurses and medical technicians from the Mississippi ANG; however, the latter usually supported Air Force aeromedical evacuation missions in the US.¹⁶

24-25 July 1967. Over 80 percent of the Michigan Air Guard's 1,200 personnel were ordered on federal active duty because of riots in Detroit. They guarded utility installations, rode with police and firefighters, guarded prisoners, and secured a base at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport.¹⁷ The Michigan Air Guard's 110th Tactical Reconnaissance Group was activated at Battle Creek by President Lyndon B. Johnson to help deal with massive rioting, looting, and arson in Detroit. The unit's Air Police contingent was flown to the city for duty, its RB-57s flew 35 sorties over damaged parts of the city producing over 9,000 photos, and other unit members took over 400 ground photos. By July 30th, all unit personnel but the Air Police had been demobilized. The latter remained on duty in Detroit until released from service on July 2nd.¹⁸

1 July 1968. Effective this date, the Air Guard was allowed to recruit women other than nurses into its ranks for the first time under the authority of Public Law 90-180 enacted by Congress in November 1967.¹⁹

6 July 1968. Pilots and 27 F-100Cs from the mobilized 127th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS), Kansas ANG, arrived at Kunsan Air Base, Korea as part of the U.S. military response to the Pueblo crisis. Along with Guardsmen and F-100Cs from the 166th TFS, Ohio ANG, Guardsmen from other units, active duty Air Force personnel, and Air Force Reservists, they formed the Air Force's 345th Tactical Fighter Wing.²⁰

July 1970. Operation Palace Alert ended. During its approximately two-year run, some 110 Air Guard F-102 pilots performed air defense alert duties with Air Force fighter units in Vietnam, Thailand, Korea, the Philippines, Okinawa, Holland, Germany, and Alaska. The ANG volunteer flyers served on tours that lasted from 90 to 139 days.²¹

26 July 1970. Two EC-121S aircraft from the Pennsylvania ANG's 193rd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron deployed from their home station to Korat, Thailand for Operation Commando Buzz. The aircraft served as flying radar stations and airborne control platforms for U.S. air operations over North Vietnam and the Gulf of Tonkin during the Vietnam War. A total of some 250 Air Guard volunteers from the 193rd rotated to Thailand on 30 to 60-day tours until the operation ended on 24 December 1970.²²

2 July 1972. ANG crews and aircraft began supporting Air Force tanker task forces overseas with aircraft and volunteer aircrews on an as needed basis.²³

18 July 1973. Former Air National Guardsman, John L. McLucas was sworn in as the Secretary of the Air Force. Capt. McLucas had served in the Pennsylvania ANG's 112th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron from May 1949 to September 1951. He remained the Air Force's top civilian official until 23 November 1975.²⁴

15-25 July 1975. Astronaut Deke Slayton, a former Minnesota Air Guardsman, served as the Apollo docking module pilot of the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project mission, a flight that culminated in the first meeting of American astronauts and Soviet cosmonauts in space. Astronaut and former California Air Guardsman Vance DeVoe Brand served as the Apollo command module pilot on that mission.²⁵

July 1975. Pentagon officials announced that, within the next three months, New York's 109th Tactical Airlift Group would convert from the C-130A to the ski-equipped C-130D and provide airlift support to Distant Early Warning (DEW) line radar sites on Greenland's ice cap. The unit would operate the only ski-equipped aircraft in the Air Guard.²⁶

1 July 1976. Ohio's KC-135A equipped 145th Air Refueling Squadron became the first Air National Guard unit to participate in the Strategic Air Command's nuclear alert force.²⁷

July 1977. After a flash flood killed over 70 people in seven western Pennsylvania counties, members of the Air Guard's 271st Combat Communications Squadron and its 112th Tactical Control Squadron provided around-the-clock communications between flood-ravaged Johnstown and the Adjutant General's office. ANG assistance was needed because the flood had destroyed the local phone firm's main switching facility in the flooded region.²⁸

19 July 1979. A C-130 and aircrew from the Tennessee Air Guard's 164th Tactical Airlift Group, deployed to Panama for Operation Volant Oak, rescued Lawrence A. Pezzullo, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua, and his party of 34 from Managua's airport just hours before the country fell to the Marxist Sandinista rebels. It was the last plane to depart before the airport was closed.²⁹

July 1983. South Carolina's 157th Fighter Squadron became the first ANG unit to begin converting to the General Dynamic F-16 Fighting Falcon.³⁰

2 July 1985. The 137th Military Airlift Group, New York ANG, received its first C-5A marking the return of the Air Guard to the strategic airlift mission.

The unit converted from the smallest plane in the Air Force inventory, the Cessna O-2A, to the largest, Lockheed's Galaxy.³¹

28 July 1989. As directed by Governor Cecil Andrus, Idaho Air Guard RF-4Cs from the 190th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron at Boise began flying missions to provide aerial photo coverage of forest fires plaguing the state.³²

13 July 1992. C-130 aircraft and volunteer crews from the 167th Airlift Squadron of the West Virginia ANG began flying food and relief supplies into the besieged Bosnian city of Sarajevo. It was the first Air Guard unit to participate in Operation Provide Promise.³³

1 July 1994. The 184th Fighter Group, Kansas ANG, was redesignated the 184th Bomb Group effective this date. It was the first ANG unit to fly the B-1B bomber.³⁴

July 1995. The *National Guard* magazine reported that the North Dakota Air Guard's 119th Fighter Group had been awarded the Hughes Trophy as the best fighter unit within the total Air Force in the air defense/air superiority mission during the previous year.³⁵

27 July 1999. The 135th Airlift Group of the 175th Wing, Maryland ANG, accepted the Air Guard's first brand new C-130J (Aircraft # 97-1351) at its home station, Martin State Airport.³⁶

10-11 July 2002. Air Guardsmen from Alaska's 210th Rescue Squadron, operating with an HC-130 rescue tanker aircraft and an HH-60 helicopter, rescued a Filipino sailor who was stricken with a serious case of appendicitis 1,000 miles at sea and delivered him to a hospital at Kodiak. The entire mission lasted about 26 hours.³⁷

12 July 2002. The 119th Fighter Squadron of the New Jersey Air Guard's 177th Fighter Wing became the first unit in the Department of Defense to fly its 1,000th Operation Noble Eagle mission. Noble Eagle was the enhanced defense of America after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. The mission was flown by Major Yarko Sos in an F-16C fighter.³⁸

16 July 2004. Retired Maj. Gen. Charles Sweeney, 84, a former commander of the Massachusetts ANG, died. During World War II he piloted the B-29 that dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki.³⁹

July 2007. *Air Force Magazine* reported that Arizona Air Guardsmen of the state's soon-to-be-activated 214th Reconnaissance Group had begun flying Predators over Afghanistan and Iraq.⁴⁰

NOTES:

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- ³ Francillon, *Air Guard*, p. 22.
- ⁴ Francillon, *Air Guard*, p. 21.
- ⁵ Francillon, *United States Air National Guard*, p. 32.
- ⁶ Francillon, *United States Air National Guard*, pp. 130-131.
- ⁷ Gross, *Prelude*, p. 63; Major Robert C. Ritchie, Washington ANG, "History of the 116th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron -- 1951-1952," Student Report No. 84-2170, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, AL, Mar 1984, p. 1.
- ⁸ Rhodes Arnold (?), *The Enchilada Air Force: New Mexico's Own 188th Fighter Squadron, 1947-1957*, (Reserve, New Mexico: Pima Piasano Publishing, 1987), pp 5, 44.
- ⁹ Gross, *Prelude*, pp 87-88; Charles J. Gross, "Armed Forces Reserve Act (1952)," *The Oxford Companion To American Military History*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), p 35.
- ¹⁰ Wayne Thompson and Bernard C. Nalty, *Within Limits The U.S. Air Force and the Korean War*, (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2000), p. 56; Vance O. Mitchell, *Air Force Officers: Personnel Policy Development, 1944-1974*, (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, United States Air Force, 1996), p 188; ANG Unit Data Cards, ANG Historical Archives.
- ¹¹ Gross, *Prelude*, pp 59, 70.
- ¹² Article (U), Maj. Gen. Winston P. Wilson, Chief, Air Force Division, NGB, "Air National Guard Radar Crews Need Skill, Not Luck, When a Plane Goes Down at Sea," *The National Guardsman*, June 1958, p. 4.
- ¹³ Article (U), "Washington Report," *The National Guardsman*, July 1957, p. 13.
- ¹⁴ Francillon, *Air Guard*, p. 89; . Francillon, *United States Air National Guard*, pp. 61, 119.

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- ¹⁷ Major Mike Potochick and Captain Lou Nigro, Editors, *50th Anniversary History, Air National Guard, State of Michigan, 1976*, (Michigan ANG, 1976), p 22.
- ¹⁸ 110th FW History Office, *Future Minus 50: History of the Battle Creek Air National Guard, 1947-1997*, (Battle Creek, MI: 110th FW, June 1997), p 54.
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- ²⁰ Francillon, *United States Air National Guard*, p. 65; Maj. LeRoy H. Meyer (Ret.), Editor, *The Story of the 184th/127th Kansas Air National Guard, McConnell AFB, Wichita, Kansas, 1941-1986*,(McConnell AFB, KS: 184th TFG, Kansas ANG, n.d.), pp. 130-131.
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- ²² Francillon, *United States Air National Guard*, p. 162 Gross, *Air National Guard*, p. 99; Cook, *Through Airmen’s Eyes*, p. 47.
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- ²⁵ Astronaut Biography (U), Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, NASA, Subj.: “Deke Slayton (MR.),” <http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/slayton.html>; Biographical Data (U), Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, NASA, Subj.: “Vance DeVoe Brand,” June 2001, http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/brand_html.
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