DATE: 30 DECEMBER 2013

A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD AND ITS ANTECEDENTS, JANUARY 1908 - 2013

Compiled By: ANG History Office NGB/HO

17 January 1921. Minnesota's 109th Squadron (redesignated the 109th Observation Squadron on 25 January 1923) became the first post World War I National Guard air unit to receive federal recognition.¹

January 1921. Governor Jacob Aall Ottesen Preus of Minnesota ordered National Guardsmen to active duty from the 109th Squadron, the aviation unit of the 34th Division, to conduct an aerial search for Cook County Commissioner James Maher who had gone missing in an open boat on Lake Superior. Since the recently federally recognized unit lacked its own aircraft, the state rented a Curtiss Oriole and two members of the unit, Major Ray Miller and Lieutenant Joe Westover, flew it to Port Arthur, Canada where they joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the fruitless search for Maher in temperatures that reached 40 degrees below zero. This was the earliest known use of National Guard aviators to support civil authorities. The 109th had been extended federal recognition on 17 January 1921.

21 January 1922. The 125th Squadron, Alabama National Guard, received federal recognition as a Corps Aviation unit. It was re-designated the 135th Observation Squadron on 25 January 1923 and then it was redesignated the 114th Observation Squadron as an aviation unit the 39th Division on 1 May 1923. On 16 January 1924, it was it was redesignated the 106th Observation Squadron as an aviation unit in the 31st Division. Maj. James A. Meissner, a World War I ace who had flown with Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, led the effort to form the unit and served as its first commander.³

January 1923. The National Guard sent 10 officers to Brooks Field, Texas to begin Army flight training and 8 of them subsequently graduated to become junior airplane pilots.⁴

30 January 1930. The 119th Observation Squadron, New Jersey National Guard, received federal recognition as the aviation unit in the 44th Division. It was the last of the original 19 air units allotted to the National Guard after World War I to be organized.⁵

January 1930. For three weeks during the peak of ice floods on the lower Wabash River, daily patrols were flown by five aircraft and aircrews from the Indiana National Guard's 113th Observation Squadron. The Guardsmen dropped food and clothing to cut-off refugees, ferried doctors, and provided all other possible assistance to flood victims. ⁶

January 1936. A detachment of three aircraft, three officers, and several enlisted men from the 110th Observation Squadron, Missouri National Guard, were stationed temporarily at Sikeston, Missouri to assist in evacuating people from the flooded area of the Mississippi River basin extending from Bird Point to New Madrid.⁷

24 January 1937. Martial law was declared in Evansville, Indiana because of a huge Ohio River flood which inundated the southern portion of the state. The entire 113th Observation Squadron of the Indiana National Guard was called into service during the emergency which lasted into the following month. Aircrews from the unit relayed information to Guardsmen on the ground and provided vital radio relay communications for the area since many telephone circuits had failed. The flood damaged property from Pittsburgh to Cairo, Illinois, left 1 million people homeless and 385 dead, and caused property losses valued at \$500 million.8

30 January 1937. Personnel and aircraft from the Tennessee National Guard's 105th Observation Squadron were ordered to Memphis from their home station at Nashville for flood relief duty. Equipped with two-way radios, the 105th flew river patrol missions searching for high-water areas and flood victims plus stranded livestock to aid rescue efforts. They returned to their home station on 10 February 1937.⁹

January 1937. Operating in dangerous winter weather conditions, personnel of the 108th Observation Squadron, Illinois National Guard, played a critical role in providing flood disaster relief to large area of the southern part of the state. Pilots flew their single-engine aircraft on a variety of missions: providing surveillance of levees, taking photos of affected areas, dropping food and medicine to stranded people and fodder to livestock.¹⁰

13 January 1942. The 108th Observation Squadron, Illinois National Guard, arrived at Howard Field in Panama becoming the first Guard aviation unit to serve overseas during World War II. It flew a collection of A-18s, B-18s, L-4s, O-47s, O-49s, P-36s, and P-39s in defense of the Canal Zone.¹¹

January 1942. By the early part of that month, seventeen National Guard aviation squadrons were flying antisubmarine patrols over the Atlantic Ocean off the U.S. east coast, three others were flying such missions over the Gulf of

Mexico and five were patrolling off the west coast. Of the remaining four units, three were training with ground forces within the continental U.S. The 108th had been sent to Panama that month (see 13 January above).¹²

- **12-13 January 1942**. Ten 0-47 aircraft and crews from several Guard aviation squadrons sailed from San Francisco, California for Singapore as part of $Combat\ Team\ X$, a unit formed with 10 aircraft and crews from former Guard units. After Singapore fell to the Japanese, they were diverted to Australia where they briefly flew antisubmarine patrols before being transferred to other Army Air Forces units with more modern aircraft. 13
- **21 January 1944**. The 110th Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter), formerly the 110th Observation Squadron, Missouri National Guard, began flying combat missions from New Guinea. ¹⁴
- **30 January 1944**. Equipped with North American B-25s, the 106th Reconnaissance Squadron, formerly the Alabama National Guard's 106th Observation Squadron, flew its first combat sorties against the Japanese from its base on Sterling Island in the South Pacific.¹⁵
- **30 January 1946**. The Army Chief of Staff, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, ordered the piecemeal activation of National Guard aviation units under an Army Air Forces plan. ¹⁶
- **20 January 1949**. During President Harry Truman's inauguration parade, some 300 Air National Guard F-47s and F-51s from 25 states roared over the Capitol in a massive formation.¹⁷
- January 1949. Following devastating blizzards, Air Guard C-47s began dropping hay to stranded and starving livestock throughout the Rocky Mountain region. Colorado ANG C-47s flew 17 such missions in January and February 1949 dropping tons of hay that saved thousands of cattle and wildlife. Transport aircraft from ANG fighter squadrons in Utah, Wyoming, and North Dakota were similarly employed. Colorado Air Guard F-51s and A-26s also flew reconnaissance missions during that emergency. The Arizona Air Guard dropped food packages to villages and hospitals on the Navajo Indian Reservation during that month. 18
- **31 January 1950**. The 138th Fighter Squadron received the New York Air Guard's first jet fighter when an F-84 arrived at its Hancock Field, Syracuse base. F-84s were slated to replace the unit's piston-driven F-47s.¹⁹
- **8 January 1951**. To further strengthen the nation's continental air defenses during the Korean War the Air Force mobilized a number of ANG units on

- this date including the: 154th Air Control & Warning Group (AC&WG), Georgia; 116th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron (AC&WS), Georgia; 117th AC&WS, Georgia; 118th AC&WS, North Carolina, and the129th AC&WS, Georgia²⁰
- **22 January 1951**. Responding to the Continental Air Command's requests in December 1950 to strengthen the air defenses of the U.S. during the Korean War by mobilizing 38 ANG fighter squadrons, the Air Force announced that 15 ANG fighter squadrons would be called into federal service on 1 February 1951 with 6 more to be mobilized on 1 March 1951.²¹
- **January 1951**. The authorized strength of all ANG units except wing and group headquarters was raised to its wartime level, approximately 80,000 personnel, from its previously authorized 67,000 personnel.²²
- **January 1951**. Seven pilots and ten enlisted members of the Michigan Air Guard's 172nd Fighter Squadron volunteered as individuals for overseas active duty in the Air Force prior to the unit's Korean War era mobilization on 1 February 1951.²³
- **January June 1951**. Under the command of Major Arthur Bridge, six F-80Cs and eight pilots from the 196th Fighter Squadron, California ANG, deployed to Eniwetok Atoll in the Pacific to provide air defense support of Operation Greenhouse, atomic bomb tests.²⁴
- **January 1952**. The Alabama ANG's 160th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron deployed to Europe and was temporarily stationed at Furstenfeldbruck AB and Neubiberg AB in Germany pending completion of facilities at Toul-Roiseres AB, France.²⁵
- **1 January 1953**. ANG flying squadrons demobilized on this date were the: 117th Bomb Squadron (BS) (Light), Pennsylvania; 122nd BS (Light), Louisiana; 168th BS (Light), Illinois; 180th BS (Light), Missouri; and the 190th Fighter Squadron, Idaho.²⁶
- **4 January 1954**. Maj. Gen. Earl T. Ricks, an Arkansas Air Guardsman assigned as the Chief of the Air Force Division and the Deputy Chief of the National Guard Bureau, died in the service of his country.²⁷
- **26 January 1954**. Brig. Gen. Winston P. Wilson, an Arkansas Air Guardsman, was appointed Assistant Chief, National Guard Bureau, Air, following the death of Maj. Gen. Earl T. Ricks. Wilson had been serving as the acting head of the Air Guard because of Ricks' illness.²⁸

- January 1954. Pennsylvania's 146th Fighter Bomber Squadron became the first Air Guard unit to begin converting to the Republic F-84F Thunderstreak. The aircraft eventually equipped 24 ANG squadrons and performed the interceptor, nuclear weapons delivery, and tactical fighter roles until the last ones left Guard service in the first quarter of 1972.²⁹
- 15 January 1955. 1st Lt. Thomas E. Williams, a Tuskegee Airman and a member of the 141st Fighter Bomber Squadron, New Jersey Air National Guard, was killed during a routine training mission when his F-86A crashed after entering an unrecoverable spin. Having joined the 141st on 7 May 1954, Williams was the first known African American pilot in the ANG.³⁰
- **1 January 1960**. The 115th Fighter Interceptor Group, Wisconsin ANG, began standing what turned out to be 14 years of air defense alert at its home station. Initially the unit was responsible for alert 14-hours per day (7:00 AM to 5:00 PM). By 1962, it changed to around-the-clock alert. The unit began operating F-89J Scorpion interceptors in this role, radar-equipped jet fighters armed with MB-1/AIR-2A Genie nuclear missiles.³¹
- **1 January 1960**. The NGB put its promotion policy for the new E-8 and E-9 ANG super-grade NCOs into effect on this date but was reportedly was in no rush to fill all available slots.³²
- **January 1960**. The 134th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Vermont ANG, began participating in the air defense runway alert program from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. Two aircrews were always on duty during those periods. The unit operated the F-89D Scorpion.³³
- **January 1960**. ANG fighter units in California, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, and Oklahoma began converting from F-86s to C-97s, the reserve component's first four-engine transports. During 1960, six ANG squadrons acquired 48 C-97s.³⁴
- January 1965. Assisted by several ANG airlift units, the West Virginia Air Guard's 130th Air Commando Group deployed the first of three increments of personnel and equipment to Howard AFB, Panama Canal Zone, to conduct its annual training. The deployments continued into March, designated "Project Highland Fling"; this marked the first known instance of an ANG unit sending all of its personnel outside the U.S. for annual training.³⁵
- **26 January 1965**. The 167th Aeromedical Transport Squadron (Heavy), West Virginia ANG, made its first Pacific flight. The 167th hauled routine cargo for the Air Force from Travis AFB, California, to Japan on an 8-day training mission. Additional trips took their place on the schedule to support the war

in Southeast Asia, including flights to Vietnam.³⁶

- **January 1966**. Air Guard volunteers began flying regularly scheduled airlift missions overseas, the majority of them to Southeast Asia. These Air Guardsmen averaged 75 flights a month in C-121s and C-97s.³⁷
- **January 1966**. The New Hampshire Air Guard's 157th Air Transport Group moved from Grenier AFB to Pease AFB following decisions made by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara to close selected bases.³⁸
- **25 January 1968**. In response to the North Korean seizure of the U.S.S. *Pueblo*, President Lyndon B. Johnson mobilized 14,000 reserve-component personnel including 9,343 Air Guardsmen. The Air Guard units that were called up included three tactical fighter squadrons and three tactical reconnaissance squadrons.³⁹
- 25 January 1968. Maj. Gen. Errol H. Zistel, Ohio ANG (Ret.), died. He had begun his military career as fighter pilot in Britain's Royal Flying Corps and then transferred to General Pershing's American Air Service during World War I. In 1927, he was among the organizers of the Ohio National Guard's first aviation unit, the 112th Observation Squadron. Zistel had retired in 1957 while serving as Chief of Staff of the Ohio Air National Guard.⁴⁰
- **12 January 1994.** In an arrival ceremony at its home station, McEntire Air National Guard Base, the South Carolina, the Air Guard's 169th Fighter Group received its first two brand new F-16C/Block 52 Fighting Falcons.⁴¹
- **28 January 1994.** Maj. Gen. Donald W. Shepperd became Director of the Air National Guard. General Shepperd, a Massachusetts Air Guardsman and a Vietnam War combat veteran, was the only United States Air Force Academy graduate ever to be assigned to that post.⁴²
- **28 January 1994**. At the direction of Gen. Merrill McPeak, Air Force Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Philip G. Killey, the former ANG Director, assumed command of the Continental U.S. NORAD Region (CONR) and First Air Force at Tyndall AFB, Florida.⁴³
- **21 January 1996**. The 137th Space Warning Squadron, Colorado ANG officially went into business in an activation ceremony at Greeley, Colorado. The 137th was the first space unit in the history of the Air Guard.⁴⁴
- **January 1996.** The ANG sent 8 C-130 aircraft, 16 aircrews, and 201volunteer personnel to Saudi Arabia and Oman for Operation Southern Watch. The Ohio Air Guard's 179th Airlift Wing led this multi-unit deployment, which ended in

- 1 January 1998. Reflecting its broader and expanding mission, the I.G. Brown Air National Guard Professional Military Education Center near Knoxville, Tennessee, took on a new designation as the I.G. Brown Air National Guard Training and Education Center. The organization took its name from the late Maj. Gen. I.G. Brown, an Arkansas Air Guardsman and former ANG Director, who had been instrumental in establishing the school.⁴⁶
- **28 January 1998**. Maj. Gen. Paul A. Weaver, Jr., a New York Air Guardsman, became the Director of the Air National Guard.⁴⁷
- 13 January 1999. A KC-135E from the 141st Air Refueling Wing, Washington state ANG, crashed and burned near Geilenkirchen Air Base, Germany killing all four crew members. It was deployed to that base as part of a well-established Air Guard rotation that refueled NATO AWACS training sorties. It was the first time that the 141st had lost an aircraft since it began the air refueling mission in 1976.48
- **January 1999**. The Texas Air Guard's 149th Fighter Wing converted from a general purpose fighter mission to training ANG F-16 aviators to help ease the huge backlog of student flyers waiting to become full-fledged Viper pilots.⁴⁹
- 13 January 2000. Elements of the 169th Fighter Wing, South Carolina ANG, deployed from McEntire Air National Guard Base by commercial air to Incirlik AB, Turkey to participate in Operation Northern Watch (ONW). The 169th was the first ANG unit to deploy operationally in the Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) role, the first ANG unit to employ the High Speed-Anti Radiation Missile (HARM) in a SEAD mission, and the first to deploy a female ANG F-16 pilot on an operational combat mission to ONW.⁵⁰
- **4 January 2001**. The ANG Director, Maj. Gen. Paul A. Weaver, Jr., broke ground for the new Chaplain Service Academy at the I.G. Brown Air National Guard Training and Education Center at McGhee-Tyson ANGB, Tennessee.⁵¹
- **20 January 2001**. Texas Governor and former Texas Air National Guardsman George W. Bush, was inaugurated as President of the United States. President Bush was the first former Air Guardsmen to attain the Oval Office.
- **1 January 2005**. The 170th Operational Support Squadron, Nebraska ANG, was activated at Offutt AFB, Nebraska. The squadron was an associate unit of the Air Force's 55th Wing, headquartered at Offutt AFB, Nebraska⁵²
- 24 January 2006. The Air Guard announced that over 400 members of

- Indiana's 122nd Fighter Wing had arrived at Balad Air Base, Iraq. They had deployed 12 F-16s and some 35 pilots to that installation.⁵³
- 1 January 2007. As of this date, 1,110 Air National Guard personnel were deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and 363 personnel deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). In addition, the ANG had 1,134 personnel deployed to the southwest border states of the United States to participate in Operation Jump Start (OJS). The Air Guard had a total of 106,000 personnel assigned at the time.⁵⁴
- **3-4 January 2007**. Airmen from the Colorado Air National Guard began dropped hay from a C-130 to starving cattle near Lamar, Colorado. A blizzard had isolated the animals on ranches in that area. Augmenting the ongoing work of Colorado Army National Guard helicopters, the C-130 hay drops were conducted from the aircraft's rear cargo door, typically at 500 feet above ground, terrain permitting.⁵⁵
- 10 January 2007. The first of eight C-21 executive transports arrived at Hector Airport, North Dakota. Flying operational support in these aircraft was a bridge mission for the North Dakota Air Guard's 119th Fighter Wing between the time it relinquished its F-16s due to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process and 2010 when the unit was expected to obtain the proposed new Joint Cargo Aircraft. The 119th also would obtain Predator unmanned aerial vehicles after the loss of its fighter aircraft.⁵⁶
- 1 January 2009. Air National Guard civil engineer personnel (excluding firefighters) begin 179-day deployments to the CENTCOM theater. Active-duty Air Force engineers started deployment in January 2008, and Air Force Reserve engineers began in September 2008.⁵⁷
- **1 January 2009**. On this date, 336 ANG security forces personnel mobilized and deployed for 179 days to three CENTCOM locations. The three locations were Baghdad International Airport, Iraq; Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan; and Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq.⁵⁸
- **15 January 2009**. The Montana Air National Guard's (ANG's) 120th Fighter Wing (FW) at Great Falls Airport flew its first F-15 sortie. The unit began transitioning from F-16s to F-15s during 2008 as a result of the 2005 BRAC round, according to a story broadcast by Great Fall's KRTV news.⁵⁹
- **15 January 2009**. According to the Providence *Journal*, Rhode Island's Governor, Donald L. Carcieri, and state Air National Guard (ANG) officials started a lobbying campaign to convince the Air Force to assign 400 active duty airmen to the 143rd Airlift Wing and place another 4 C-130J aircraft in the unit. The wing lost 4 of its 12 C-130s due to BRAC 2005.⁶⁰

- **16 January 2009**. An HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter from the New York ANG's 106th Rescue Wing (RQW) crashed near Kabul, Afghanistan while on a medical evacuation mission. There were no injuries to the occupants.⁶¹
- **13 January 2010**. The first C-130 and aircrew from the Ohio Air Guard's 179th Airlift Wing landed at Port-au-Prince on a relief mission after an earthquake that devastated Haiti on January 12th.⁶²
- **30 January 2011.** Four skiers were hoisted into an Air National Guard helicopter from the 210th Rescue Squadron, Alaska, and evacuated to safer ground about four hours after they were caught in an avalanche in the Chugach Mountains south of Anchorage.⁶³
- **January 2011**. Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAF) F-16 training became fully operational with the Arizona ANG's 162nd Fighter Wing at Tucson after three years of conducting that training with the Ohio ANG. Previous to the latter, RNLAF pilots had trained for 18 years at Tucson.⁶⁴
- **January 2011**. The ANG added the Critical Care Air Transport Team (CCATT) mission to its operational portfolio and was expecting to start flying those missions, which involved airlifting severely injured service members, from Ramstein Air Base, Germany.⁶⁵
- **4 January 2012**. The Air National Guard had 104,832 personnel assigned on this date. Its programmed personnel end strength for Fiscal Year 2012 was 106,700.⁶⁶
- **4 January 2012**. The Air National Guard reported that 8,835 (2,271 mobilized and 6,564 volunteers) of its members were on federal active duty as of this date.⁶⁷
- **31 January 2013**. Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, USAF, Director of the Air National Guard, retired, effective this date.⁶⁸

NOTES

¹ Gross, American Military Tradition, p. 37.

² The Air National Guard in Minnesota, 1921 To 1971: A Fifty Year History Of Pioneering, Progress And Service To State And Nation, (Department of Military Affairs, State of Minnesota, 1970), p 14; Francillon, United States Air National Guard, p. 134; hereinafter "Francillon, Air Guard."

³ Francillon, Air Guard, p. 19; Gross, American Military Tradition, pp. 37-38.

⁴ Maurer, Aviation in the U.S. Army, p. 95.

⁵ Francillon, Air Guard, p. 19; Francillon, Air Guard, p. 26.

⁶ Maj. Robert E. Hall, et al., A History: 181st Tactical Fighter Group, Indiana Air National Guard, 1921-1986, (Terre Haute, Indiana: 181st TFG, Indiana ANG, undated), pp. 13-14.

⁷ M. Sgt. Les Paron, HQ Missouri ANG, Editor, *The 'Show Me' Spirit. A 50 Year History of the Missouri Air National Guard, 1923-1973*, (Headquarters, Missouri ANG, 1973), p 30.

⁸ Hall, A History: 181st Tactical Fighter Group, pp 14, 16.

⁹ Childers, Blackwood Field to Berry Field, p.48.

 $^{^{10}}$ Lt Col George W. Porter, Historian, Illinois ANG, et al., *Illinois Air National Guard Historical Review 1964*, (Chicago O'Hare IAP, Illinois: HQS Illinois ANG, undated), no page numbers, (See History of the $108^{\rm th}$ Air Refueling Squadron).

 $^{^{11}}$ Francillon, $Air\ Guard,$ p.118; Unit Data Card (U), $108^{\rm th}$ Air Refueling Squadron, Illinois ANG, ANG Archives.

¹² Francillon, Air Guard, pp. 31, 89.

¹³ Francillon, Air Guard, pp. 31-32.

 $^{^{14}}$ Francillon, $Air\ Guard,$ pp. 34-35.

 $^{^{15}}$ Francillon, $Air\ Guard,$ p. 35.

¹⁶ Gross, *Prelude*, p. 19.

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¹⁸ Rpt (U), NGB, "Annual Report of the Chief National Guard Bureau Fiscal Year Ending 30 June 1949," Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1950, p. 52; Colorado ANG, Colorado Pride: A Commemorative History, 1923-1988, (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1989), p. 76; Article (U), "Missions Of Mercy," The National Guardsman, March 1949, pp. 6-10, 25.

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²⁰ Gross, *Prelude*, p. 64; Paper, NGB, Subject: "Data Concerning Air National Guard Units Called Into Active Military Service," undated, in "Korean War - ANG" File, NGB-PAI-H Archives, Air National Guard Unit Data Cards, ANG Historical Archives, NGB-PAH.

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²² Memo For Record, Evans, "The ANG," 8 February 1951.

²³ 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 27.

- ²⁴ 163rd Fighter Interceptor Group, p 10.
- ²⁵ Francillon, Air Guard, p 99.
- ²⁶ ANG Unit Data Cards, ANG Historical Archives.
- ²⁷ Article (U), "In Memoriam: Major General Earl T. Ricks."
- ²⁸ Gross, American Military Tradition, p. 197.
- ²⁹ Francillon, Air Guard, p. 203.
- ³⁰ Article (U), Gary Gault, NGB-PAH, "Proud Pioneer," *The On Guard*, February 2000, p. 15; Article (U), Maj. Roger Pharo and TSgt. John Carothers, 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey ANG, "On the Leading Edge of History: The Story of 1st Lt. Thomas Williams," *Contrail*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, February 1999, pp. 1, 6-8.
- ³¹ James L. Dawson, Editor-in-Chief, *Wisconsin's Finest: A Commemorative History of the Wisconsin Air National Guard*, 1940-1990, (Wisconsin Air National Guard Historical Committee, Inc., 1991), pp. 59, 62.
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- ³⁴ Gross, *Prelude*, p. 64; Francillon, *Air Guard*, p 59; Article (U), Col. W.D. McGlasson (Ret.), "Anywhere, Anytime in a C-97," *National Guard*, September 1985, pp. 28, 29.
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