



**Air Training Command
and
The Korean War**

**AIR TRAINING COMMAND
AND
THE KOREAN WAR**

by

Dr Robert B. Sligh

**Office of History and Research
Headquarters Air Education and Training Command
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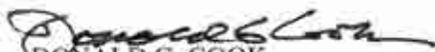
FOREWORD

This historical study examines Air Training Command's role in the Korean War. The outbreak of the war on 25 June 1950 promised a substantial increase in training requirements. One of the first major changes for the command was the transfer of combat crew training to ATC. With operational commands immersed in the war, HQ USAF decided to let ATC train pilots for combat. Soon after the war started, the Air Staff raised pilot production from 3,000 to 4,000 per year, and by the end of the year, the rate had climbed to 7,200. At the same time the need for enlisted technicians also rose.

With the increased responsibilities, the command's total base structure jumped from 22 to 37, and personnel strength and student load more than doubled. To handle this enormous workload, officials decided to establish three subcommands to supervise flying training, technical training, and indoctrination training. ATC reached its Korean War peak of over 176,00 personnel in June 1952.

During the last half of 1952, the volume of training conducted steadily decreased as the supply of pilots and technicians met the Air Force demand. In May 1953, the Air Staff dropped plans to produce 10,000 pilots annually and postponed plans to build up to 143 wings.

The Korean War ended on 27 July 1953. During the three-year conflict, ATC produced nearly 12,000 combat-ready pilots and graduated over 1,000,000 personnel from its various courses. As it did during World War II and as it would in subsequent contingencies, Air Training Command did whatever it took during the Korean War to meet the Air Force's surging requirements for combat trained airmen, the heart of combat capability.


DONALD G. COOK
General, USAF
Commander

PREFACE

Much to the surprise of the Truman administration, the North Korean People's Army crossed the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950, and opened a three-year war for control of the Korean peninsula. The Korean War brought a major shift in United States military policy, for it provided an atmosphere of crisis that allowed the nation to mobilize for one war in Asia and rearm to deter another war in Europe. By the time the conflict ended in an uneasy armistice in July 1953, the United States had tripled the size of its armed forces and quadrupled its defense budget.

The newly independent United States Air Force reflected this enormous military growth. In June 1950, just prior to the outbreak of the war, the Air Force consisted of 48 groups and 411,000 personnel. By the end of the war, the Air Force had grown to 93 wings (USAF changed from groups to wings to describe two or more squadrons and supporting elements) and 974,000 personnel. To provide the combat ready airmen to support this air armada, Air Training Command* nearly doubled its number of bases and more than doubled its personnel strength. In addition to its mission of basic military training, technical training and flying training, ATC assumed responsibility for combat crew training, allowing the operational commands to concentrate on fighting the war.

Dr. Robert Sligh of the AETC History Office was largely responsible for this study. He departed for a new assignment with the first draft nearly completed. The undersigned then edited the draft, added some more relevant information, and included numerous new photographs to complement the text. I would like to thank SSgt Oscar Vega, the information specialist in our office, for doing much of the work laying out the narrative, standardizing the format, and inserting the new photographs.



THOMAS A. MANNING
Command Historian

* Air Training Command (ATC) was established on 1 July 1946; it was redesignated Air Education and Training Command (AETC) on 1 July 1993. For the purpose of this study, ATC is used throughout the narrative.

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Chapter I

Boom and Bust

1940-1949

A SERIOUS BREACH OF THE PEACE

In the early morning hours of 25 June 1950,^{*} North Korea unleashed an unprovoked attack on its neighbor, South Korea. Moving in three columns, the North Korean invasion included eight infantry divisions and one armored brigade—roughly 90,000 men. Facing them was the numerically superior 98,000 men of the Republic of Korea Army. However, the surprised South Koreans were only lightly armed, had no tanks, and only 89 howitzers. Against this weaker force, the North Koreans made rapid inroads.¹

The first shooting war of the Cold War era had begun. North Korea's sudden, swift attack caught Washington by surprise. Even worse, the advance seemed unstoppable. President Harry S Truman pressed for United Nations action, gaining a resolution calling for North Korea to cease its attack and return to its borders. When North Korean forces continued to advance, the UN, for the first time in its history, decided to go to war to preserve the international peace.[†]

US forces in the region had also been surprised. The US has some 500 military advi-



“The Government of the United States is pleased with the speed and determination with which the United Nations Security Council acted to order a withdrawal of the invading forces to positions north of the thirty-eighth parallel. In accordance with the resolution of the Security Council, the United States will vigorously support the effort of the Council to terminate this serious breach of the peace.” Harry S Truman, 26 June 1950. (Photo: Truman Presidential Library)

sors in the country but no combat units. The nearest force was the green occupation troops from Japan. In Japan a hastily assembled force called Task Force SMITH[‡] were sent into the fight. Heavily outnumbered, SMITH was only expected to fight a delaying action until more substantive forces arrived. The task force fought its first engagement on 5 July. Despite a heroic defense, Task Force SMITH was overwhelmed by North

^{*} 24 June 1950 Washington, DC, time.

[†] This was only possible because the Soviet Union was boycotting the General Assembly at the time—a mistake it never repeated.

[‡] Named after Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith, commanding officer, 1st Battalion, 21st Regiment, 24th Infantry Division.

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Korean armor. But Task Force SMITH, and other under-strength and under-trained units rushed to Korea, had delayed the North Koreans. On 26 July the 29th Regimental Combat Team arrived from Okinawa to bolster the defense, but the retreat continued. By the beginning of August Lt Gen Walton H. Walker, commander of all ground forces in Korea, held only a small portion of the country, a thin 140 mile line of defense protecting the port of Pusan. There, Walker's mixed force of US and South Korean troops made their stand, holding off North Korean attacks.



A Russian-made T-34 tank of the North Korean army bearing the message “Knocked Out 20 July 50 Under The Supervision of Maj Gen W.F. Dean.”

(Photo: Harry S Truman Library)

Fighting on internal lines of defense against an enemy that had outrun its supply lines, the UN force was able to build up its numbers and matériel. At the same time, the US and UN commander-in-chief, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, was preparing his own surprise for the North Koreans—an amphibious landing at the port of Inchon.²

FAR EAST AIR FORCES

The Air Force's role at the outbreak of hostilities was initially a defensive one. As the North Koreans approached the South Korea capital, Seoul, Fifth Air Force, assigned to Far East Air Forces (FEAF), flew evacuation missions. To do this FEAF had to take a step back in time. It traded its more advanced C-54 transports for the older C-47s because the older “Gooney Birds” could land on shorter runways than the larger C-54s. Escorted by F-82s, F-80s, and B-26s, the 374th Troop Carrier Wing was able to evacuate 748 people to Japan. On 27 June, the escorts shot down seven North Korean fighters, the largest single-day tally of the war.³

Even before Task Force SMITH arrived in Korea and took up its first blocking position, FEAF had already moved from the defensive to the offensive, striking troop concentrations north of the Han River and even attacking targets in North Korea. Although FEAF forces inflicted heavy casualties on the North Koreans it, too, could not stop the rolling Red tide. One by one FEAF was forced to give up airfields to the advancing North Korean army. It finally reestablished itself at K-3 at Pohang, a base 11 miles from Pusan. In the meantime, USAF was sending more forces to the theater, including B-29 heavy bombers.⁴

Although the initial US response to the North Korean attack had been with green, under-trained and under-equipped ground units, the Air Force had been able to respond with offensive force even in the face of a virtual rout. In large part this was because of a build up of trained forces over the previous few years. However, it had not been an easy road. The Air Force as a whole, and Air Training Command (ATC) in particular, had gone through several lean years before the Korean War started. Indeed, it was at the height of the Second World War that the great decline began. That said, since 1948 there had been an increase in the size of the Air Force as a whole, and ATC as well. But it had not been enough to meet the twin crises in 1950 of supporting the war and expanding the force to meet Soviet aggression in Europe.

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FROM BUST TO BOOM TO BUST, 1940 TO 1946

The US military in 1940 was in much the same condition it was a decade later—equipped with out-dated matériel, lacking adequate training, and in a period of expansion.

The long dreaded war in Europe had started in September 1939, but after Poland was divided between Hitler's Germany and the Soviet Union, little action had taken place. The Phony War, as it was called, lasted until the spring of 1940 when Hitler again unleashed the power of the *Wehrmacht* and the *Luftwaffe*, in lightning attacks against the Low Countries, Denmark, Norway, France, and Britain. Within six weeks of the initial assault, all but Britain had fallen to the Nazis.

Most Americans wanted to stay out of Europe's latest war and it was against this background that President Franklin D. Roosevelt and new Chief of Staff of the Army General George C. Marshall worked. They considered it in America's national interest to support the Allies wherever possible. However, 1940 was an election year and Roosevelt was running for an unprecedented third term—as politically charged an issue as rearmament. As a result, Marshall took the point on defense issues, couching the argument in terms of preparedness rather than aid to Britain. As deputy Chief of Staff, and later as Chief of Staff, Marshall had proven so forthright and persuasive that Congress generally gave him a sympathetic hear where Roosevelt or others in his administration would have been received with skepticism or hostility. While isolationists predominated in American politics, even they were increasingly in favor of strengthening the US military, to a point, as a means to protect the Western Hemisphere. While Marshall pressed for increased spending for the Army,

a peacetime draft, and mobilization of the National Guard, he also called on Congress to increase the size of the Air Corps. While some isolationists viewed an increased air force as an offensive weapon, and thus likely to get the US involved in the war, most saw the limited range bombers (even B-17s) as defensive in nature.



An O-47B from the California Air National Guard's 115th Observation Squadron, ca. 1937-1940. (Air National Guard Photo and Caption)

In September 1940, Congress approved the mobilization of the National Guard of the United States and the first peacetime draft in American history. With the stroke of a pen in September 1940, Roosevelt doubled the size of the Army* by federalizing the National Guard. Mobilized Guard divisions provided fighting units and cadres of trained officers and NCOs just as the flood of draftees entered service.⁵ At the same time, Guard observation units were stripped from their parent divisions and given to the Army Air Corps. In all, the Guard added 29 observation squadrons and nearly 5,000 trained personnel. As Charles J. Gross wrote in his book on the Air National Guard, “Eventually, most of their personnel were scattered across the rapidly expanding Army Air Corps as individuals rather than members of or-

* The US Army at the time numbered 180,000 scattered across over 100 installations—generally old posts in the West from the Indian wars and the Philippine Islands.

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ganized National Guard units. Their skills and enthusiasm were a valuable addition to the Air Corps whose total active duty strength had risen only to 51,185 by the end of 1940.”⁶

Mobilizing the Guard and the draft were not the only moves Roosevelt made.

In January Roosevelt had submitted a budget that called for \$1.8 billion in defense spending. In May 1940, Roosevelt requested \$1.3 billion in additional spending from Congress, with money earmarked to build 50,000 aircraft, an unheard of number. A few months later, with France occupied and bombs falling on England, Roosevelt asked Congress to appropriate \$4.8 billion for a 1.2 million-man army and for 15,000 additional aircraft. Roosevelt’s requests came at a time when the Air Corps possessed only 6,028* aircraft and a little over 21,000 men.⁷ While many members of Congress and the press doubted that many planes could be produced, the issue facing the Army Air Corps was how to train enough pilots, navigators, gunners, technicians, mechanics, and other support personnel for what seemed like a vast number of planes.

Pre-war training was divided between three locations. Randolph Field conducted all pilot training, turning out 246 graduates in 1939. Chanute Field, Illinois, trained technicians such as mechanics and radio operators. At Maxwell Field, Alabama, the Air Corps had its postgraduate school, the Air Corps Tactical School. Craven and Cate, in their

multi-volume history of the Army Air Forces in World War II, characterized the training program as “excellent if judged by the performance of the men it turned out, but they were carefully selected and highly motivated professionals whose schooling was accompanied by no unseemly rush for time.”⁸

With the mobilization of 1940, there was an

“unseemly” rush to train aircrew and support personnel. Quality was, to some degree, sacrificed to produce in quantity. The 1939 plan had called for 24 groups requiring 1,200 pilots and 30,000 technicians trained per year. By 1940 the seemingly ambitious 1939 plan was surpassed. The Army Air Corps now plan called for 41 groups. That required 7,000 pilots plus support. But as President Roosevelt asked for more plans, Air Corps strength plans leapfrogged to 54 groups (12,500 pilots) then 84 groups (30,000 pilots). As Craven and Cate put it, “After June 1940 the problem facing the Air Corps was no longer a struggle for recognition and adequate funds, but rather the mounting difficulties of hugely expanded programs of procurement and training.”⁹



Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall. (US Army photo)

FLYING TRAINING

There was no way the three prewar training centers could produce the quantity of pilots, technicians, and, later, administrative personnel the rapidly expanding Army Air Corps needed. In July 1940 it divided the country into three regions, establishing training centers at Maxwell Field, Alabama, for the Southeast; Randolph Field, Texas, for the Gulf area; and Moffett Field, Cali-

* Of that total, 2,731 were trainer aircraft.

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ifornia, for the West Coast. Within these regions the number of bases and facilities teaching pilots to fly quickly grew. In 1940, the number went from one base, Randolph, to three, then to 19 flying and 1 gunnery schools. Shortly thereafter, another 20 flying and 2 gunnery schools joined the list. Fifty-six civilian schools conducted primary pilot training as well.¹⁰

Facilities aside, recruiting qualified candidates for either flight or ground training and providing adequate training were two of the biggest problems facing the Army Air Forces. The Air Corps, and its successor the Army Air Forces (AAF), competed with the US Navy and the US Army for qualified candidates. In some ways the competition was unfair. Each branch of the service jealously guarded its potential pool of talented recruits, using whatever enticements it could. In the recruiting game, the AAF sometimes hurt itself. For example, AAF regulations prevented paying a recruit's fare to and from a physical examination, while the Navy was not. As part of the Army, the AAF could acquire candidates from its parent service's ranks. However, the Army could disapprove applications to join the AAF, thus keeping promising officers for itself. As a result, during the buildup phase of the war, roughly 1941 to late 1943, the AAF was forced to lower its prewar physical and mental standards for pilot candidates.

There were other disincentives that, until they were removed during the latter part of 1943, kept the AAF from reaching its recruitment goals. Once the regulations were changed, however, the AAF became inundated with applicants.

An aviation cadet entering pilot training before mid-1940 could expect to spend a year learning his craft. After the German invasion in the West, however, that was cut to just 36



Air traffic control instruction at Scott AFB, 1948. (AETC/HO Archives)

weeks. As the demand for pilots increased, the duration of their training decreased. By August 1940, training time was reduced to 32 weeks. When the training goal reached 102,000 pilots per year, the time a pilot spent in the cockpit or in the classroom dropped to nine weeks, three weeks for each phase of training.¹¹

Throughout the war years the AAF suffered from insufficient facilities, overworked—and at times under qualified—instructors, and a shortage of training aircraft.* As an early AAFTC history pointed out “The figure of 102,000 was virtually impossible of attainment, because even under the 93,000 pilot program it was necessary to use such unsatisfactory facilities as tents, field kitchens and ditch latrines.”¹² The Air Force would find itself in much the same situation during the first year of the Korean War.

With substandard facilities and military instructors in short supply, the Air Corps turned to the civilian sector. It contracted private aviation companies to train pilots and other aircrew, many

* In addition to training US personnel, AAF Training Command trained over 21,000 foreign air force aircrew and support personnel. See: Jay E. Hines, *History of Foreign Training in ATC, 1941-1976*, History and Research Division, Office of the Chief of Staff, Headquarters Air Training Command, Randolph AFB, TX, n.d.

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at Air Corps bases. Contract primary schools graduated over 250,000 pilots, 3,700 navigators, 1,074 WASPS, 5,818 glider crewmembers, and 4,300 miscellaneous pilots during the war.¹³

TECHNICAL TRAINING

While the three centers managed pilot training within their regions, the Air Corps established the Technical Training Command at Chanute Field. Like the Flying Training Command, the Technical Training Command expanded greatly during the war. In mid-1940 Lowry Field, Colorado; Scott Field, Illinois; and Chanute Field, conducted all of the Air Corps technical training. That number expanded to 15 technical schools, 5 universities, 5 commercial airline schools, 34 civilian contract schools, and 50 factory schools.¹⁴

Providing training administrators became another issue Technical Training Command took on. In February 1942, Chanute became the command's training base for administrative officers, who were commissioned through officer candidate schools.

Like pilot training, technical training, too, suffered under pressure to produce as many ground support personnel as possible in the shortest amount of time. Before mid-1940, "Courses were long and thorough," as the post-war Air Training Command (ATC) history noted, "and the production of a relative handful of highly competent technicians in

several broad fields... was the objective of the Air Corps Technical School."¹⁵ But generalized technical training was not what the AAF needed in 1942 and the system was changed. Specialization was brought in and out went time "wasted," to use General Arnold's expression, on teaching theoretical concepts. The teaching of "why" something worked was dispensed with.¹⁶ As a result, training went from 38 to 16 weeks. At three aircraft maintenance schools, training went on a 24-hour basis. But there was a price to pay. "The AAF was well aware that it was not possible to turn out a completely skilled aircraft mechanic in a short period of 5 months."



General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold.
(USAF Photo)

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MOBILE TRAINING UNITS

Added to the shortened training time was a plethora of new types of aircraft coming into service and a seemingly never-ending stream of modifications. Mechanics could not keep up in this changing environment. The solution was to take some of the training to the field—either as top off training for those just out of tech school or continuing training for those in the field. The Mobile Training Units (MTUs), as they were called, went from 17 in 1943 to 141 at the end of 1944. These wartime lessons would not be lost. Indeed, MTUs would return during Korea.¹⁷

OVERHEAD

Administration and oversight for both types of training was becoming a problem for the rapidly expanding programs. The Air Corps had established the separate Flying Training and Technical Training Commands to administer training but as these training commands approached 400,000 as-

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signed personnel and over 400 installations, it became obvious that the current organization was insufficient. As a result, on 7 July 1943 the AAF established the Army Air Forces Training Command, bringing Flying and Technical Training under one commander—Lt Gen Barton K. Yount. Other organizational refinements followed. Flying Training Command's three centers—Southeast, Gulf Coast, and West Coast—were redesignated as Eastern, Central, and Western Flying Training Commands, respectively, on 31 July 1943.

Technical Training Command had established five regional districts since the command's establishment in March 1942. However, at the end of August 1943, Technical Training Command's organization was brought in line with that of the Flying Training Command with the elimination of two districts and the redesignation of the remaining three as Eastern, Central, and Western Technical Training Commands.¹⁸

THROTTLE BACK

Once the AAF freed itself from restrictive recruiting regulations, the pilot crunch was over. Indeed, by the end of 1943 a backlog had even developed. As 1944 began the AAF was in a position of near stability of its forces. The European Theater of Operations was no longer building up. Indeed, the deployed air forces were simply replacing their losses. In both Europe

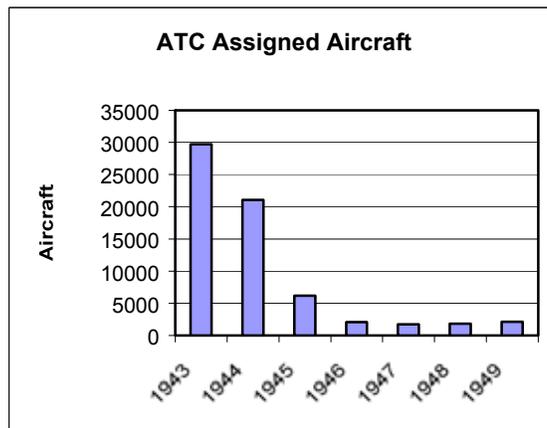
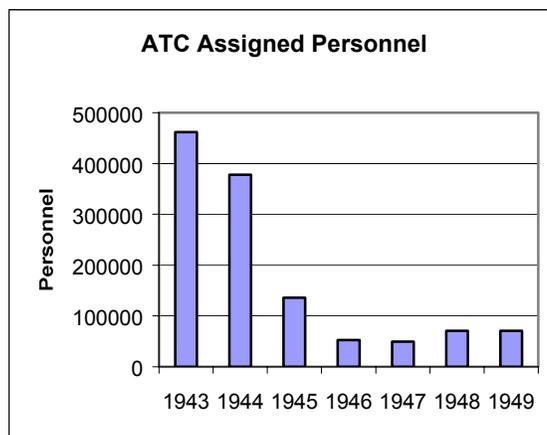
and the Pacific, Allied air forces held air supremacy. On the verge of D-Day, losses had been reduced compared to the year before. As a result, the AAF once again raised its standards and lengthened the training course. Quality of training was returning as the demand for quantity declined.¹⁹

With the end of the European war on the horizon and the massive hammer of the B-29s about to befall Japan, Gen Henry "Hap" Arnold began to throttle back on pilot, aircrew, ground staff, and aircraft production. Like General Marshall, Arnold had vivid memories

of the rapid demobilization that followed the First World War and wanted to avoid the destructive effects a similar event would have on the AAF. Arnold had his sights on an independent Air Force. Beginning in April 1944, even before the Allies landed in Normandy, Arnold ordered cutbacks in training and the manpower pipeline.²⁰

He was also cutting back the matériel pipeline, but for a different reason. The war in the Pacific had been almost entirely an American show. With the war in Europe almost won, he, and oth-

ers, worried about the British and Soviets coming into the Pacific fight and the postwar political consequences that entailed. US aircraft production by late 1943 was well in advance of AAF needs. Although the US had sent some of the surplus to Britain and the Soviet Union, Arnold did not want to send more aircraft than he had to. To remedy this thorny political



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problem, Arnold decided to cut back on production. Of course, that was not the only reason. Overproduction was a concern as well. The war against Nazi Germany and Japan were not consuming as many planes as expected and, with American factories at full tilt, there was the danger of producing too many aircraft.²¹

DEMOBILIZATION

Despite Arnold's throttle back on training and aircraft production, the end of the war led to rapid demobilization that was as bad as that which followed the First World War—and politically more dangerous. A “train wreck” was inevitable. With approximately eight million men in uniform at the end of the war and public sentiment to “bring the boys home,” there was bound to be a wrenching effect to any type of demobilization. The AAF discharged 500,000 men by December 1945. Another quarter of a million followed by February 1946. Medal of Honor recipient, Brig Gen Leon W. Johnson, then chief of the Personnel Services Divisions, summed up the situation when he said, “We didn't demobilize; we merely fell apart.... It was just a riot, really.”²²

Sheppard Field was one of those places where the AAF “fell apart.” During the war, Sheppard had produced glider mechanics and pilot as well as B-29 engineers, C-82 transport mechanics and, late in the war, helicopter pilots. By October 1945, however, its role was as a separation station, with a peak population of 46,000.²³

For Training Command the decline began in early 1944 and was a consequence of Arnold's cutbacks. With fewer men to train, there was less and less need for facilities, instructors, and support staff. At its height in July 1943, the command had 457 installations. That declined to just 170 by the end of

1944.

Contractor-operated schools suffered a similar fate. A total of 64 primary flying schools operated during the war but 47 closed in 1944. Contracted basic pilot and navigator training, and the WASPS program as well, ended in 1944.²⁴

By May 1945, the month the war ended in Europe, Training Command was down to 140 stations. But the decline did not stop there. In September there were only 113 stations left and only 34 at the end of the year. Likewise, Training Command's permanent party went from a high of 461,656 at the end of 1943 to 136,134 at the end of 1945. But that was not the end. In 1946 the command's strength was down to 52,707 and in 1947 ATC reached the low mark of 49,321, almost one-tenth its size only four years before.²⁵

AN INDEPENDENT AIR FORCE AND THE FALLING IRON CURTAIN

At the same time the AAF was cutting back on training and manpower acquisition, it was also planning for the future. During the war, Arnold had placed on hold the Air Corps' quest for independence from the Army. Having proven the strategic importance of the air arm, the AAF would take the autonomy Marshall had allowed during the war and turn itself into a co-equal branch of the armed forces. Independence would not come automatically or without organizational pain.

While Marshall looked to a post-war military based on a small standing force manned through universal military training and supplemented by reserves, Arnold pressed for a large standing Air Force of 70 groups.* Arnold and his planners had based their estimates for a post-war Air Force on whether the United Nations was an effective organization. An effective collective security organization equated to a need for an Air Force of from 70 to 75 combat groups. An ineffective organization, they reasoned, required an Air Force

* The term wing later replaced group in Air Force parlance.

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of 105 combat groups. As the war ended, it looked as if the AAF would get a maximum of 70 groups. General Carl Spaatz, Arnold's successor, held to this number even when a declining defense budget for fiscal year 1948 came out in 1946. The Truman administration budgeted only enough money for 55 groups. Spaatz maintained 15 groups at skeletal strength rather than abandon the principle. Reaching the goal of organizing and equipping even 55 groups proved difficult. The Truman administration was keen to keep the post-war economy from stalling. Fears of inflation from pent up wartime demand and savings, further fueled by defense spending, kept all branches of the US military from realizing their wartime plans for their new role in the postwar world.²⁶

By 1948 the world situation was increasingly tense. The threat of Communism had grown considerable since the end of the war, ever since Winston Churchill brought the matter to public attention in his 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech. In 1945 and 1946 the Soviet Union placed considerable pressure on Turkey to cede it territory and to give the USSR partial control over the Dardanelles. Truman responded with several speeches aimed at showing US resolve in supporting Turkey. In early 1947, Britain informed the US that because of its dire economic problems it was no longer able to support the Greek government against Communist rebels and the Turkish government against Soviet pressure. Truman responded with what became known as the Truman Doctrine. The United States, Truman declared during a joint session of Congress, must "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure."²⁷ The US would help with \$400 million in economic and financial aid. While Truman stopped short of military aid, he was clearly taking aim at the Soviet Union. The wartime ally was now seen as an aggressive opponent. The Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in

February 1948, and General Lucius Clay's "war warning" telegram* in March of that year, added to the belief that the Soviets were out for European, if not world, domination. While these events spurred President Truman to send a \$3.159 billion supplemental request to Congress for military spending, it was not as much as Secretary of Defense Forrestal and Secretary of the Air Force



General Carl Spaatz, first Chief of Staff of the Air Force. (USAF photo)

Symington thought necessary. Indeed, it was not as much as Congress wanted. When it added more defense funding than he wanted, Truman refused to release it. The President was still concerned about rampant defense spending disturbing the economic balance. Direct financial aid, such as to Greece and Turkey under the Truman Doc-

* On 5 March 1948, General Clay sent what became known as the "war warning" telegram stating his belief that the Soviets might be planning a military action in the West. The message sent shockwaves through Washington. See: Steven L. Rearden, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Vol 1, The Formative Years, 1947-1950*, Alfred Goldberg, General Editor, Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC, 1984, pp. 281-2.

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trine, and aid such as the Marshall Plan that stimulated the economies of Western European countries, were seen as bulwarks against the Soviets. Currency reforms in Germany, and especially Berlin, in 1948 brought the West and the Soviet Union to the brink of war when the Soviets denied the US, Britain, and France access to the city. Rather than go to war, the Allies staged a massive airlift of supplies to the besieged city. Unable to force the Allies out of Berlin, the Soviets gave up their blockade in 1949. Indeed, the blockade had been counterproductive. The Allies were more united at the end of the crisis than they had been before. They had formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and West Germany—especially West Berlin—was now firmly in the West's corner.

However, even with the formation of NATO and the US financial commitment that went with it, Truman was still reluctant to increase defense spending. The President had a deep suspicion of generals and admirals, especially when it came to spending money. During World War II, as a senator, Truman headed a committee that examined wartime spending. From that work he came to the conclusion that there was considerable waste in the Defense Department's budget. When Louis Johnson became his new secretary of defense in 1948, budgets were cut. As a result, the Air Force could muster only 48 groups, and its hopes for enlargement to at least 55 groups had been dashed in 1948 on the eve of the Berlin crisis. While the Air Force received supplemental funding, it was not enough to build the type of force many people thought was needed. Indeed, the situation worsened when the Truman administration mandated a reduction in the force in 1949 as the economy went into a recession.²⁸

ON THE VERGE OF WAR

The military was at low ebb in 1947. Demobilization had ended the autumn before, with tens of thousands of trained men leaving the service. During the spring of 1947, the government ended selective service. The result was dramatic for the Air Force. With a strong civilian economy, trained personnel drained away while there were few replacements coming in. By 1947 the Air Force was down to approximately 300,000.

ATC was no exception. It went from a high of 461,656 personnel in 1943 to just over 49,000 in 1947. Training virtually came to a halt in the days after the Japanese surrendered. Only officers returning from combat with aircrew ratings were given training. For nearly a year, there was no formal pilot training as thousands of pilots were demobilized. Not until October 1946 did the Air Force set a training goal of 825 pilots per year—including foreign students. A year later the Air Force more than tripled the rate to 3,000 per year, a rate that remained in effect until the Korean War forced a rapid expansion.²⁹

Increasing the number of pilots ATC was expected to train meant an increase in facilities and permanent party personnel. During the initial postwar period, Randolph AFB once again stood alone as the Air Force's basic flying training base. However, to meet new targets ATC reactivated Goodfellow on 1 December 1947—though it was 19 February 1948 before the first class of 269 students arrived for training. Perrin was next, reactivating on 1 April 1948. However, budget shortages delayed training until July. Waco followed on 1 August* with its first class starting on 25 October. ATC planned to open a fourth base in 1948, but its budget and personnel were already stretched painfully thin. Further expansion in the flying training program would have to wait.³⁰

At the same time ATC reactivated bases, the

* In June 1949, ATC redesignated the base as James Connally AFB in honor of Waco native Col James T. Connally who was killed on a bombing mission over Yokohama.

BOOM AND BUST

command also reevaluated its flying training courses. Basic flight training went from eight months to six. However, the courses removed from basic flight training simply shifted to the advanced flying training, which expanded to six months.³¹

Technical training suffered a similar fate in the immediate postwar era. Training came to a standstill immediately after the Japanese surrendered while the size and shape of the postwar Air Force was decided. Eventually production goals of 750 primary aircraft mechanics, 120 radio operators, and 120 photo lab technicians per month were set. However, shortages persisted. By September 1946, the AAF set a goal of training 3,000 primary aircraft mechanics per month—the same number as pilots. Likewise, other specialties were boosted. The AAF aimed at eliminating shortages by 1 July 1947. However, a cut in spending, and therefore personnel, in 1947 stalled the effort to fill the gaps. Instead the Air Force established a new training goal of 66,000 technicians by the end of 1948. While training goals were once again on the increase in 1948, the Air Force produced only 55,000 graduates that year. It faced the uphill battle of recruiting qualified people in a peacetime environment and postwar prosperity. Even though it could not meet its current goals, the Air Force announced a new goal of 167,000 by the end of March 1951.³² As the ATC history of the time noted, the new goal “was believed impossible unless two new bases, 19,000 additional permanent party personnel and \$56,000,000 in additional funds were provided.”³³

Unlike flying training, technical training would have to make do with what it had. No new installations or permanent party members were authorized to handle the in-

creasing number of graduates ATC was expected to produce.³⁴

The focus of ATC’s technical training changed during this period as well. During the war, Arnold had done away with generalized and theoretical training in favor of specialized training—and in the shortest time possible. After the war, ATC concentrated on keeping trained personnel who were interested in a career in the soon-to-be independent Air Force. Courses became longer and more generalized—just as they had been before the war. The intent was to “prepare a man not so much for a particular job as for a military career.”³⁵

With tensions between the West and the Soviet bloc on the rise, the US began to rearm, if only in small steps. On 24 June 1948, President Truman signed the Selective Service Act. This came at the same time Congress increased defense spending through the Fiscal Year 1949 budget. Although Truman’s, and Marshall’s, goal had been a universal military training system, it met considerable opposition in Congress and with the public. A limited draft, on the other hand, proved more politically acceptable.³⁶

As in the past, a draft proved a great impetus for volunteering. Volunteers were generally looked upon with greater favor than draftees. This was especially true of the Air Force’s Aviation Career Plan, which had been instituted in 1947. Under the program volunteers with a high school diploma could apply for technical training of their choice before enlisting. The program’s aim was to improve the quality of recruits. The result in 1948, however, was greater than had been expected. With no limits on enlistments in the program, tension in Europe, the uncertainty of the draft hanging over their heads, and the beginning of an economic recession, high school graduates flocked to the Air Force and to the Aviation Career Plan. Lackland AFB, Texas, the Air Force’s basic training base, was inundated with enlistees. Some were sent to nearby Kelly and

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Brooks, but around 3,000 of the new enlistees were housed in tents. Sheppard Field was reactivated on 1 August 1948 and it took in 3,300 enlistees in January 1949. By February, just after the base learned the Airplane and Engine Mechanics School and the Rotary Wing and Liaison Mechanical School would relocate there, the number of enlistees had dropped to 1,700. This sudden rush of enlistments, and the problems it caused, was just a foretaste of what was to come.³⁷

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¹⁶ Eileen M. Barrett, *History of Technical Training in ATC, 1941-1976*, History and Research Division, Office of the Chief of Staff, Headquarters Air Training Command, Randolph AFB, TX, January 1977, p. 6. See also: Nickle, *Contract Flying Training in Air Training Command, 1939-1980*.

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²⁵ Manning, *History of Air Training Command, 1943-1993*, pp. 27, 33.

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²⁷ President Harry S Truman, March 12, 1947 in an Address Recommending aid to Greece and Turkey, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/teacher/doc/trine.html>.

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CHAPTER II

THE DARK DAYS

JUNE 1950 – FEBRUARY 1951

“WAR CAN COME: WILL WE BE READY?”*

Even before the North Koreans came over the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950, the US was beginning to stir. Over the previous two years the nation had witnessed a communist coup in Czechoslovakia and the Berlin blockade and subsequent airlift. In the past year China had been “lost” to Mao Tse-dung, the Soviets had exploded their own atomic bomb—well ahead of expectation, British atomic scientist Klaus Fuchs had been unmasked as a spy, and former State Department official Alger Hiss had been convicted of giving perjured testimony regarding his communist connections. A new red scare led by Senator Joe McCarthy was gripping the nation. Within the Truman administration there was a move to rebuild American military might in the face of Soviet aggression.[†]

* *Life* magazine headline in early 1950, as quoted in McCullough, *Truman*, p. 764.

† In 1949 the Department of Defense called for a budget of \$16.9 billion. Truman gave them \$14.3 billion. That same year he lowered the defense budget for FY 1951 to \$13 billion. And when congress raised the budget to \$14.35 billion, including funds for aircraft, he withheld the money. See: Condit, *The Test of War*, p. 4.

In early 1950 the State and Defense departments presented National Security Council 68 (NSC 68) to President Truman. The document was meant to shock, and it did. “This Republic and its citizens,” the paper read, “in the ascendancy of their strength, stand in their deepest peril....”³⁸ It called for a massive military buildup and a three-fold increase in defense spending. Truman, however, was still unmoved. He would not be rushed into a decision until he knew more. Truman was still more concerned with keeping the economy in balance than with foreign affairs. Inflation was still a potential problem and the economy was slowly recovering from the 1948-49 recession. But events would soon change his focus.³⁹

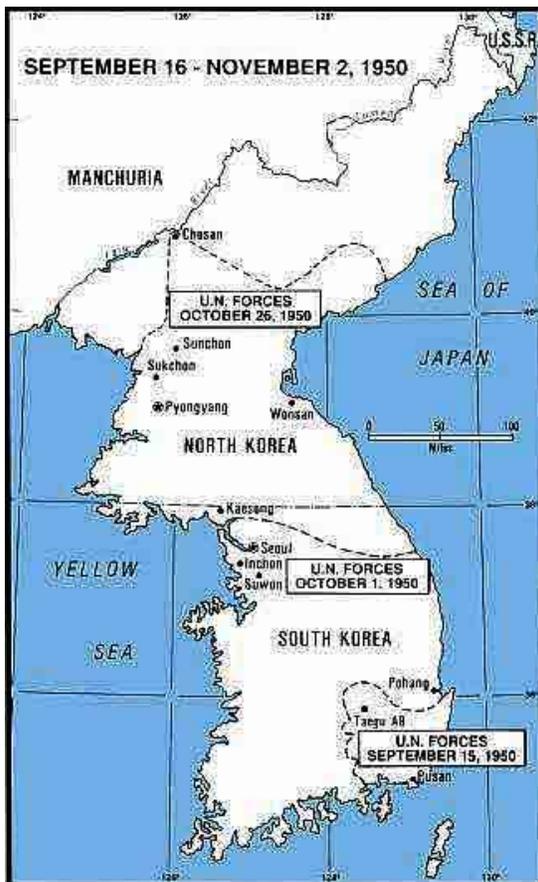
When the North Koreans crossed the border, US military troop strength stood at 1,460,000, with the Air Force accounting for 411,277 of that number. A quarter of that number (110,044) were in ATC alone. It was not enough to fight even a limited war in Korea.

While Truman had moved cautiously in the days before Korea erupted in flames, now he moved decisively. As historians Walton S. Moody and Warren

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A. Trest wrote, “the outbreak of war forced President Truman to disregard the threat of inflation and spend more for national defense than he had intended.”⁴⁰

On 19 July, President Truman told the nation that he intended to start a rearmament program well beyond the needs of the Korean conflict. Truman asked Congress for more money for defense, a \$50 billion tax increase, and virtual control over the economy. He received much of what he asked for. Congress appropriated \$48.2 billion for military spending for Fiscal Year 1950-51 and \$60 billion for Fiscal Year 1951-52.



Truman had finally accepted NSC 68 and all it entailed, which meant increasing the draft as well as calling up National Guard and reserve units. A few days after the President spoke to the

nation, the Army sent out a draft call for 100,000 men.

Congress obliged by extending the draft for one year and authorized the call-up of the National Guard and the Reserve for 21 months. All branches of the service were increased in strength, with the Air Force authorized 502,000 personnel—the long-desired 70-group Air Force Arnold had sought in 1945—with 24,000 aircraft.⁴¹

ATC GEARS UP

While FEAF forces were pounding the advancing North Korean army, ATC was gearing up for the largest expansion in the Air Force since World War II.

At the time, Lackland AFB, Texas, was the sole Air Force basic military training (BMT) base. There, recruits were processed and given their first taste of military, and Air Force, life. For 13 weeks they lived on the base, receiving 520 hours (65 days) of training—though nearly two weeks of that time involved such mundane tasks as kitchen police and other chores. But they also learned the basics of being in the US military, including drill and ceremony, physical fitness, weapons, and combat training. At times during World War II, basic military training had contracted to as little as a month. The same was about to happen in the fall of 1950.

With the war raging in Korea—and going badly for UN forces—the number of enlistees increased. In July nearly 10,000 men arrived at Lackland and more were expected. On 15 July the base went to a six-day training week to increase the flow and prevent a backlog. But the number of recruits was about to jump.

THE DARK DAYS

The situation in Korea and the new draft call undoubtedly spurred more young men to volunteer for the Air Force. By the end of July, it was evident that the number of enlistments would go up. As a result, on 24 July Headquarters USAF directed that basic training cut from 65 to 40 days. As Larry Benson, the Lackland historian, wrote in 1978, “The number of formal training hours was cut to 320; however, trainers were still supposed to give 134 of the 200 eliminated hours on an unscheduled basis.”⁴²

The strain of so many recruits coming in started to show. As in 1949, the decision was made to move some of Lackland’s operation to another base. Sheppard Field was the base selected to handle the overflow. The Air Force had inactivated the base on 15 August 1945, the day after Japan announced its surrender. While the National Guard used some of its buildings, others were either left as they were or were moved to nearby Wichita Falls, Texas. Indeed, several buildings became part of Wichita General and Midwestern hospitals. When the Air Force began to expand again in 1948, the Air Force asked the city of Wichita Falls to prevent any further “disposal of base property.”⁴³ In August the Air Force reactivated the base and work began to bring the base back to usefulness. The Aircraft and Mechanical School moved to the base from Keesler AFB, Mississippi, in 1949, and in January 1949 Secretary of the Air Force Stuart Symington announced that Sheppard would become a permanent Air Force installation.⁴⁴

Lackland stretched its already thin resources still further when it created the 3704th BMT Group out of units belonging to the 3700th AFIW. The new



group—52 officers and 743 enlisted men—activated at Sheppard on 26 July. A week later its first 750 enlistees arrived from Lackland to begin their training. As Benson later noted, “As much as possible, those who were further assigned for BMT at Sheppard [after processing at Lackland] would remain there for technical training in aircraft mechanics.”⁴⁵

July’s flood of recruits became a torrent in August with 12,812 young men and 253 young women arrived at the San Antonio base. September saw a further 12,300 new enlistees enter Lackland’s gates. Nearly 4,000 went to Sheppard in July and over 5,300 the following month.⁴⁶



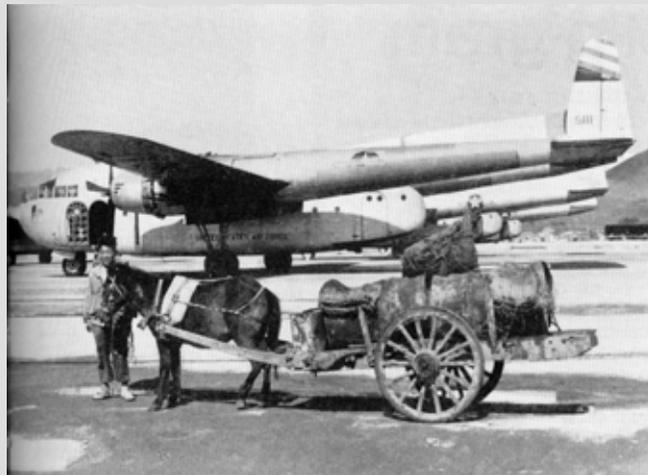
314th Troop Carrier Group

Detached from its parent wing, the 314th TCG, with its newly modified C-119 “Flying Boxcars,” moved from Sewart AFB, Tennessee, to arrive at Ashiya AB, Japan, in late August 1950. From September through November 1950, it dropped ammunition and rations to UN frontline troops as they engaged the North Korean forces. It airlifted the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team to Kimpo AB. On October 20, the 314th TCG furnished the bulk of the aircraft in the airborne phase of the UN assault north of Pyongyang. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for actions from November 28 through December 10, 1950. During this period, the Chinese Communist Army encircled regiments of the 1st U.S. Marine and USA 7th Infantry Divisions near the Changjin Reservoir. The 314th TCG airdropped urgently needed ammunition, gasoline, and rations, as well as an eight-span M-2 treadway bridge, allowing the besieged UN forces to extricate themselves along with their equipment. The group maintained an almost constant shuttle to front line troops in Korea, delivering supplies, ammunition, and fuel and, at times, moving and air-dropping troops. It continued to transport personnel and supplies from Japan to Korea for the rest of the war and evacuated UN prisoners of war when they were freed.

During its 15 months with FEAF, the 314th was awarded a total of two Distinguished Unit Citations and two Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations.

The group returned to its parent unit, the 314th Troop Carrier Wing in November 1954.

Source: USAF Lineage and Honors History.



THE DARK DAYS



With Lackland filling up and Sheppard handling an increasing number of recruits, the Air Force had to do something. If the flow of volunteers continued—and in early September it looked like it would—both bases would soon have a backlog. The first, but unwelcome, solution was to again cut the number of training days from 40 to 30 at Lackland. The next solution was to open another base. However, events in Korea were to create a short-lived lull in recruitment.⁴⁷

INCHON AND THE BREAKOUT FROM PUSAN

By mid-September the Eighth Army had been penned within the Pusan parameter since 4 August. With their backs literally to the sea, Eighth Army and its South Korean allies were able to hold on, if sometimes just barely. On 1 September the North Koreans breached the parameter but were beaten back. In a strong defensive position with a port for supplies and air supremacy for protection, Lt Gen Walton H. Walker, Eighth Army commander, was able to build up men and matériel for a counteroffensive. At the same time, General MacArthur was preparing his own strike against the North Koreans. In one of the most daring and dangerous operations in military history, on September 15 MacArthur's forces landed at the port of Inchon, just miles away from Seoul. As Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson* said later, MacArthur had "hit our enemies 'where they aint'...[and] changed the course of the Korean campaign in a matter of hours."⁴⁸ The next day, Walker's Eighth Army launched its counter-offensive,



(Above) Gen MacArthur at Inchon. (US Army Photo) (below) 1Lt Baldomero Lopez, USMC, leads the 3rd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines over the seawall on the northern side of Red Beach, as the second assault wave lands, 15 September 1950. Wooden scaling ladders were used to facilitate disembarkation from the LCVP that brought these men to the shore. Lt. Lopez was killed in action within a few minutes, while assaulting a North Korean bunker. (USMC Photo)

* Shortly to be replaced by General of the Army George C. Marshall.

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breaking out of the Pusan Perimeter. The North Koreans, who had badly overstretched their supply lines, were now between the anvil of MacArthur's forces to the north and the advancing hammer of the Eighth Army. Fearing isolation and eventual destruction, the North Koreans began a retreat that turned into a rout. Over the next five weeks, UN forces pushed the North Koreans back across the 38th parallel and, in a change to the UN's original aim of merely to restore South Korea, crossed the border. The goal now was to completely defeat North Korea. By 25 October US, UN and South Korean forces were within a few miles of the Sino-Korean border, and the war appeared to be all but won. Confident of victory, MacArthur had FEAF drop over a million leaflets calling for surrender from the seemingly defeated enemy.

COMBAT CREW TRAINING

Prior to July 1950, ATC produced pilots that, as one historian put it, "could take off, fly to some predetermined destination, and land an aircraft safely."⁴⁹ However, he was not combat-ready. That was left up to the operational unit to which he was assigned. While this was acceptable during peacetime, it became unworkable once the nation was at war. With FEAF engaged in combat and units being sent from stateside commands, and the prospect of the Soviets stirring up trouble in other parts of the world, operational commands were hard pressed to provide the same type of training they had before 25 June 1950.

At a 3 July 1950 meeting in Washington DC, Headquarters Air Force gave ATC responsibility for combat aircrew training. Three combat crew training

initiatives were decided that day with others to follow over the course of the year. The first was the training of fighter/bomber escort pilots. FEAF believed it needed 115 F-51 and 92 F-80 combat-ready pilots. In large part, FEAF was anticipating a heavy casualty count and wanted most of these pilots as replacements.⁵⁰

Nellis AFB, Nevada, was the first base to take on the training of F-51 pilots. To create space for the new mission, Nellis' advanced conventional single-engine pilot training role—which had only started in March 1949—was moved to Craig AFB, Alabama. As the ATC history noted, "The conversion from an advanced single engine (F-51) to fighter combat crew training was accomplished with unprecedented speed." Just two weeks after the Washington



A Nellis student watches a classmate take off. (AETC/HO Archives)

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meeting, the first group of F-51 pilots headed for Korea arrived at Nellis for training. After the six-week course, they were on their way overseas.⁵¹

The course was planned with no attrition of pilots anticipated. However, with most of the pilots coming from either recalled reservists or Air National Guardsmen, many of whom had lost proficiency, attrition was inevitable. As a result, ATC fell behind in its quota for FEAF. Fortunately, combat losses were lighter than FEAF had initially expected and the pressure on Nellis diminished in October as UN forces reached the Yalu River. But the experience had exposed weaknesses in this hastily put together course. There was a lack of rocketry training and the overall length of the course was judged too short. ATC lengthened the course by two weeks and revamped its curriculum.

In mid-November, as the war began to turn against the UN, Nellis opened its USAF Air Crew School.⁵²

The first initiative had caused a rearrangement of ATC's courses. The second combat crew training initiative would do more. Craig AFB, which had only activated on 1 September, took over Randolph's pilot instructor training mission. Randolph had taken up conventional medium bomber (B-29) crew training from SAC on 7 August. Although Craig had taken over Randolph's pilot instructor training mission, there was still plenty of flying at the San Antonio base. Basic student pilot training continued but it was the B-29 aircrew training that took center stage in September 1950. Eventually the basic course would be phased out in late 1950 to make room for more B-29 training.

Moving B-29 crew training to the base meant finding room for both the 50



Superfortress over Randolph AFB, Texas, where B-29 combat crew training was conducted from 1951-56.

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aircraft that arrived by the end of September and the student crews. Room for the aircraft was made on the east flight line by moving the basic pilot training program to the west ramp. Moving in aircrews entailed moving student officers out of the base's Bachelor Officer Quarters and in with aviation cadets. That also meant commissioned officers and cadets sharing one mess hall. Some cadets and student officers were eventually moved to other training bases. This allowed the consolidation of the four Randolph squadrons into two.

The 3511th Combat Crew Training Group activated in August 1950. It was the first time since 1945 that B-29 crewmembers would train at Randolph. By 1 October 1950, there were 803 students in crew training. Their training was in two phases. The first was in individual specialties such as pilot, co-pilot, flight engineer, and gunners. Phase 2 brought the crew together for the first time. Once their training was complete, the crew moved to SAC as a single unit, ready for duty. As 1950 ended, six crews graduated from the course with more to follow.⁵³

One side effect of moving B-29 training to Randolph was the need for more room. Moving basic flying training to Craig was not enough. On 11 October 1950, several sections of the Air Force School of Aviation Medicine moved to Gunter AFB, Alabama. The base, located on the north side of Montgomery, had been all but deserted only a few years before. While a few functions had survived World War II on the site, most of the base had been allowed to return to grass and weeds. Even the city of Montgomery had refused an offer to take back the property. But by 1950 the base was beginning to revive. Just before the Korean War flared, the Air Forces Ex-



Truman and MacArthur meet, October 1950. (Harry S Truman Library)

tension Course Institute had relocated there, as had the Air Tactical School and the USAFE Special Staff School, which had moved from Craig AFB and Tyndall AFB, respectively—all to make room at operational bases. As noted in a history of the base, the transfer of the school “gave Gunter new life.” New facilities and infrastructure were added to the old base. Gunter would be around for some time to come.⁵⁴

BMT EXPANSION

The changes in the fortunes of war were reflected in the recruiting office as much as they were on the battlefield. While Lackland received 9,699 basic trainees during October, that was 2,600 off from the month before. With the war seemingly won, the rush to volunteer lessened. But the Air Force continued with its expansion plans even if MacArthur seemed to have things wrapped up. In late October, just as South Korean forces reached the Yalu River, the Air Force announced it was opening a new BMT center at the old World War II Navy base at Sampson, New York.

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Marine tanks scramble around blown out bridge south of Koto-ri. Note Chinese communist prisoners at left being herded to rear for questioning.

(USMC Photo)



Evacuation of Korean orphans, part of Operation Kiddy Car, December 1950. Safely aboard a C-54 transport of the U.S. Far East Air Forces, Capt Mary Spivak, flight nurse, gives the children candy. (USAF Photo)

For ATC and Lackland, the basic training crunch seemed to be manageable by October. As Benson noted in 1978, “With the 30-day BMT schedule at Lackland and the growing training load at Sheppard, the USAF was able to

train as many recruits as it received—and would soon have a second ‘Gateway to the Air Force.’”

CHINA ENTERS THE WAR

UN forces had the Yalu River and victory in sight at the end of October 1950. But the Red Chinese changed that. On 27 October Chinese “volunteers” attacked unsuspecting UN troops just as it seemed the war was over. The Chinese continue their offensive until November 6th when they abruptly halted operations. UN forces, however, continued their push to the Yalu. On 24 November the Chinese renewed their attack. On the 27th they surrounded part of the X Corps and the 1st Marine Division at Changjin (Chosin) Reservoir. For the next thirteen days this battered US force would fight for its life in sub-zero weather. With supplies either flown in or air dropped to them by FEAF, they were able to break out of the Chinese ring on 10 December. By then the North Korean capital of Pyongyang had fallen to the Chinese and UN forces were in retreat. On New Year’s Day, the Chinese crossed the 38th Parallel. But they did not stop there. By 6 January 1951, they had taken Seoul and there appeared to be no stopping them. To add sorrow to misery, on 27 December General Walker was killed in a jeep accident. These were the dark days for the US military, and they would have an effect on ATC.

THE TRICKLE BECOMES A FLOOD

While enlistments in October had been down compared to September, November witnessed an increase to nearly 16,000. However, this was well below the quota of 18,000 set for the month.

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The first three weeks of December were even worse. Only 13,000 entered the service that month, 6,000 below that month's goal. The holidays undoubtedly played a part, but so did the situation in Korea. Immediately after Christmas 1950, the enlistment floodgates opened. As Benson noted in 1978, "the harrowing news stories about wounded, frostbitten, captured, and killed infantrymen in Korea made a four-year hitch in the Air Force look pretty good." Over 1,300 recruits arrived on 28 December and another 2,379 arrived the next day. By the end of the year, over 25,000 male and 600 female recruits had descended on Lackland and another 7,600 were at Sheppard. But this was only the beginning.⁵⁵

As more recruits piled in, Lackland was in danger of becoming a bottleneck rather than the Air Force's gateway. Indeed, the base's emphasis changed from providing BMT—which was cut to 14 days and was suspended altogether on 30 December—to simply housing and processing the flood of new recruits. BMT would have to take place at the recruit's next base. As it was, Lackland rapidly ran out of room. The field house and classrooms were used to house new airmen while base theaters, clubs, and the baseball stadium were used for classrooms and assembly grounds. Lackland's processing line operated 24 hours a day and could process 4,000 a day. But it could not keep up and a backlog developed.⁵⁶

The flood continued after the first of the year. Nearly 12,000 recruits arrived at the base during the first week of January. Even though the Air Force tried to put the breaks on recruitment during the first two weeks of the year, thousands continued to arrive. The desperate news from Korea and Secretary of Defense



The Lackland recruit rush, December 1950-January 1951. Recruits wait to be processed (top). Lackland's "Tent City" (bottom). (AETC/HO Archives)

George C. Marshall's 10 January submission to Congress of a selective service bill that lowered the draft age from 19 to 18 had an impact on young men signing up with the Air Force. Rumors that exemptions might disappear un-

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doubtedly added an extra spur. Whatever the causes, the results were felt at Lackland. On 15 January 7,746 recruits arrived, and the next day the Air Force suspended all recruitment. Around that time Lackland's population stood at some 70,000 recruits and 3,000 permanent party personnel.⁵⁷

With so many recruits arriving at one time, Lackland's infrastructure—both physically and organizationally—was stretched to the limit, if not beyond. Permanent structures were filled to capacity either as billeting, training, or processing facilities. A boomtown of 4,000 twelve-man tents was erected as the base's 25 dining halls stayed open long hours to feed the growing host.⁵⁸



Supplies poured in from other Air Force bases and from the Army. Kelly AFB's flight line served as an aerial port while the rail lines into Lackland were



One week's worth of food. Care and feeding of recruits at overcrowded Lackland was of concern to the public, Congress, and the Air Force

(AETC/HO Archives)

busy moving freight and incoming enlistees. Still, rumors of shortages of food and other necessities flourished. While there was no shortage of food for the new troops—a later congressional investigation revealed that recruits consumed between 4,400 and 4,600 calories per day—there was a shortage of uniforms. In early January, the Air Force limited uniforms to one blue uniform per man to make the supply go around. Even with the limits, some of the newly arrived recruits that month remained in civilian clothes for their first few days.⁵⁹

Instructors were also in short supply. Like every other command, ATC had already sent experienced personnel to the war in Korea—and would lose more over the coming months. The sudden recruit rush of late December and January made this situation worse. Even with the suspension of BMT at Lackland, there were not enough trained flight chiefs to go around.* Usually the

* Some of Lackland's experienced personnel were already at Sampson, New York, setting up

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Lackland AFB's new processing center, ca. 1952. (AETC/HO Archives)

3700th AFIW carefully chose would-be flight chiefs, screened them, and sent those selected to a four-week course. By January 1951 that had gone by the way-side. Instead, new flight chiefs were selected as they completed basic training. As might be expected, this chaotic situation allowed abuses—such as newly frocked flight chiefs selling assignments. It also meant dedication to duty such as a new flight chief working three days without rest.⁶⁰

It was inevitable that conditions at Lackland would draw public and congressional attention. Rumors of poor living conditions, desertions, epidemics, and even recruit suicides were now in the press and had reached both Air Force and congressional ears.⁶¹

a new “Gateway to the Air Force” at the old Navy basic training base.

In early January, Maj Gen Kenneth P. McNaughton, Air Force Director of Training, visited the base and reported

They are using slit trenches and being marched to the nearest barracks for baths. Five of the mess halls are running on a 24-hour-a-day basis, with two feeding lines running most of the time.... The men slept in tents with cots with four blankets.... They are disappointed, of course, in the crowded conditions and the speed with which they are being processed. They are also inconvenienced, but I found no instances of actual hardship.⁶²

Air Force Surgeon General, Maj Gen H. G. Armstrong, visited the base on 19 January to investigate health conditions at the overcrowded facility. He found “incidence of disease among the military population...below that expected, based on previous statistical experience.” As for deaths at the base, there had only been two in the past 18 months. One was the result of an automobile accident

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and the other was from intestinal cancer.⁶³

Congressional investigators, led by Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, visited the base as well. Like Generals McNaughton and Armstrong, they found crowded conditions, but no reasons for concern.⁶⁴

By February 1951 the situation was beginning to change. The flood of recruits was ebbing and Sheppard was taking up the overflow. Added to that was Sampson, an old World War II Navy BMT base.

But that was not all. In January the Air Force announced it would go to 95 wings. To accommodate an Air Force of that size, new facilities were needed. ATC would grow. The command was about to experience a building boom. The Lackland recruit rush of the winter of 1950-51 undoubtedly had an effect on Congress. Appropriations for housing and facilities increased over the next few years. Lackland itself would erect 167 new dormitories and a new processing center that remained in use until the 1970s.

SAMPSON AFB

Even before the recruiting rush hit Lackland in late December 1950, ATC planned to expand its ability to take onboard an increased number of enlistees. The increase in enlistments in September and October had brought the point home.

Sampson started out as a World War II Navy boot camp. From its activation in May 1942 until the Navy closed it in July 1946, Sampson trained 411,429 recruits. Its service schools trained a further 31,181 men. After the war it reversed its role, serving as a separation center during the postwar rapid demobilization.

Once demobilization was over, some of its assets were turned over to the state of New York for a college that educated, appropriately enough, discharged GIs. Although the base hospital stayed open for a while, serving as a Veterans Administration facility, it, too, was handed over to the state as a mental hospital. In 1949, the Department of Agriculture acquired a portion of the base to store tons of wheat and beans under the Production Marketing Administration of the Commodity Credit Corporation's parity program.⁶⁵

In October 1950, New York was ready to take over more of the base as a state park. At virtually the last moment, the Secretary of the Navy placed the deal on hold. The next day, 14 October, an Air Force officer arrived at Sampson to survey the facility. The Air Force was interested in taking the old Navy base and turning it into the Air Force's second "gateway." In addition to availability, Sampson offered a good location. It was close enough to large sources of recruits—the Northeast and Midwest.⁶⁶

The transfer from civil to military operation was not without its problems. The Department of Agriculture was forced to move 110,000 bushels of wheat and 15,000 sacks of beans out of "various drill halls and warehouses," while the mental hospital had to relocate patients and tenants in base housing. Also dislocated were squatters from some of the disused houses. There were other problems once ATC took over the base on 14 November and rehabilitation work got underway in December and January.

While the Air Force tried to keep friendly relations with the local populace, as the Navy had done during World War II, there was a housing shortage in

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the area. Local residents were concerned that a large influx of Air Force families, and the eviction of those living in base housing, would raise rents in the area.⁶⁷

Labor was another, related, problem. Rehabilitating the base required skilled and un-skilled labor above that available locally. Residents were concerned that the increased demand for labor would affect everything from rents to drawing workers from local construction projects to creating non-union competition.⁶⁸

To counter local concerns, the Air Force held meetings with contractors and community leaders. This allayed economic fears but there was still the concern, as the historian of the time put it, that Air Force personnel were a “‘hungry horde,’ bent on disruption of civilian mores and manners....”⁶⁹ Civic leaders were flown to Lackland to view for themselves the Air Force training program. Finally, it was the individual Air Force member himself that won the day. They made their presence known in area churches and at civic functions.



Maxwell AFB, Alabama, 1950s.

(AETC/HO Archives)

Fears eased as the local community got to know its new neighbors.⁷⁰

The Air Force began moving into rehabilitated buildings in late January 1951. A few days later, on 1 February, the first trainees arrived at the base—all six of them. The number increased over the next two months but there were problems. The prime contractor for facility rehabilitation work was changed in January and this delayed work. As a result, housing and medical facilities could not support the anticipated 300 trainees arriving per day. ATC held this number to 80 percent for the first two months until construction caught up with demand. However, by March the base was beginning to graduate airmen. Most would go on to technical training.⁷¹

AIR UNIVERSITY AND MAXWELL AFB

Lackland, Sheppard, and eventually Sampson were not the only bases affected by the recruiting rushes of late 1950 and early 1951. Maxwell AFB, then under Air University's jurisdiction, had a rush of its own. Soon after North Korea invaded the South, permanent party personnel began volunteering for combat duty with FEAF. In October alone, 371 officers and over 1,200 enlisted men were processed for overseas duty.

Recruits, too, flocked to the base, as they were doing at Lackland. In July, Maxwell handled 833. A month later the number rose to 2,440. By October the number of recruits processed increased seven fold.

Aside from taking officers and enlisted troops from Maxwell,

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there was a real question about what to do with Air University during the war.

Clearly AU could not continue with “business as usual.” During a time when trained professionals were in short supply, major commands could not afford to lose valuable members to the school. But the Air Force could not afford to completely close its center of professional education. The answer was to compromise. Air War College courses were suspended until 1 January 1951. At the same time Air Command and Staff School (ACSS) courses became the nucleus of a rapidly reducing Air University. Courses held at Craig and Tyndall, two bases reassigned to ATC, were incorporated into ACSS courses. Courses were shortened from five and a half months to three and a half. The Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) civilian institution program went “from 1260 to a minimum.”⁷²

But the contraction of Air University courses was short-lived. Like the rest of the Air Force, by the beginning of 1951 AU had reversed course and began to expand. Finding faculty members and facilities were the two major problems facing the command during the first half of 1951 and onwards.⁷³

TECHNICAL TRAINING

Technical training was already on the rebound before the outbreak of the Korean War. In 1948 ATC trained 31,220 technicians and 48,325 the following year. With the outbreak of the war training goals increased dramatically. In 1950 alone the number of trained technicians graduated from ATC courses reached over 82,000.

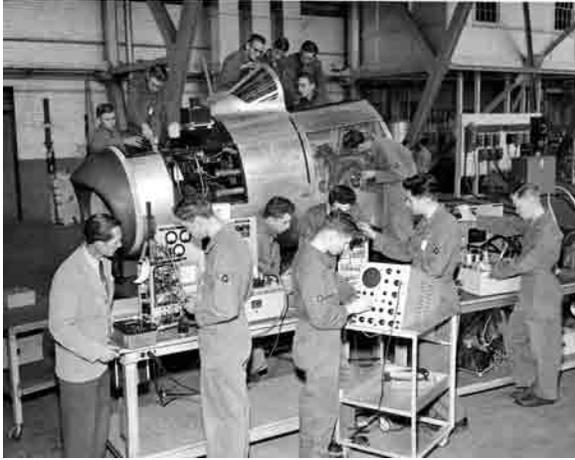


Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, 1950s. (AETC/HO Archives)

Most of the training, at least in 1950 and early 1951, was done at bases already under ATC jurisdiction. Chanute AFB conducted aircraft maintenance, weather, and “trade” courses. Francis E. Warren AFB in Wyoming trained airmen in “supply, vehicle and motorized equipment maintenance, teletype, and fixed wire communications.”⁷⁴ At Sheppard AFB students learned the finer points of intelligence, comptrolling, and various aspects of transportation. Keesler had been an aircraft and mechanics school during World War II. When Korea erupted, Keesler trained airmen in air traffic control, ground radar, and electronic countermeasures. Scott AFB, Illinois, provided trained communicators and cryptographers. Lastly, Lowry AFB trained individuals in armaments, the growing field of guided missiles, firefighting and crash rescue, flexible gunnery, and photography.⁷⁵

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After Air University closed its Air Tactical School at Tyndall AFB, Florida, ATC took over the base and established a security police school at the base in September 1950. SAC's need for 6,000 additional security cops was the driving impetus for the school. Tyndall obliged by filling that quota by December 1950. Yet that was not the end of what had been envisioned as a temporary school.



Radar training at Lowry AFB.
(AETC/HO Archives)



A future AP learns to fire a .45 at Tyndall AFB.
(AETC/HO Archives)

Renamed the Air Police School, it continued to produce 400 officers and enlisted men each month.⁷⁶

Instructors Wanted, No Experience Necessary

Finding flight chiefs for the flood of recruits was not the only problem facing ATC. Recruiting and keeping qualified instructors for both BMT and technical training had been a problem as far back as World War II. Policies and practice rotated personnel in and out of instructor posts. At the same time prospective instructors saw the job, with its slow promotions, as an undesirable career field. To make matters worse, just as the Air Force became a separate service in 1947, there was a drastic cutback in the civilian workforce, including civilian instructors. The Air Force was forced to turn to its own training pipeline to fill spaces. Students were selected to fill instructor billets as they graduated. The effect was, as the ATC history of the time noted, "Immature and inexperienced instructors produc[ing] inadequate graduates, some of whom were retained as instructors to produce graduates of still less ability." The Air Force tried to correct this, but the flood of recruits in 1950, and the resulting cut in the training cycle, produced an undertrained workforce. In many cases at the end of 1950 and the beginning of 1951, students were assigned as instructors *before* they graduated. By 1 April 1951, fully half of the 11,254 instructors had less than one year's experience and held the rank of sergeant or below.⁷⁷

ATC had four ways to obtain instructors. As mentioned above, retaining recent graduates, which produced the bulk of instructors. The second method was to trade bodies with other commands.

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However, even before the war other commands were reluctant to trade an experienced hand for a tech school graduate. Once the war started they had fewer bodies to trade, and even less to gain. As a result, ATC gained few instructors from the other commands.

Hiring civilians was the third method, but there were drawbacks here as well. With class sizes fluctuating radically, a civilian instructor did not know whether he would be overworked with a large class one cycle and out of work the next when the number of trainees dropped. A large portion of the civilian staff had degrees in such fields as electrical engineering. Some used the Air Force training jobs as a way station while they waited for a better-paying civilian job. Thus, the Air Force could not count on keeping a stable civilian workforce.

Still, civilians provided at least one source of instructors. Paying for them was another problem. To remedy this, in October 1950 the Air Force converted 5,500 from military to civilian positions. However, when it looked like the war in Korea was nearly won, the program was placed on hold. The flood of recruits in January 1951 brought it back to life and by the end of June 1951, 40 percent of ATC's instructors were civilians.⁷⁸

The last source of instructors was from within its staff. While each base screened its members as potential instructors, the command was being heavily levied for overseas duty. The net effect was often a loss for the command. Lackland was a good case in point. The base received 383 instructors from permanent party members, but at the same time lost 735 of its staff "to fill shipment quotas."⁷⁹

Another policy further weakened the instructor pool. Instructors were fre-

quently moved on to other jobs after only a short time, just as they were learning how to teach.



A Mobile Training Detachment class.

(AETC/HO Archives)

MOBILE TRAINING

Schoolhouse training was under a serious strain, producing less than proficient students. It was a problem the Air Force had faced in WW II. To alleviate, if not solve it, ATC turned to another method of instruction.

As with Korea, during World War II technical training was truncated as much as possible. The pre-World War II 8-week course was reduced to 16. Yet demand for trained technicians had increased dramatically during the war. Decreased training time and increased throughput in the technical schools

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meant most graduates were less well trained than their pre-war elders. As if that was not enough, the war years saw a rapid technological transformation. The number and complexity of combat and other aircraft increased dramatically. Aircraft that were on the drawing board in 1941 were flying combat missions in 1943. The result of this mix of compressed training, new and advanced aircraft, and innovations from the field meant aircraft mechanics could not keep up with new developments. In a combat situation, that could cost lives.

To remedy this situation—especially for the P-38 “Lightning”—the AAF sent mobile training teams to bring mechanics “up to speed” on this advanced, twin-tailed fighter. The idea quickly spread to other aircraft and technical subjects. By the end of 1944 the AAF was able field 141 Mobile Training Units (MTUs).⁸⁰

During the inter-war years, mobile training suffered much the same as the Air Force in general. Rapid demobilization depleted its ranks of trained instructors, while frequent moves from one base to another caused morale to suffer. At the same time the shortage of training equipment and spare parts caused mobile training to lose much of its World War II effectiveness. Also, the Air Force had by this time gone back to generalized training with specific training to be done “on the job.” Though this training was never complete enough.

Beginning in 1947, mobile training began to grow again. The program shook off some of the problems that had befallen it during the darkest post-war period: shortages of spare parts and instructors, and outdated curricula. Like the Air Force itself, mobile training was moving into the jet age.

When the war broke out in Korea the Air Force faced a similar challenge to that of 1942—new technology. The Air Force of the piston engine was rapidly giving way to that of the jet engine. Just as pilots made the transition, trading F-51s for F-80s and F-84s, so did maintainers. They had to learn a whole new way of doing things.

Mobile Training Detachments (MTDs) helped with this transition. While some units went to Korea to train Air Force personnel, most of the in-theater training occurred in nearby Japan. Within the first year of the Korean War, the number of MTDs went from 82 to 113, and production increased from 12,000 graduates per year in the late 1940s to 58,000 in 1952.⁸¹

The value of mobile training during the war was perhaps best expressed by the 3499th Mobile Training Wing commander, Col Sherwood E. Buckland, after a visit to the Far East in 1953. Writing to ATC’s Technical Training Air Force commander, Maj Gen Eugene L. Eubank, Buckland said:

It is sincerely believed that without the mobile training detachments the flying organization in the Pacific...would have a very difficult time in getting good utilization out of their aircraft. This is particularly true in the combat zone where the one-year rotation policy is a terrific handicap to the tactical organizations who are trying to keep their planes in the air.⁸²

FLYING TRAINING

Although ATC had taken over combat crew training from SAC and other major commands, it continued to train pilots from basic through advanced flying training. It also trained instructor pilots, who were in short supply.

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Instructors of all types had been in short supply since the rapid demobilization after World War II. Korea exasperated an already thin instructor pool in two ways. The demand for combat ready personnel—whether pilots, aircrew, or support staff—was high and the only way to fill the gaps in FEAF was from the ranks of the active Air Force and recalled reservists (see next chapter).

At the same time, the Air Force was pulling trained personnel for combat duty, ATC was expanding in an attempt to fill the Air Force's strength goal. By January 1951 that meant going from 70 to 95 groups. ATC had already witnessed what expansion meant in terms of instructor shortages and its consequences. In 1949 ATC had to use recent flying training graduates as instructors. That year Williams AFB had a high accident rate believed to be tied to this practice. The flying training program that students entered in 1950 and 1951 was the result of a 1949 restructuring based on a study conducted by the US Office of Education. Headquarters ATC took up the Office of Education's suggestions ranging from defining course content better to employing only instructors who wanted to teach and who had the proper qualifications. But it also revamped pilot training. Prior to 1949, training consisted of eight months in basic flying training followed by four months in advanced training. In 1949, ATC divided the yearlong training program into three segments.

The first part was a four-week preflight session conducted at Lackland. After that, pilot candidates spent six months at basic flying training followed by six months of advanced

training. Unlike World War II, when the amount of time spent on pilot training went down, ATC maintained the course length and, at least through 1950 and into early 1951, kept its qualification of at least two years of college.

ATC's pilot training program during the Korean War benefited from the 1948-1950 expansion. When 1948 began, Randolph was the only base providing basic flying training for the Air Force. As noted in Chapter I, by the end of 1949 that number jumped to four: Randolph, Goodfellow, Perrin, and Connally AFBs. At the same time, there were two advanced multi-engine training bases—Reese and Vance—as well as two advance single-engine bases—Williams and Las Vegas.

While ATC was expanding its basic pilot training program, it also added to advanced pilot training. Enid AFB was



Mather AFB navigation students practice dead reckoning in a TC-47 using radio compass, Loran, or celestial navigation, ca. August 1950.

(AETC/HO Archives)

the first addition. It reopened in 1 August 1948, doubling ATC's bases devoted to the production of multi-engine pilots—Barksdale being the first base.

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An ATC F-86 over the Nellis range, 1950s.

(Photo Nellis AFB)

However, its opening was not without problems. The Berlin Airlift and the demand for pilots to support it almost closed the base before it could properly open. With personnel headed to Europe to man the airlift, ATC was forced to scrounge people from other bases—Randolph primarily—to bring Enid (later renamed Vance) up to strength. At the Oklahoma base, students transitioned from the single-engine T-6 to the twin-engine TB-25 aircraft.

Reese AFB was another reactivated and redesignated base. Originally known as Lubbock Field during World War II, the base was returned to duty on 1 August 1949 as an advanced multi-engine pilot training base. Three months later its first class began when the 3500th Pilot Training Wing moved from Barksdale. At the end of November, ATC renamed the base in honor of Shallowater, Texas, native 1Lt Augustus F. Reese, who was killed over Sardinia in May 1943.

By the time of the Korean War, ATC had two advance single-engine pilot training bases, Williams and Las Vegas. Williams was one of the few bases left active after World War II. At the end of the war, it had been a bombardier and specialized 2- and 4-engined training

base. However, by 1948 the base was producing advanced single-engine pilots. It retained that mission until 1952.

Las Vegas (later Nellis) AFB reactivated as an advanced fighter pilot training base on 1 April, but it was 1 March 1949 before training began there.

As 1951 began, ATC added a new flying mission to Tyndall when it opening the Interceptor Aircrew School. This was in addition to its Aircraft Controller Schools. Tyndall produced all-weather capable fighter crews—a much-needed commodity in Korea—using F-86s, F-89s, and F-94s. The base was also the home of the USAF Instrument Pilot School. Graduates from this school returned to their home units to teach instrument flying.⁸³

EXPANSION AND PILOT PRODUCTION

The 1 January 1951 announcement that the Air Force would expand to 95 wings was only one in a series of planned expansions begun in the inter-war period. At the start of the Korean War, the Air Force was already expanding to 48 wings, though this leapfrogged throughout the rest of the year. Under the 48-wing program, ATC was supposed to produce 4,000 pilots per year. While this was only 1,000 above the Air Force's stated goal of 3,000 per year, it was more than double ATC's actual output of 1,904 graduates. Going to 95 wings meant an annual production of 7,200 pilots. With an expected attrition rate of 29 percent, ATC would have to start with 10,000 students. Many of those who would fill this quota were reservists recalled to active service or Air National Guardsmen. As will be seen in

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Chapter III, the use of reservists and guardsmen was far from trouble free.⁸⁴

Training the trainers was one of ATC's main functions. Expansion of combat crew training at Randolph necessitated the transfer of its Pilot Instructor School to Craig in September 1950. There the school expanded greatly. The school taught both Air Force personnel who would go on to be instructors and contract civilian instructors who would teach basic flying training to future Air Force pilots. But there was a problem with the latter. Contractors evidently hired many of their instructors without paying close attention to qualifications. Of the first 45 civilian instructors that entered the school, only 11 completed the course.⁸⁵

With an even greater demand for pilots, and thus instructors, ATC expanded the size of the class from 49 to 95 and shortened the course from 8 to 6 weeks. The result was dramatic. While Randolph had produced 109 instructors in the first half of 1950 (an annual rate of 218), the Craig school produced 875 in Fiscal Year 1951, a 400 percent increase.⁸⁶

CONTRACT FLYING TRAINING

As mentioned above, in addition to its normal flying training, ATC revived a system used during World War II, contracting out basic flying training. In

1948, the Aeronautical Training Society, an organization formed during World War II to represent flying training contractors, began pressing for a revival of the Air Force contract flying training program to meet the increased need for pilots. The Air Force commissioned the Stanford Research Institute to examine



Maj Gen Robert W. Harper, ATC Commander, 1948-54. (AETC/HO Archives)

the idea and it returned a study in 1949 calling for the program's revival. Private contractors could deliver pilots at a cheaper cost and with reduced strain on Air Force personnel and facilities. A revived program also offered a quicker way of rapidly expanding flying training during a war mobilization.⁸⁷ As an ATC study of contract flying training stated: "During World War II, contract training had reached the dimensions of a rather sizable industry, which was rapidly demolished by demobilization."⁸⁸

Indeed, that industry had produced thousands of primary flying training graduates, basic pilot training graduates, navigators, glider pilots, and a variety of other pilots, including the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP).⁸⁹

The day before the North Korea invasion, Headquarters Air Force directed ATC to conduct a survey of potential contractor sites and provide answers within five weeks. With a limited amount of time and a war starting, ATC concentrated on locations in the South. On 28 September 1950, ATC commander, Maj Gen Robert W. Harper, recommended six fields: Minter Field,

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Bakersfield, California; Max Westheimer Field, Norman, Oklahoma; Sanford Airport, Sanford, Florida; Tye Field, Abilene, Texas; Columbus AFB, Columbus, Mississippi; and Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi. While ATC proposed, it was up to Air Materiel Command to dispose. It chose Greenville AFB, Mississippi, a name not on ATC's list, as the first base and Columbus AFB as the next. It chose these two old Air Force bases to avoid "legal issues."⁹⁰

Graham Aviation Company was awarded the first contract and started operations at Greenville AFB on 1 December 1950. Nineteen days later California Eastern Airways, Incorporated, began operations at Columbus AFB. Over the next ten months seven more schools would open.⁹¹

FOREIGN FLYING TRAINING

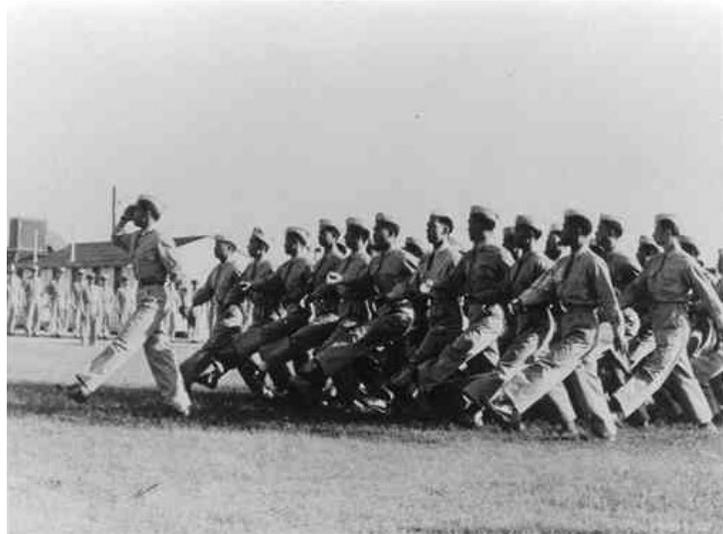
In addition to training its own pilots and aircrews, the USAF took on the job of training airmen from other friendly nations. It was not the first time the Air Force had taken on such a burden during a time when training facilities were stretched thin.

During World War II, the United States trained around 21,000 of airmen from the United Kingdom, France, China, Brazil, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. The object was to produce competent foreign pilots for use against German and Japan. Like so many other wartime projects, once the war ended Lend-Lease Act funding for most of this training evaporated. However, because of

the civil war in China, President Truman extended the training of Nationalist pilots beyond the end of Lend-Lease. Their training continued into 1947. After that point, US training was carried out in China itself.⁹²

But the end of Lend Lease did not mark the end of foreign training. There were Latin American students during the interim as there were a small number of students from Greece and Turkey trained under the Truman Doctrine. But training foreign pilots was a small program during the postwar years. As the Air Force built its strength in the years 1948 to 1950, the number of foreign students, primarily Greek, also increased.⁹³

As tensions with the Soviet Union increased in the days following the Czech Coup and the Berlin Crisis, Congress passed the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949. This produced the Mutual Defense Assistance Program in early 1950 that trained foreign aircrew much as Lend-Lease had during World War II.



Chinese students at Marana, Arizona, 1944. Some of these students may have flown against US pilots in the Korean War. (AETC/HO Archives)

THE DARK DAYS

Primarily aimed at NATO countries, the French were the first to take advantage of the program sending 74 enlisted men to Randolph AFB in April 1950. The French graduated in October 1950 with half* going on to F-51 training at Craig AFB and half going on to F-80 training at Williams AFB, Arizona. In addition to French pilots, ATC trained nine navigation students.⁹⁴

The Dutch followed in May with 44 enlisted pilot candidates. They entered training at Goodfellow AFB on 2 October 1950, just as the French were ending their training at Randolph. By mid-November there were even more foreign students at ATC bases. The Norwegians arrived at Connally AFB on 16 November to begin basic flying training. These were just the first of many. The number of foreign students would grow over the coming years.⁹⁵

EBB TIDE AND COUNTEROFFENSIVE

The United States and its allies had taken a beating during both the opening days of the war and since Communist China intervened. Although not forced to retreat to Pusan, as it had in September 1950, UN forces had been pushed back 25 miles south of Seoul. There they stood until 25 January 1951, when the UN staged its first counteroffensive of the year. Under the cover of Fifth Air Force's fighter-bombers, UN forces steadily advanced, retaking Kimpo Air Base on 10 February.⁹⁶

The 315th Air Division, which contained a future AETC unit—the 314th Troop Carrier Group—delivered tons of

* Seventy-four French students had entered the program but only 57 graduated. Sixteen were eliminated and one was killed.



A French pilot completes his last F-51 landing at Craig AFB, Class 52-H.

(AETC/HO Archives)

supplies to troops when thawing roads became impassable. Near the end of March, troop carriers dropped a reinforced regiment north of Seoul and re-supplied it.⁹⁷

At the same time, FEAF units continued to bomb targets in North Korea. But the Fifth Air Force ran into stiff resistance in northwestern Korea south of the Yalu and north of the Chongchon Rivers. "MiG Alley," as the region was called, was, for the time being, an area of Communist air superiority.⁹⁸

By February 1951, the recruit rush had come under control at Lackland. Sheppard had taken its place as the second "Gateway to the Air Force" and Sampson would soon be producing BMT graduates. However, shortages of nearly every type persisted during the period, whether it was instructors, spare parts,

AIR TRAINING COMMAND AND THE KOREAN WAR

training aircraft, or maintenance personnel. Yet the Air Force, and especially ATC, was coming to grips with the situation at hand and was planning for an expansion that would double the Air Force's size in less than a year.

Endnotes for Chapter II

³⁸ As quoted in McCullough, *Truman*, p. 772.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Winged Shield, Winged Sword: A History of the United States Air Force, Vol II, 1950-1997*, Bernard C. Nalty, General Editor, Air Force History and Museums Program, Washington, DC, 1997, pp. 1129-130.

⁴¹ Condit, *The Test of War*, pp. 30-1.

⁴² Larry Benson, "The USAF's Korean War Recruiting Rush," *Aerospace Historian*, June 1978, p. 63.

⁴³ The Handbook of Texas Online, "Sheppard Air Force Base," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/SS/qbs6.html>.

⁴⁴ Dwight W. Tuttle, "Sheppard AFB and the Korean War," Headquarters 82nd Training Wing History Office, 1 June 2000, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Benson, "The USAF's Korean War Recruiting Rush," p. 63.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Condit, *The Test of War*, p. 66.

⁴⁹ AETC History, 1995, p. 176.

⁵⁰ AETC History, Jul 50 – Jun 51, p. 231-233.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-234.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 235-240.

⁵³ Peter A. Law, "Randolph AFB during the Korean War," 12 TW/HO.

⁵⁴ Jerome A. Ennels, *A Brief History of Gunter Air Force Station, 1940-*

1980, Office of History, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, 15 September 1981, pp. 48-51.

⁵⁵ Benson, "The USAF's Korean War Recruiting Rush," p. 64.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65; Condit, *The Test of War*, p. 490;

⁵⁸ Benson, "The USAF's Korean War Recruiting Rush," p. 65.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² ATC History 1 July 1950 – 30 June 1951, Vol I, pp. 27-28

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶⁴ Benson, "The USAF's Korean War Recruiting Rush," p. 66.

⁶⁵ 3650th Air Force Indoctrination Wing, "Historical Data: 10 December 1950 to 31 March 1951," ATEC Archives, Microfilm Roll M2358, pp. 3-8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 14-18.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-96.

⁷² Air University History Office, "Maxwell and the Korean War," n.d., pp. 4-5.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Eileen M. Barrett, *History of Technical Training in ATC, 1941-1976*, History and Research Division, Office of the Chief of Staff, Headquarters Air

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Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas, January 1977, pp. 33.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-34.

⁷⁶ Tyndall Air Force Base Supports the Korean Conflict

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, ATC History, Jul 50 – Jun 51, pp. 633-34.

⁷⁸ ATC History, Jul 50 - Jun 51, p. 631.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 631-32

⁸⁰ Thomas A. Manning, *The World is Our Classroom: A Brief History of the Air Force Field Training Program*, History and Research Office, Office of the Chief of Staff, Headquarters Air Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas, n.d., pp. 1-17.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-57.

⁸² Quoted in Manning, *The World is Our Classroom*, p. 55.

⁸³ Tyndall Air Force Base Supports the Korean Conflict

⁸⁴ ATC Jul 50 – Jun 51, pp. 130-133.

⁸⁵ ATC, Jul 50 – Jun 51, p. 400.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 401-403.

⁸⁷ Barry Nickle, *Contract Flying Training in Air Training Command, 1939-1980*, History and Research Division, Headquarters Air Training Command, September 1981, pp. 13-14.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16, 47.

⁹² Jay E. Hines, *History of Foreign Training in ATC, 1941-1976*, History and Research Division, Office of the

Chief of Staff, Headquarters Air Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas, n.d., pp. 35-37.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ “1st UN Counteroffensive: January 25-April 21, 1951,” http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/afhra/wwwroot/korean_war/korean_war_campaigns/1st_un_counteroffensive_012551_042151.html; A. Timothy Warnock, ed., *The USAF in Korea: A Chronology, 1950-1953*, Air Force History and Museums Program, Air University Press, Maxwell AFB, AL, 2000, pp. 28-32.

⁹⁷ “1st UN Counteroffensive: January 25-April 21, 1951,” http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/afhra/wwwroot/korean_war/korean_war_campaigns/1st_un_counteroffensive_012551_042151.html.

⁹⁸ “CCF Spring Offensive: April 22-July 8, 1951,” http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/afhra/wwwroot/korean_war/korean_war_campaigns/ccf_springoffensive_042251_070851.html.

CHAPTER III

GROWTH AND STABILITY

February 1951 – April 1952

RECOVERY AND ATTACK

Even as ATC struggled with the flood of recruits at Lackland, the US military was fighting to stabilize the situation on the ground in Korea. November 1950 to January 1951 had seen the worst tactical losses for the US since the beginning of the war. Chinese forces drove US and UN units from the verge of the North Korean-Chinese border to below the 38th Parallel and recaptured Seoul. The new ground commander, Lt Gen Matthew B. Ridgway,* faced the daunting task of halting the UN retreat and establishing a holding action.

FEAF, too, had faced a difficult time. The Air Force's ability to use cargo planes to resupply and evacuate wounded Marines and Army troops at Chosin Reservoir undoubtedly saved lives. Its B-29s had destroyed Chinese supply centers, forcing them to either disperse their matériel or stage it in Manchuria. Either way bombing missions had disrupted the flow of supplies heading south. And, as both the North Koreans and the UN had learned, overstretched supply lines was an Achilles heel in Korea.

But FEAF faced an even tougher challenge. When Chinese forces entered the war, so too did the Chinese Air Force. Its MiG-15 jet fighters were faster and flew

higher than any US aircraft in theater. US air superiority over the peninsula was threatened. In response, the Air Force dispatched the F-84 equipped 27th Fighter-Escort Wing from Bergstrom AFB, Texas,† in early December. The 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing, New Castle County Airport, Delaware, followed with its F-86s at mid-month.

EXPANSION AND DIVISION

In January 1951, the Air Force was given the green light to expand from 48 to 95 wings. This meant expanding the force from the 411,277 on active duty before the war to over 1 million. Of course, that meant ATC would have to train more pilots, aircrew, technicians, administrators, and other support personnel as well as requiring more facilities and equipment. At the beginning of the war, ATC had a total of 13,600 recruits in BMT, 27,640 in technical training, and 3,572 students in flying training of various types. To manage training ATC had 70,801 officers and enlisted personnel. That number doubled to 142,000 before the end of the fiscal year, i.e., July 1951.‡

† The 12 Fighter-Escort Wing, a future ATC unit, back-filled the 27 FEW at the Austin, Texas, air base in December 1950.

‡ ATC's budget likewise more than doubled during Fiscal Year 1951 (July 1950 to June 1951). ATC expended \$371 million in FY 50 and \$614 million in

* Ridgway replaced Walker, who had died in a jeep accident in December 1950.

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General Ridgway tours the fighting front. L-R are: Lt Gen Matthew Ridgway, US Eighth Army commander; Maj Gen Charles Palmer, commander, 1st Cav Div; Col John Daskalopoulos, commander, 7th Cav Regt, 1st Cav Division (US Army Photo)

As the Air Force expanded, so did ATC's workload. More work meant more people, which meant an increased need for space. But additional office space at the command's headquarters at Scott AFB was running out. The command even attempted to lease space in nearby Belleville, Illinois, but this proved impractical. More people were squeezed onto Scott, but it would soon be full. With no end to the expansion in sight, and the difficulty of administering flying, technical, and basic training programs increasing, ATC began exploring ways to solve this knotty problem. Establishing subcommands, as had been done during World War II, was the proposed solution. While Headquarters ATC would oversee training and establish policy, three sub commands—flying, technical, and indoctrination—were envisioned to take the load. However, as planning progressed, the idea of a separate

indoctrination command was dropped. Instead, the Technical Training Air Force, as the subcommand would be named, would incorporate indoctrination as part of its mission. Planners believed that a technical command could better manage the flow of recruits into technical schools—where most would end up.⁹⁹

The decision on flying training was a little more clear-cut, at least for the time being. The plan called for ATC to establish the Flying Training Air Force to administer its growing pilot, navigator, and combat crew training programs. As noted in the next chapter, eventually the flying program would grow too large even for the FTAF and a new organization was added.

Headquarters Air Force approved ATC's "decentralization" plan. However, it warned ATC not to "dislocate present activities nor overload already taxed communities."¹⁰⁰ That led to the problem of where to put the new commands. The first choices were Randolph and Lowry for the new headquarters; however, both bases were already programmed for expansion. Waco became the second choice for the Flying Training Air Force. There was room in two buildings in town for the advance party. The city was "adjacent" to the flying training bases of the Gulf States, and Connally AFB was nearby to provide administrative support. Additional buildings would be built on land belonging to St Basil's College in town. Air Force approved of the plan and the Flying Training Air Force (FTAF) was established at Waco on 1 May 1951.¹⁰¹

It took longer to find a suitable location for the Technical Training Air Force (TTAF). ATC eventually settled on facilities belonging to the Gulf Coast Military Academy near Biloxi, Mississippi. That put the new headquarters just five miles from

FY 51. See ATC History, 1 Jul 50 - 30 Jun 51, p. 118.

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Keesler AFB, one of its largest facilities. TTAF activated there on 16 July 1951.¹⁰²

Establishing training air forces, their headquarters, and staffing them was only part of the process. The idea had been to establish these subcommands and delegate much of ATC's functions to them. Headquarters ATC would monitor and inspect its junior headquarters rather than become involved in the day-to-day operations of training. But this was easier said than done. FTAF and TTAF rapidly became the size and shape of major commands yet they were subordinate organizations. TTAF alone was, by mid-1951, the largest single "command" in the Air Force with over 200,000 personnel. Likewise, FTAF was the third largest "command" in the Air Force and, as the ATC historian of the time recorded, "the largest single user of aircraft."¹⁰³

The next step was to establish functions and expand the limits the two training air forces operated under. Air Force regulations stood in the way of much of what ATC wanted to do. In the autumn of 1951, ATC presented Air Force with a list of 95 functions it wanted the training air forces to perform that ran counter to regulations. While Headquarters Air Force agreed in principle, some of ATC's suggestions involved not merely regulations but public law and presidential directives. It would take time to make what changes it could.¹⁰⁴

In the meantime, ATC delegated 35 non-controversial functions to the training air forces. Of course, transfer of functions translated into an increase in personnel. FTAF believed it needed over 800 personnel to accomplish its new functions. However, the headquarters bumped up against overall ATC manpower limits. This pointed to the problem of untangling what Headquarters ATC was supposed to do and what functions actually devolved to its subordinate commands. ATC was finding it hard to let go of



12th Fighter-Escort Wing

The 12 FEW did not deploy to Korea, but it did serve with distinction during those years. It moved to Bergstrom AFB, Texas, in December 1950, replacing the 27 FEW after the latter rapidly deployed to Korea to meet the MiG-15 threat. Newly equipped with F-84E *Thunderjets*, the wing practiced air-to-ground gunnery at Matagorda Island, Texas, and trained Turkish Air Force officers. During a mission escorting B-36 bombers on a cross-country flight, a flight of the wing's aircraft flew into a "dark mass" and, to a plane, experienced engine flameout and loss of electrical power. All eight aircraft crashed near Richmond, Indiana, with the loss of three pilots killed and two injured.

Wing personnel deployed to RAF Manston, United Kingdom, in July 1951, taking up both the aircraft of the 31 FEW and its mission of protecting SAC bombers based in the UK. Over the next six months the wing further deployed to Sola Air Base, Norway, to participate in a NATO exercise and Wheelus Air Base, Libya, for gunnery practice. Needless to say, the wing's presence in the UK reinforced NATO's deterrent against any Soviet action in Europe.

Source: SSgt Peter A. Law, "The 12th Fighter-Escort Wing During the Korean War," 12th Flying Training Wing, Randolph AFB, TX, 2001.

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some functions, especially letting go, if only slightly, of the manpower reigns. Because of ATC's grip, FTAF and TTAF lacked flexibility in how to use its manpower, a problem that would continue for some time.¹⁰⁵

As the training air forces workload and personnel numbers went up, Headquarters ATC's manning declined. ATC's manning dropped from 1610 to 970 between 1 August 1951 and 25 February 1952. During the same period, manning at FTAF went from 772 to 691 while FTAF declined from 882 to 775.¹⁰⁶

FLYING TRAINING AIR FORCE

When FTAF stood up on 1 May 1951, it had authority over 17 active bases and 3 civilian contract schools on Air Force bases.* As FTAF's first history noted, the purpose of the new air force was "to administer the expanded flying training program." And it



An ATC F-86D fires rockets at a training range. (AETC/HO Archives)

* These bases were: Reese, Randolph, Williams, Mather, Goodfellow, Perrin, James Connally, Vance, San Marcos, Nellis, Ellington, Craig, Tyndall, and Luke. Civilian contract schools were located at Greenville AFB, MS; Columbus AFB, MS; and Spence Field, GA.

was still expanding. Over the next 9 months, FTAF added at least six more training bases and six bases that conducted civilian contract flying courses.

More Bases

Luke AFB had already been returned to active duty when it came to ATC, and thus FTAF, from SAC. Although back on the Air Force's property books since 1 January 1951, its host unit, the 127th Fighter Wing, did not arrive from Romulus, Michigan, until 23 February. This Air National Guard unit had been under the Continental Air Command before both its transfer to Luke and to ATC. Its job was "to augment jet fighter combat crew training at Nellis."¹⁰⁷

Luke had been officially inactivated in 1946, but its proximity to the Gila Bend Gunnery Range meant continued use by Air Force wings beginning in 1950. Otherwise, the 197th Fighter Squadron[†] and a 12-man detachment from the Airways and Air Communications Service, which ran an aeronautical radio station, were the sole residents of the base until the 127th arrived.¹⁰⁸

Restoration began soon after the start in January and lasted through the end of the year. The runway was extended to 8,800 feet and the runways at two auxiliary fields were extended and improved as well. But there were delays. Material was in short supply and three floods in July and August caused a two week delay.¹⁰⁹

Although flying training began in April 1951, the "poor reliability" of the unit's F-84B and C aircraft caused a halving of the student load. The aircraft had been stored on Long Island, New York, before being shipped to the Michigan Air National Guard. The salty Atlantic air had taken its toll.

[†] The 197th Fighter Squadron was the first unit of the Arizona Air National Guard.

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With federalization, the move to Arizona, and the added demands of the new training mission, the F-84s quickly developed problems. Of the 69 aircraft on hand in March 1951, only 25 were operational. It would be a year before the wing received the improved, and easier to maintain, F-84G model.¹¹⁰

The F-80 *Shooting Star* was assigned to the base in early 1952 but only stayed until mid-September when they were discontinued. During their relative short stay, the F-80s proved more reliable than the F-84s.¹¹¹

Over the next two years, Luke trained US and foreign pilots in three different aircraft. The short-lived F-80 course produced 27 graduates, while the F-51* course furnished

Reactivating Bryan AFB was relatively easy. The government had retained this World War II training base in case of need. When it reopened on 1 July 1951, ATC established the 3530th Pilot Training Wing (Advanced Single-Engine) at the old base. However, reactivating two of Bryan's auxiliary fields proved slightly more complicated. Easterwood Field had been returned to Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Texas A&M University) at the end of the war. Located just a mile and a half from the campus, the college was reluctant to return the field to government use, even though it had received the field under an agreement that gave the government use if necessary. The Air Force did not want to completely take over the field, just establish joint-use. As the history of the time noted,



Pilots of the 127th Fighter Group, recently recalled to active duty, discuss aerial maneuvers following a training flight at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. (Air National Guard Photo)

624 pilots. The largest contingent, however, were the 1,019 graduates of the F-84B/C/G courses.¹¹²

* This mission transferred to the base in June 1951 from Nellis.

“After further consideration, though, a joint-use agreement was reached in October [1951].”¹¹³

Recouping the second auxiliary field, Hearne, was more involved. After World War II the field had been sold to nine

AIR TRAINING COMMAND AND THE KOREAN WAR



Two dozen members of Idaho's 190th Fighter Squadron pose next to one of the unit's F-51D Mustang fighters at George Air Force Base in 1951. The 190th served at the California base and at Moody Air Force Base in Georgia for 20 months to replace Air Force units fighting in Korea. (Air National Guard Photo)

individuals. When three of them resisted the government retaking the land, the government initiated condemnation procedures to take the land at the “fair market price.”¹¹⁴

Like many other World War II training bases, the field at Big Springs, Texas, had reverted to the city and since been sold off to numerous interests. It took time to recapture all the land associated with Big Springs AFB. Indeed, the process lasted until December 1951. Nevertheless, construction went forward with the city's help. On 1 October ATC officially activated the 3560th Pilot Training Wing (Advanced Single-Engine). However, delays caused by lack of building material and clouded land titles prevented the base from being formally activated until 1 January 1952.¹¹⁵

Moody AFB reactivated in April 1951 under SAC control. Ownership was transferred

to ATC on 1 September 1951. That same day ATC established the 3550th Training Wing (Interceptor Aircrew). However, SAC personnel remained at Moody for some time, delaying the transfer of ATC personnel. The two commands decided to gradually withdraw SAC personnel, swapping them for ATC members.¹¹⁶

By the time ATC took over the base, renovation work was already underway, though Moody could not accommodate its new mission. Construction projects included extending two runways, adding jet fuel storage tanks, improving taxiways and maintenance facilities, as well as building more family housing and a commissary. The first phase was completed in mid-December 1951, with the remainder contracted in February 1952.¹¹⁷

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Contract Flying Training

FTAF considered management of the civilian contract flying training one of its most important administrative duties. As mentioned in Chapter II, the contract flying program was to provide entry level flying training for future Air Force pilots. During World War II, the use of civilian contractors for this task had proven successful in producing large numbers of pilots in a short amount of time. The need during Korea was no less acute. While the process of setting up contracts began in 1950, the program itself did not begin in earnest until 1951.

At its establishment FTAF inherited three bases already in the process of standing up as contract flying bases: Greenville, Columbus, and Spence. These World War II-era bases were chosen because they had been maintained, though in inactive status, since 1949. Thus, rehabilitation costs were low and covered by the government. However, as the need for more pilots increased, so too did the need for more bases. A board of three civilians and three Air Force officers was established to select more sites. One of the most important criteria was the site's elevation. Sites could not be over 3,000 feet above sea level. The reason was simple. For aerobatic training, students needed to fly at least 5,000 feet above ground level. A base at 3,000 feet or higher meant flying at a minimum of 8,000 feet. Flying above 10,000 feet required oxygen, something the Air Force wished to avoid.¹¹⁸

The board eventually selected five disused World War II bases: Hondo, Texas (opened 5 June); Malden, Missouri (11 July); Bainbridge, Florida (11 July); Marana, Arizona (1 September); and Kinston, North Carolina (17 October).¹¹⁹

AMC selected civilian contractors on a fixed cost basis, just as had been done in World War II, at the first five bases. This

later proved unworkable, as contractors had underestimated the actual cost of flying training. Some of this was due to the Air Force's lack of clarity on what it expected. As a result, ATC and AMC revised the contracting system on 26 June 1951 to a cost plus fixed fee contract, retroactive to the beginning of the program. Contractors received \$1.50 for each flying hour for the first 50,000 hours, \$1.25 each for the next 25,000 hours, and \$1.00 above 75,000 hours.¹²⁰



A California Eastern Airways contract instructor (center) gives two students a preflight briefing, Columbus AFB, MS, 1950s. At Columbus, instructors initially wore gray uniforms. Later, instructors at all FTAF contract bases wore blue uniforms.

(14 FTW/HO Archives)

One of the costs contractors bore, at least for six bases, was base rehabilitation. As with most of the old bases, they had been returned to civilian use after the war. At least one of the buildings adjacent to the contractor's facilities at Bainbridge was still privately owned. It was used on Saturday nights as a dance hall and created some problems for the school.¹²¹

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Managing the contract was a bureaucratic tangle for the Air Force. When Headquarters Air Force delegated contractor oversight authority, it divided it between AMC and ATC without saying which did what. Confusion resulted. In April the two commands met to iron out the procedure, deciding that AMC would handle the legal aspects of the contracts while ATC would handle the rest. But this word did not always reach the base level. As problems persisted, the commands held a series of meetings with USAF and FTAF representatives to handle issues.¹²²

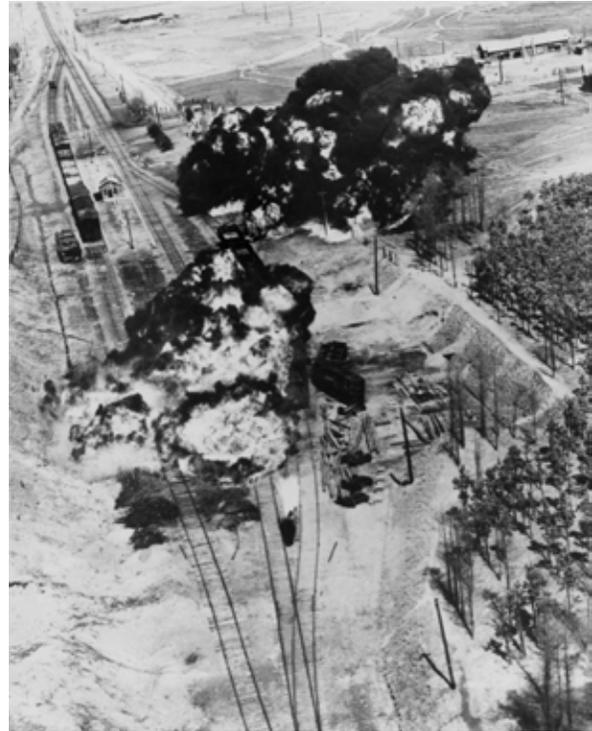
For FTAF managing contracts was a question of personnel and money. FTAF employed 816 people to manage contracts and handle the mountains of required paperwork. The ratio of FTAF personnel to students was 1.5 to 1. This was 50 percent higher than in World War II, but it was considerably less than the 7 to 1 ratio at regular Air Force bases conducting flying training. As for costs, FTAF spent \$1,161,441 of its operating budget for the month of December alone. This figure did not include the contract costs.¹²³

With the exception of Goodfellow AFB, contractors took over the basic flying training program. Goodfellow was both a yardstick with which FTAF measured contractor effectiveness and provided supervisors and check pilots for the contract schools.¹²⁴

The end product of the civilian contract program was 869 basic flying training graduates (out of 1,197 entrants) from four schools by the end of 1951. Many more students were in the pipeline.¹²⁵

COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE

With the spring of 1951 came a Chinese and North Korean offensive against UN forces. As they had done at the end of 1950, the Communists struck South Korean forces.

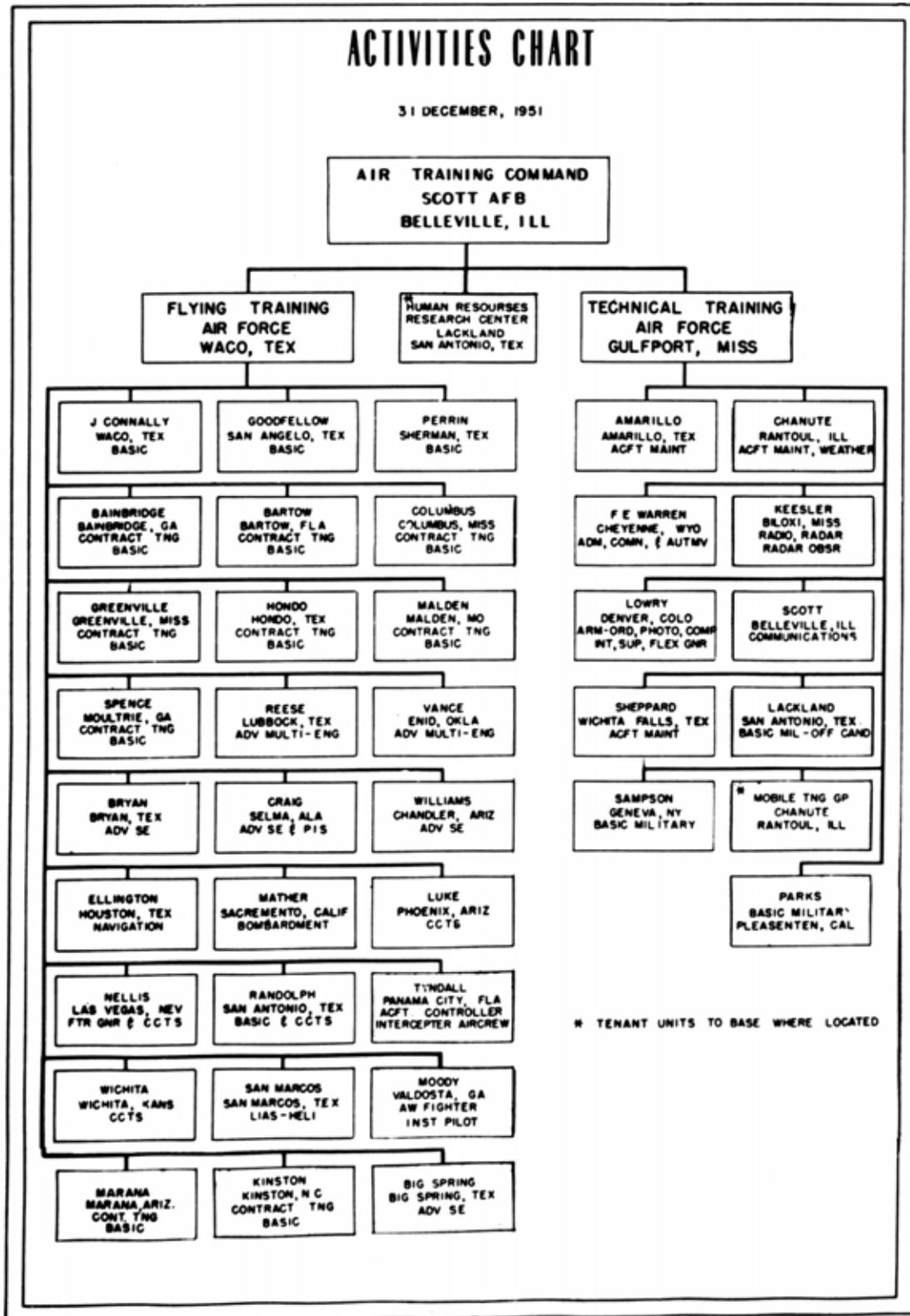


Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers attack lucrative targets behind the lines in Korea. (AETC Archives)

The onslaught caused a gap in the lines 40 to 55 miles northeast of Seoul. US Army, Marines, and British units rushed to plug the gap, bringing the enemy offensive to a temporary halt by 1 May. But this brief respite ended two weeks later when Communist forces attacked near Taepo near the east coast. However, within a week the Eighth Army stopped the attack and then went on the offensive, throwing enemy forces back.¹²⁶

While UN ground forces pushed back Communist forces, FEAF, US Marine, and US Navy air power continued their attacks on Communist ground forces and their airfields. For most of the Communist offensive, Chinese pilots remained north of the Yalu River, but on 20 May 50 MiGs engaged 36 Sabres.

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Organizational Chart from the 1952 ATC History (AETC Archives)

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During the action, Capt James Jabara, USAF, became the first “jet-to-jet” ace when he downed his fifth and sixth enemy aircraft. Over the next two weeks, USAF aircraft escorting B-29s engaged MiGs, destroying six more.

As UN forces again approached the 38th Parallel in early 1951, sentiment both in the Truman Administration and among the Allies grew to stop the advance at the old border. Or, if the advance continued, it should be slow and deliberate. Truman and the Allies wanted to negotiate an end to the war. To that end the Administration began putting out peace feelers to China and North Korea via the Soviets. For the Truman Administration the war in Korea threatened to expand and detracted attention from Europe, the real focus of US foreign policy. Evidence of this was Truman’s decision not to send more troops to Korea. While replacements would continue to go there, no additional forces would deploy. Instead, the thinly stretched US military would send additional forces to Europe.¹²⁷

But the Administration was vague in its instructions to General MacArthur. When the press asked Truman about UN forces crossing the 38th Parallel, he demurred saying it was a military decision. However, Allied sentiment was to hold at the 38th and thus restore the Republic of Korea—the original UN goal.¹²⁸

With General Ridgway’s forces just north of the 38th Parallel on March 23, Truman prepared to issue a cease-fire statement. MacArthur, however, issued his own statement that UN forces could “doom Red China to the risk of imminent military collapse.” At the same time he “stood ready”



The unchanging Taj Majhal, Randolph AFB, 1952.

(AETC/HO Archives)

to talk to Communist leaders to end the fighting.¹²⁹

The statement ruined Truman’s initiative before it got started and turned the President’s thoughts to dismissing the UN commander. The final straw was a letter MacArthur wrote to House Minority Leader Joseph W. Martin, Jr. (Rep-Mass.), in which the general supported expansion of the war. MacArthur was out of step with the Administration and would not remain silent. Truman, with the backing of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of Defense Marshall, relieved MacArthur on 11 April. Ridgway, the ground commander in Korea, replaced MacArthur.¹³⁰

On 23 June, with their offensive halted and then pushed back, the North Koreans, through the Soviet Union, proposed a cease-fire. UN forces continued their advance until early July when negotiations began at Kaesong, North Korea, 35 miles north of

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Seoul. Talks continued until suspended on 23 August. They would not resume until November. With talks on hold, UN forces conducted a fall offensive, strengthening its tactical position. Territorial gain was no longer the UN command's goal, attrition of enemy forces was.¹³¹

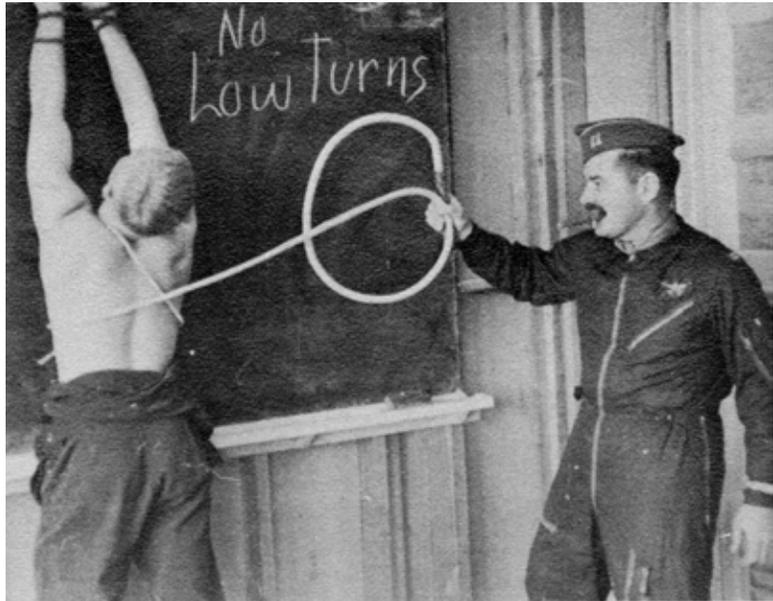
For FEAF it was a time to improve Korean airfields and continue its efforts to cripple enemy lines of communication. But the Chinese Air Force was strengthening its position as well. MiG Alley was all but inaccessible to UN air power while Communist pilots became more aggressive against Allied aircraft.

NEEDED: MORE PILOTS

Like the other services, the Air Force was understaffed in early 1950. The recession of 1948-49 had forced the Truman Administration to cut back on expenditures. Cutting personnel was the easiest and quickest way to do it. But the Air Force was left short of qualified officers. Using reservists on three-year active duty tours—which could be extended—became a popular way to both fill the gaps and provide reservists with training. However, the system had its problems. Most of the reservists recalled were rated officers thrown into non-rated jobs. As one historian wrote, “The recall was, therefore, only a qualified success; it filled out the ranks without really satisfying the specific requirement.”¹³²

When the Korean War started, the Air Force tried to redistribute officers in support of the war and in the defense of Europe—the suspected next target of Communist aggression. As noted in Chapter II, Air University and even ATC were denuded of officers for

either service in Korea or in Europe. But even this was not enough. In an effort to fill the gaps that developed from the tug at both ends of the world, the Air Force stepped up its voluntary recall of officers. Experience over the preceding two years had shown that recalling reservists would help, if not solve, the immediate manpower problem. But the response was disappointing. Reservists likely to be recalled were World War II veterans. Many believed they had done their bit and were less than eager to go back in harm's way or disrupt their lives. As a result, President Truman authorized involuntary recalls of both officers and enlisted men on 19 July 1950.¹³³



Training at Webb was strict—class book humor, 1952.
(AETC/HO Archives)

Involuntarily recalling reservists quickly became a sensitive political issue. Secretary Marshall laid down guidelines on recalling reservists on 24 October 1950. “Marshall directed that units and individuals receive at least four months advance notice of a recall to active duty and have at least thirty days to report after receiving orders.” The Air Force added its own guidelines, including an

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end to enlisted recalls,* and, with the war seemingly won in Korea, recalled fewer reservists.¹³⁴

China's intervention in the war dramatically and rapidly changed these policies. At the end of the year and into the first quarter of 1951, the Air Force involuntarily recalled 20,000 individuals—the largest recall of the war. But the system was haphazard and inefficient, mainly because most of the reservists' records had not been updated since World War II. Reservists were called to the colors seemingly without regard to their skills. Many found themselves either assigned to jobs for which they had no qualifications or to no job at all. Their morale declined as a result. Involuntary recalls would continue until December 1951. Even when the Air Force went to strictly voluntary recalls problems would persist.¹³⁵

Pilot procurement was not as big a problem even though ATC's training requirement went from 1,900 pilots a year in early 1950 to 3,000 by 1951. The Aviation Cadet Program brought in enough qualified applicants. Indeed, pilot production just prior to the outbreak of war was at a level that matched what field units could take. With a shortage of support personnel, flying units could not take any more. The influx of enlisted personnel during the latter half of 1950 and well into 1951 began to change that.¹³⁶

Still, after 1 August 1950, ATC faced the challenge of increasing pilot production from 3,000 to 4,000 to meet the Air Force's goal of 65 wings by May 1951. After Red China's intervention, that number jumped to 95 wings, or 7,200 pilots annually. Past experience told ATC planners that they could

expect a 29 percent washout rate, which translated into 10,000 students in training by November 1951 to meet these goals.¹³⁷



A student pilot gets the traditional dunking after his first solo. (AETC/HO Archives)

The Aviation Cadet Program was the single largest producer of qualified candidates—accounting for over one third of the total. Between June and December 1950, the Air Force took 9,000 applications for the program, and in June 1951 alone there were 7,000 applications processed. An additional 3,000 applicants were awaiting training. Undoubtedly, the draft had a positive impact on the program, but it also had a negative one as well. The attrition rate was not the expected—and historical—29 percent. It was 50 percent. Half of all applicants did not complete flying training—perhaps because of a downward revision of the Aircrew Battery Test in 1949. With the prospect of running out of qualified candidates

* The flood of enlisted recruits obviated the need to involuntarily recall enlisted men and the policy was dropped by the end of the year. But the officer recall remained in place.

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looming in the not too distant future, the Air Force investigated the problem and found that 18 percent of those that washed out resigned as a way to get around the draft. The catch they exploited was that signing up for the Aviation Cadet Program did not obligate the student to military service, but it did relieve them of further obligation under the draft. Once this was understood, General Gabriel P. Disosway, Air Force director of training in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, had cadets enlisted in the Air Force at the airmen basic rank with a four-year obligation, the standard enlistment term in the Air Force. If they resigned from flying training, aviation cadets would serve as enlisted troops two years longer than if they had been drafted by the Army.¹³⁸



Craig AFB cadets endure room inspection, 1951. (AETC/HO Archives)

Draft dodging was not the only, or largest, reason for the high drop out rate. Many cadets had entered the program expecting a life of excitement and glamour. What they found was the shock of military life. Hazing was the most cited reason for the program attrition rate. Some of the worst forms of hazing were eliminated in 1951. By mid-year the attrition rate dropped to 29 percent—the expected rate. But it did not stop there. The rate continued to drop, ending at a 26 percent rate in 1952.¹³⁹

While reducing hazing improved cadet retention, events in Korea affected young men's willingness to join the Air Force. By mid-1951 UN forces had recovered from the Chinese attacks and even recovered ground. When the war turned into a stalemate and peace talks began, the number of applications dropped dramatically. The Air Force needed an average of 1,000 entering students per month to keep pace with both those leaving the Air Force (or killed in action) and for expansion. By mid-1951 applications dropped to 150 per month. While the program had a backlog of applicants, that cushion would disappear quickly. The Air Force made two changes. In December 1951, General Disosway decreased the enlistment for washouts from four to two years. The second change, which took place in April 1952, lowered the Aircrew Battery Test score requirement from five to three. This action alone increased the applicant pool by a third. The two changes solved the problem and even produced a surplus.¹⁴⁰

“FEAR OF FLYING”

In addition to the Aviation Cadet Program, the Air Force used voluntary recalls to fill aircrew gaps. Indeed, Fifth Air Force discovered that by April 1951, “72 percent of the officers in the Far East Air Forces (FEAF)...were reservists.”¹⁴¹

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But FEAF was not the only command employing reservists. SAC was particularly concerned with finding enough aircrews. Guardsmen and reservists filled the gaps. It had been a little over a year since ATC took over combat crew training—and B-29 training in particular—when a crack began to appear in the system. Many of the individuals going through Randolph's training were reservists who had voluntarily returned to active duty. But by November 1951 a trend was beginning to develop. In increasing numbers observers and aircraft commanders were requesting removal from flying status. At Randolph this situation caused a problem. If the aircraft commander was removed from flying status the entire crew had to repeat training. A backlog was beginning to develop. In some cases aircrew members were reporting that they had a fear of flying while others were classified as lacking initiative or capability. "Fear of flying" was a new twist on a morale problem that had plagued SAC for several years. Living conditions and slow advancement in the command was reflected in poor retention rates. Beginning in November 1951, disgruntled reserve officers began to turn themselves in as unfit for flying, in essence grounding themselves. Many, but not all, of the pilots and observers attempting to stay out of the air were World War II veterans who had seen combat, some winning decorations for bravery. But they had volunteered for active duty during Korea believing they would either receive better treatment because of their past service or receive a ground assignment—relieving

younger men for combat. When they found themselves on a track for combat service many believed they had done their part during the last war and were once again facing danger while regular Air Force officers were assigned non-combat duty.¹⁴² Added to this was the pervasive belief, as expressed by the



Secretary of the Air Force Thomas K. Finletter, 1950-53.
(USAF Photo)

“Randolph Reserve,”* that the Air Force discriminated against reserves. Another complaint, which had some validity, was that reserve officers were “kept in the dark.” That reservists were looked down upon was beyond doubt, at least to a degree. One source noted Randolph’s operations officer publicly sneered “at the mental and physical qualifications of the recallées.”

While Randolph’s chaplain told a group of reservists “that Randolph had been a nice base until their arrival and suggested they showed far more interest in chasing women than in their military duties.”¹⁴³

To be sure, many of the recallées were combat veterans who now found themselves years later with settled lives and families now facing the uncertain future of a B-29 crewmember. Family problems, pressure by loved ones to stay out of harm’s way, and an increasingly unpopular war combined to produce the “fear of flying” trend that became noticeable in January 1952. The question was what should be done. Understandably, the Air Force was concerned. The trend was increasing and threatened to

* The “Randolph Reserve” were recalled officers undergoing B-29 training at the Texas base who issued a grievance letter to congressmen and senators.

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voluntary recall system, ATC recommended in 1952 that Continental Air Command* tell all recallees “that assignment to combat crew training was to be expected and whether or not they still desired recall.” Headquarters Air Force agreed and requested Continental Air Command “act accordingly.”¹⁴⁶

The fear of flying episode pointed up the fact that individuals recalled to active duty were at times discriminated against and kept uninformed. But this was not new, especially in a service that had expanded greatly over the past year and a half. At Randolph General McNaughton pursued “an aggressive campaign to motivate...Reservists toward duty.” He also held commanders accountable for morale. McNaughton also looked at aircrew makeup and ordered combat crews “composed of men as similar as possible in terms of age, family status, service experience, and rank.” Aircraft commanders, however, had to be senior in rank. As a result, by November 1952 instances of fear of flying had practically vanished.¹⁴⁷

FOUR PHASE PILOT TRAINING

At the same time the Air Force faced a pilot candidate shortage and the “Fear of Flying” cases, there was another concern with pilot training. As noted in Chapter II, in 1949 ATC changed its pilot training to a three-phased structure. Basic and advanced flying were balanced at six months each with one month added to the front of the process as pre-flight training. At the end of 1950, Headquarters USAF noted a disturbing trend. Over half—53 percent—of those who entered flying training did not graduate. In 1950 that amounted to 1,903 potential pilots lost. Worse, nearly 90 percent of those who had failed did so in basic flying

training. Thousands of flying hours had been wasted, as USAF saw it, on individuals who might have been screened out earlier.

While ending hazing brought the attrition rate back to its historic level, the Air Force wanted to go further. Its solution was to change the flying training program once again. Instead of a three-phase system with a short amount of pre-flight time, the new scheme called for 16 weeks of pre-flight training followed by a month of flight screening. It was hoped that these first 20 weeks would weed out those likely to wash out of the program before they reached basic flight training.

Convinced this was the way to go, in May HQ USAF asked ATC to comment on the plan. It was clear, however, that the Air Force wanted to put the plan into operation by 1 July 1951. ATC believed this was too fast. It set up a board staffed with its headquarters personnel, members from the newly created Flying Training Air Force as well the Air Staff. Over the next five months the board examined the proposed solution. In November 1951, it endorsed the 4-phase plan. However, it was not until May 1952—a full year since USAF sent the proposal to ATC—that a final agreement was worked out. In its final version, the four-phase program consisted of 12 weeks of preflight training; 18 weeks of primary training, featuring 120 hours of T-6 flight training; and 16 weeks of basic flying training, including 130 hours of flying in either the T-6 or T-28 and in several tactical aircraft. The fourth phase featured crew training and covered an average of 12 weeks.¹⁴⁸

B-47 TRAINING

Even as the United States was waging World War II, military planners and Boeing aircraft designers were looking to the next generation of bombers. The future was in

* Continental Air Command was in charge of reserve matters.

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jet aircraft that could fly higher, farther, faster, and carry a greater bomb load. The giant B-36 and the B-52 were the answers for strategic, i.e., atomic, heavy bombardment. But the Air Force also needed a smaller aircraft as well.¹⁴⁹

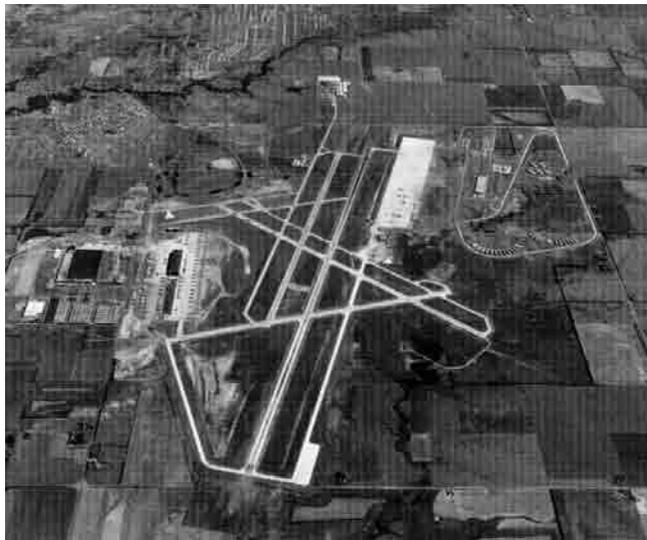
The three-man, swept-wing B-47 was viewed as a replacement for the rapidly becoming obsolete B-29 and its successor the B-50. Although design work began in 1943, it did not make its first flight until 1949. And even then there were noticeable design flaws. Although the new bomber had been designed to fill the medium bomber gap, it did not fulfill SAC's expectations of a bomber that could fly 2,500 miles. But such an aircraft would weigh 250,000 pounds, heavier than SAC wanted in a medium bomber. A sacrifice had to be made and it was range. The B-47 would have a planned range of 1,700 miles, fly at 40,000 feet at over 500 miles per hour, and carry 22,000 pounds of bombs. But adding necessary components, like the navigation radar and rear defense system, added more weight, thus reducing range. Another problem fur-

40,000 feet, the B-47 experienced fuel boil-off. The new bomber would need tanker support and bases closer to its targets.¹⁵⁰

Test flights of the XB-47 revealed another problem. Its six General Electric jet engines were underpowered, making the aircraft unsafe to fly. Nor was it safe for the crew to abandon the aircraft. There were no ejection seats in the early models, something the Air Force considered a critical piece of equipment for the high and fast bomber.¹⁵¹



Boeing B-47 Stratojet ca. 1949. (Boeing Aircraft Corporation)



Wichita, Kansas, Municipal Airport.
(AETC/HO Archives)

ther restricted the aircraft's range. Flying at

Despite these flaws, the Air Force urgently needed the medium bomber. The B-29 and B-50 were reaching the end of "growth potential," and the B-47 was the best available alternative. Even before the first B-47 took to the air, the Air Force was upping its order. The Korean War, "rising world tensions, and mounting urgency to build an atomic deterrent force raised the tempo of the B-47 program."¹⁵²

Production difficulties—mainly with engines and components—continually delayed production. By June 1952 the Air Force had received only 124 bombers and none were combat ready. These delays had an affect on aircrew training.¹⁵³ SAC assigned the task of training its crews to

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Second Air Force in late 1950. The 306th Bombardment Wing at MacDill AFB, Florida, was directed to establish a school and to produce 15 crews by September 1951. However, in January 1951 the task of training B-47 aircrews was transferred to ATC. As with B-29 combat crew training, ATC would take on the task, leaving SAC to concentrate on “building up combat potential.”¹⁵⁴

Headquarters Air Force’s January 1951 directive assigning the task to ATC also planned to acquire Wichita Municipal Airport in Kansas and Pinecastle Air Field from the city of Orlando, Florida, as training bases. The plan also allocated \$100 million for base construction, 84 B-47 aircraft for training, and 30 SAC aircraft commanders “as a cadre of instructors.”¹⁵⁵ The goal was to have 49 crews trained by the end of the year. None of the expectations would be met in full.

Unlike other bombers, the crew of the B-47 was envisioned as capable of performing each other’s tasks. As Walton S. Moody wrote, “Ideally all crew members were to be pilot-observers: that is, qualified multi-jet engine pilots would go to observer school to master navigation, bombing, and radar.”¹⁵⁶ ATC designed a training program in four phases to accommodate this plan. Phase One consisted of three weeks of T-33 transition training. Phase Two was three weeks of B-47 training with a Mobile Training Detachment. Phase Three was B-47 transition training. The final phase was six weeks of combat crew training. ATC based its plan on using Wichita as the primary instructor training base and in training crews as only aircraft became available to SAC.¹⁵⁷

Wichita and B-47 Training

Wichita Municipal Airport* was the location of choice to train B-47 instructors and aircrews. The Boeing factory that produced the new bomber lay on one side of the facility, allowing aircraft to literally leave Boeing’s hands and move onto a training base. With the January 1951 Air Force directive naming Wichita as one of two training sites, Air Force representatives began negotiating use of the base with the city of Wichita in early 1951. Both parties agreed on a price of \$8.65 million. However, the Corps of Engineers was not pleased with this deal. It reminded the Air Force that it alone had the authority to negotiate real estate purchases for it and the Army. The Department of Justice, too, objected to the purchase. It believed the price was too high. Justice instructed the Corps of Engineers to acquire the base through condemnation. A Notice of Taking was eventually filed with the court on 1 June 1951. The court would set the fair price for the base.¹⁵⁸

Not having ownership of the base did not stop the Air Force from beginning to implement its plans. Although legal authority to build at the airport was not granted until 1 June 1951, construction was already underway. In almost every case the city proved responsive to Air Force needs when it came to getting the base ready. But there were delays, some natural, some bureaucratic.

One of the first projects at Wichita was the construction of a tent city to temporarily house up to 250 men by the expected turnover date of 1 June 1951, and a 1,750-man city by 20 July. These projects were threatened by rain, and the resulting mud hampered construction. Troops who were erecting tents were shifted to helping fight floods “which menaced the Wichita area.”

* Later McConnell AFB.

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Even with flooding, a tent city for up to 500 men was ready on 1 June, exceeding the original plan.

Differences of opinion over the base's layout and facilities caused delays. ATC stepped into the middle of this situation when it tried to lease a hangar from the Wood River Oil and Refining Company. With hangar construction far down the road, and Wichita winters notoriously harsh, ATC believed it needed the hangar otherwise there was the real possibility of no B-47 flights that winter. Headquarters Air Force quickly cut ATC short, reminding it that only the Corps of Engineers could negotiate real estate leases. Air Force also noted the Wood River Oil's hangar was part of the general condemnation procedure, though there was no resolution on that issue in the foreseeable future.¹⁵⁹

At the end of May, General Harper, ATC Commander, was so concerned with the situation at Wichita that he wrote the Air Force Chief of Staff a letter outlining all the problems at the base. Wichita, as he saw it, was a potential "hot potato." With only two weeks before the start of scheduled student training, the base did not belong to the Air Force, nor were facilities ready. Tents were no substitute for permanent structures—especially considering the area's winter weather. As he pointed out, no permanent construction had even started. As his staff's actions regarding the Wood River Oil hangar indicated, the lack of hangar space for aircraft maintenance was a real ATC concern. He predicted that without a hangar there would be no winter flying. Without B-47s flying by the end of the year there was no way instructor training could be completed in time to begin crew training

by December. As the official history of the period noted, "In short, he felt, 'the whole situation adds up to another potential 'Lackland'.'"¹⁶⁰

Wichita was activated as an Air Force base on 5 July—six days after Harper's letter. There was still much to do. ATC believed fuel would quickly become a problem once training began. It wanted an AMC "bolt" storage tank installed, if only on a temporary basis. The Kansas City District of the Corps of Engineers countered that a permanent



Boeing's Wichita factory with B-47s lined up on the ramp. (Boeing Aircraft Corporation)

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system was already planned and that the AMC “bolt tank” was unnecessary. After this issue went back and forth between the two, the Corps eventually promised to move the fuel tank completion date to 15 October vice the original date of 1 November.¹⁶¹

Work and living space was also an ATC concern. As General Harper had pointed out, tents were no substitute for permanent buildings. As early as July the base requested temporary Quonset-style prefabricated metal buildings as a stopgap between tents and buildings such as barracks. Headquarters Air Force rejected the idea, citing its standing objection to temporary structures in the continental United States (CONUS). In September the base made another run at getting Quonset huts. This time it was successful, and even won \$50,000 from Air Force for the buildings. However, the huts and new barracks were not completed in time for the first major snowfall of the year. On 1 November the base was blanketed with eight inches of snow. Men living in the tents either found rooms in private houses, moved into a hangar, or into the terminal building.¹⁶²

Workspace at Wichita was in short supply as well. Because of the swiftness of the Air Force takeover of the field, tenants could not be kicked out until a new municipal airport was completed. This included three scheduled airlines that continued to fly from the field. Each activity took up space forcing the newcomers, the Air Force, to seek office space off base. Those activities and facilities that were on base were frequently in substandard buildings. The clinic was a notable example. Until the end of 1951, it was housed in a tar paper shack that lacked plumbing. Eventually, it was moved to a metal building and then to a permanent structure. For a time, however, operations, however minor, were conducted at a nearby private hospital.¹⁶³



An aircrew at ATC’s Wichita AFB, Kansas, prepares for a B-47 training mission, ca. 1952. (AETC/HO Archives)

While having three scheduled airlines continuing to operate from the base took up space, there were other flying activities to contend with. Boeing conducted test flights from Wichita, as did the Air Force with a combat-configured B-47. Numerous unscheduled airlines also used the runway, as did transient military and civilian aircraft. To top it off, just 1,500 feet off the north end of the runway was a small, private airfield. As the history of the day put it, “it was unpleasantly true that ‘every flying safety rule [was] broken every day.’” Harper had ample cause to be concerned about “another Lackland” and investigations that might come from conditions at the base.¹⁶⁴

Pinecastle and B-47 Training

While Pinecastle AFB, Florida, was easier to establish, it, too, had its problems. It had been a training base during World War II and at the conclusion of the war was returned to the city of Orlando. Little was done with the property over the intervening years. Buildings erected during the war and meant to last only five years were literally falling apart. When the Air Force decided to reopen the base, the city was only too happy

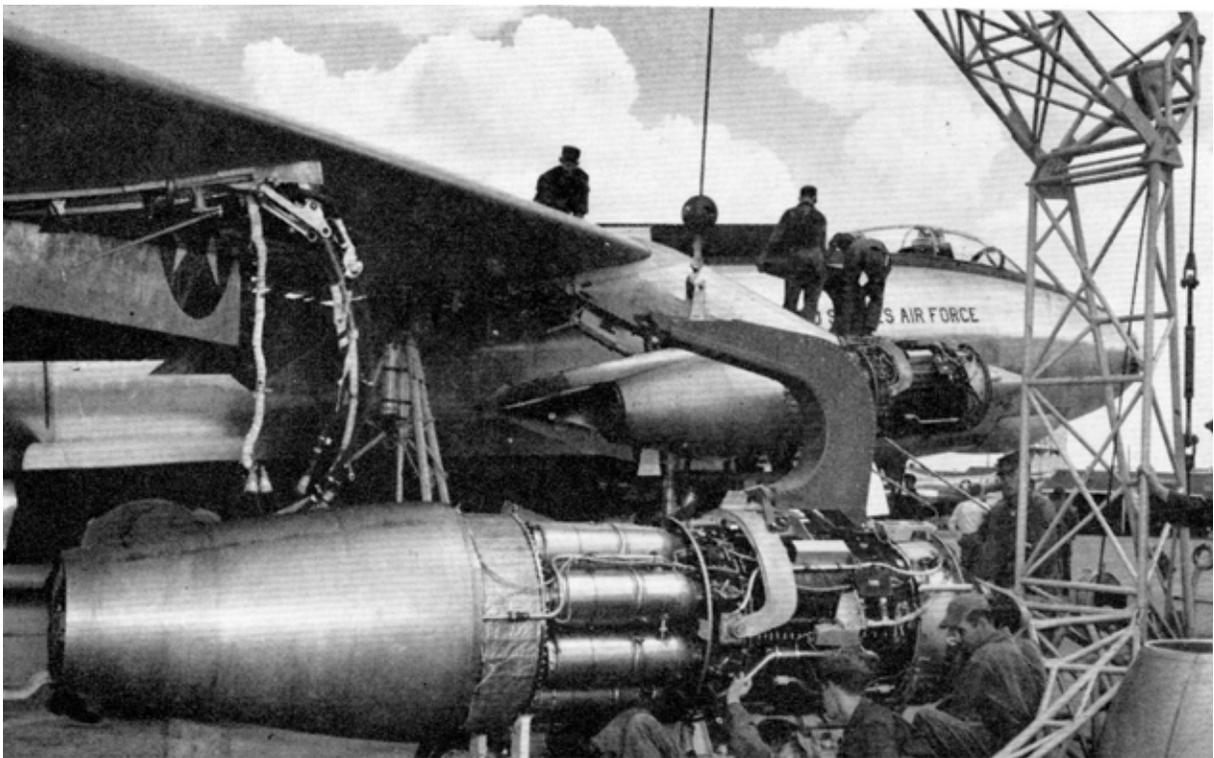
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to help. Indeed, the city deeded the old base to the Air Force for the princely sum of \$1.00. However, bringing the base back to life would cost considerably more. The task was more of building a base, almost from scratch, rather than refurbishing buildings.¹⁶⁵

One of the first problems for Pinecastle was funding. The first Air Force directive on B-47 training did not specify how many aircrews each base—Wichita or Pinecastle—would produce. The second directive reflected budget reality. Because of its location next to the Boeing factory, Wichita was given priority. That left no funding to rebuild Pinecastle until the third quarter of Fiscal Year 1951 (i.e., January to March 1951). When construction began in June, there was no problem with either Orlando or the Corps of Engineers removing, or moving, buildings still on the base. Even with this cooperation, there was friction during the construction phase. Once again the

Corps of Engineers and the Air Force failed to see eye-to-eye on the site plan for Pinecastle. For the remainder of 1951, Headquarters Air Force and the Corps argued over the placement of roads and buildings, but not to the extent that construction stopped.¹⁶⁶

The Air Force activated Pinecastle on 10 September 1951, though, as the ATC history noted, it was not ready for “comfortable occupancy.” While the Air Force Corps of Engineers argument undoubtedly slowed construction, the contractor was slow as well. His work was also substandard, as an ATC team discovered on a visit in October. The team found that “barracks construction was so poor that it was possible to stand inside rooms and see cracks in the exterior walls and to stand in the second-floor room and see through cracks in the room below.” A month later the Air Force Inspector General visited the base. The IG’s report did not mention the shoddy barracks construction,



B-47 maintenance training ca. 1952.

(AETC/HO Archives)

but it did mention “the delay [in construction] could be laid to failure of construction authorities to act aggressively in the improvement of steel deliveries.” A shortage of steel was the major cause of slow progress at Pinecastle.¹⁶⁷

The base itself was expanded from its original size of 1,900 acres to 3,500 acres to accommodate the new mission. Likewise, the existing 10,000-foot runway was lengthened with two 1,000-foot extensions. As ATC’s *Air Training* magazine of the time noted: “The concrete for that runway is enough to make a highway 22 feet wide, six inches thick and 25 miles long.”¹⁶⁸

While construction occupied most of the inhabitants of Pinecastle, one was kept busy with another, dangerous job as *Air Training* revealed.

For a while, the Ground Safety Officer at Pinecastle kept track of the number of snakes and dangerous animals killed on the base. He saved the snake and alligator skins, but soon so many were killed that the novelty wore off.¹⁶⁹

The base was not ready for the planned 26 November 1951 start of training. It could not even meet the original training date of 24 December. But, as with Wichita, that did not matter. Fielding the new bomber had been delayed.¹⁷⁰

With base construction continuing, and, indeed, the base becoming operational in late 1951 and early 1952, ATC decided to use the base for regular flying training until the B-47 program was back on track. This arrangement meant FTAF and, later, Crew Training Air Force (CTAF), would have to share the base’s still limited facilities. By mid-1952, both FTAF and CTAF had cadres at the base, the former with maintenance personnel from Luke AFB for F-80s and F-84s.¹⁷¹

B-47: Plans and Delays

The original plan was to have 49 B-47 crews trained by the end of 1951 and to have 54 more beginning their training in the new bomber. As mentioned above, ATC prepared Wichita and Pinecastle for operations and sent maintenance personnel to Boeing for training. But delivery delays began as early as March with the scale back of the first class to 21 graduates by the end of the year. But Boeing was unable to produce enough bombers. It was to supply a total of 84 B-47Bs by the end of 1951, 67 of these with the radar-navigation-bombing K-system. However, by August Wichita had only 7 aircraft, none equipped for combat crew training. In the meantime, transition training continued at Wichita with instructor and student training starting in June. Two more classes started in July. While the view in March had been optimistic—the revised plan actually advanced the date crews would enter combat training—the grounding of the B-47B several times in August, and the resulting delays in aircraft deliveries, forced SAC and ATC to revise the training schedule once again. Classes were cancelled and combat crew training was virtually abandoned, though transition training continued at Wichita and resumed at MacDill. In addition to a lack of K-system equipped bombers, lack of base facilities further hampered Wichita’s training schedule. At best it could only house 15 aircraft until hangars were ready.¹⁷²

Providing maintenance for the new bombers was becoming a problem as well. Maintenance personnel trained at the Boeing factory or with the Air Force’s B-47 development program were expected to move from training to B-47 bases. But the delivery delays meant an evaporation of this trained pool. Trained personnel either separation from the service when their enlistments were up or from reassignment. By the fall of

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1951, the pool of trained personnel was considerably smaller. As a result, Wichita had to institute a new training program.¹⁷³

In November, USAF was forced to yet again revise its plans for the B-47 program. In a reversal of earlier plans, Wichita would train more instructors—who had previously been pushed down in priority—than combat crews. At the same time, the base would receive as many bombers as it could handle with at least half of them equipped with K-systems. However, none had arrived by the end of 1951.¹⁷⁴

Nevertheless, the Air Force continued to plan for ramped up training of B-47 crews at an annual rate of 240 by the final quarter of 1952 and 1,280 by the third quarter of 1954. However, continued shortages of aircraft hampered the training effort. The oft-revised training plan began to take effect when the first K-system equipped bombers began arriving in February 1952. The first class entered training shortly thereafter, graduating in June.¹⁷⁵ As the ATC history recorded:

The new, swept-wing B-47, however, was still in short supply at the end of 1952 and limited training to only token numbers. It was notable, nevertheless, during the last half of 1952 that 14 three-man crews were given actual crew training. This crew production was the first to be achieved in the command since the B-47 program had been established.¹⁷⁶

Still, because of construction delays, lack of test and maintenance equipment, and aircraft, Wichita and Pinecastle would not become fully capable of producing anywhere close to the planned number of bomber crews until 1953.



Sheppard AFB on Parade: Armed Forces Day, 1951 (top). Sheppard AFB's "Roach Coach," ca. 1951 (bottom). (HQ AETC/HO Archives)

TECHNICAL TRAINING, A MOVING TARGET

The Air Force's intent to expand to 95 wings meant an expansion of ATC's bases, facilities, and personnel. The first plan estimated ATC needed to have a peak student load of 120,000 trainees* in its schools and another 30,000 at contract technical training schools. The six existing schools could han-

* This would produce nearly 300,000 students per year.

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Students receive hands-on training in an aircraft engine course at Sheppard AFB, ca. 1952. (AETC/HO Archives)

dle most of the load, but not all of it.* ATC planners estimated the command needed to add two more training bases—each training 12,000 students at a time—to its inventory to reach its target. Amarillo AFB, Texas, and Selman AFB, Louisiana, were the command's choices.¹⁷⁷

It soon became apparent to ATC planners that the 120,000-student goal was beyond even the eight bases' capability. Their solution was to add yet another base, Gulfport, Mississippi, to their list. However, a re-evaluation of the Air Force's needs resulted in an estimated peak student load of only 102,000. This was well within the eight bases' capacity. Gulfport was dropped from the list and, despite General Harper's objection, the Air Force dropped Selman in favor of Fort Snelling, Minnesota.¹⁷⁸

* Chanute, Scott, Warren, and Lowry were to train 12,000 students each while Sheppard and Keesler would take 24,000 each.

Truman's budget forced a third look at the Air Force's needs, and ATC's capabilities forced the peak student load figure down again. By March 1951, ATC needed only 90,000 students in training at any time to meet the 95-wing goal—though many of the new wings would be severely under-strength. Based on the new number, ATC determined it did not need Fort Snelling. Indeed, ATC decided it only needed one more base, Amarillo. On 1 March 1951, ownership of the Texas base passed from the Corps of Engineers to ATC. But Amarillo would not begin training students until 7 September 1951. Two reasons contributed to what was called the "leisurely manner" of Amarillo's activation as a jet aircraft mechanical training base. There were delays in rehabilitating existing buildings and adding such things as roads. Shortages in office furniture, mattresses, and maintenance equipment also threatened delays. But the greatest threat was simply the lack of aircraft for training purposes, especially F-84s, F-86s, and F-94s.¹⁷⁹ As the ATC history of the time noted, "There were insufficient jet aircraft for operational requirements, so it was not surprising that a shortage of planes for the training of mechanics existed."¹⁸⁰ The shortage was so critical at Amarillo that TTAF "asked all major commands to notify it when jet planes crashed in order that TTAF personnel might examine the wreckage to see if it was usable for training mechanics."¹⁸¹

Under the third revision of ATC's plan, this number was sufficient to meet its training goals. It also meant ATC could train enough recruits with only three basic training bases. At Lackland the flood had receded. With Sampson and Parks AFBs either already processing and training recruits or about to, the need of Sheppard as a BMT base diminished. Sheppard would return to its primary role as a technical training base, teaching "airplane and engine mechanics

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training.” Indeed, it would expand that training.¹⁸²

By mid-June 1951, ATC had 53,857 students in training with another 20,806 at contract schools, as well as in Army and Navy training programs. ATC had reached a stable plateau, at least for the time being. During the last half of 1951, ATC produced 126,066 graduates and had maintained between a high student load of 69,000 in June and a low of 62,000 in December. At the same time, ATC’s use of contract training was on the decline. In July 1951 it had some 15,000 students in contract schools. By December that number was cut by more than a third. In September the Air Force had directed the maximum use of Air Force and other service schools over contractors. As it turned out, many of the 16 courses taught at 69 contract schools were already given at ATC schools. Though ATC continued to use contractors, their use would diminish.¹⁸³

BMT’S THIRD (GOLDEN) GATEWAY

The flood of recruits in late 1950 convinced the Air Force it needed more induction and indoctrination centers. Sampson AFB, New York, was established to tap into the Northeast’s huge population. A similar base on the West Coast “was obviously desirable.” In early 1951, a team from Headquarters ATC and Lackland AFB concluded that Camp Parks, a portion of the Navy’s Shoemaker Distribution Center, was the best loca-

tion. It was only 35 miles from San Francisco and had been a Seabee training base in World War II.¹⁸⁴

The Air Force and Navy agreed to the transfer in early May 1951, and the Corps of Engineers began work on 23 May. However, not everyone was happy with the decision. Alameda County did not want the base for several reasons. At the end of the war, it had received a lease for much of the base and had spent \$200,000 building a rehabilitation center, an alcoholic treatment clinic, a prison farm, and other facilities. The Air Force taking over meant the county would lose use of these facilities. But there was an objection that went beyond the county’s use of the site. It involved a commodity vital to the area—water. The prospect of 30,000 or more Air Force personnel moving to the area alarmed local residents. Much of the county depended on agriculture for its livelihood, and agriculture depended on water. For some time residents had been concerned about the declining water table. Having a military base dropped on their doorstep exacerbated those concerns. Livermore Valley residents became so concerned they pressed Congress to force the base to pipe water from San Francisco’s reservoirs in the Sierra Madre Mountains. The Air Force rejected this idea as too expensive. It planned on using water wells it would gain by condemnation of nearby wells. However, San Francisco already had a claim on the wells. By prior agreement the Bay City received the first 15



Parks AFB main gate.
(AETC/HO Archives)

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million gallons the wells produced per day. The base was legally free to take as much water as it needed after that. Of course, if the water table continued to decline there might not be enough water for the base's needs. As a result, the Air Force tried to form a coalition with the Corps of Engineers and local officials to press Congress for funds to pay for a survey of water resources in southern Alameda County.¹⁸⁵

Water was only one of the problems ATC faced at Parks. While the base was ideally located for recruiting and BMT, the proposed training site proved unworkable. The proposed site, south of the main portion of the Navy base, was found to be in a flood plain and was, therefore, unacceptable. North lay hilly terrain, which meant expensive grading and filling. With no other cost-effective option, the Air Force requested 537 additional acres from the Navy. Although TTAF approved, no action was taken for the rest of the year.¹⁸⁶

In the meantime, construction started on the 181 dorms and 10 large dining halls the base needed for its new mission. Construction began at the end of May but contractors could not meet the 15 November completion date. As 1951 ended it looked as though most of the dorms would be ready by mid-January and other buildings would follow in two weeks. But that meant Parks could not be ready for its first enlistees by the planned opening on 15 February.¹⁸⁷

To make matters worse, the Corps of Engineers found that much of the construction was substandard. It refused to accept the buildings until contractors corrected the numerous defects. As a result, Parks did not receive its first recruits until March 1952.¹⁸⁸

By that time the pressing need for three "gateways" had eased. No longer was there a flood of young men (and women) eager to

join the Air Force. During the last half of 1951, the Air Force took in 122,149 recruits. That number dropped to 94,845 during the first six months of 1952.¹⁸⁹

THE CHANGING LENGTH OF BMT

From July 1950 to June 1951, the length and makeup of basic military training course changed six times. In each case the Air Force responded to the changing fortunes of the war in Korea and the need to expand the Air Force as quickly as possible. The first change occurred soon after the war started, reducing the number of days of BMT training from 65 to 40.* As the number of recruits increased, the number of training days declined. By December 1950, BMT was down to a mere two weeks. When the Lackland recruit flood occurred in January 1951, the pretense of BMT training was dropped entirely, at least at the Air Force's premier induction base. Recruits were merely processed and shipped to technical training bases where they were expected to receive at least a smattering of basic training.¹⁹⁰

Air Force, and especially ATC, leaders riled at these cuts. They knew that incoming recruits were being herded rather than trained. During a time of war, that "system" produced airmen with little or no ability to conduct themselves as members of the military, to serve their country fully, or to protect themselves in a combat situation. It was only after the flood had subsided in February 1951 that the Air Force and ATC could return BMT to some semblance of its former self.¹⁹¹

* At the same time the basic military training course for females underwent a similar shortening. Course length was cut from 55 days to 40 days on 24 July 1950. See: ATC History July 1950 to June 1951, p. 451.

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Parks AFB, CA, barracks being built (top left); recruits moving in *ca.* 1951 (top right); the Parks AFB Reception Center under construction (middle left); a view of Parks AFB, (middle right); recruiters visiting the barracks, 1952 (bottom left); and target practice outside Parks' Quonset huts (bottom right). (USAF Photos)

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Officer candidates at Lackland AFB, Texas.
(AETC/HO Archives)

On 1 February 1951, Lackland instituted a new 48-day BMT program. Once more recruits underwent basic in-processing, orientation, military science and tactics, weapons training, mathematics, and physical training.¹⁹²

In July 1951, BMT expanded to 56 days in order to “to permit more time for assignment of graduates of the basic course to appropriate technical courses.” ATC, however, wanted to return BMT to its original 13-week length. But this was only part of a broader issue facing the Air Force. Should BMT “produce soldiers or persons prepared to absorb technical training”? It was a question the Air Force had wrestled with since gaining its independence. Before Korea the Air Force had come down on the side of producing “prospective technicians.” After Lackland the Air Force was beginning to reconsider. Air Force leaders had noticed a decline in military discipline and courtesy, especially compared to sister services. There was also the question of teaching mathematics to every recruit, even those not destined to technical fields. Headquarters Air Force also believed the training week should expand from 48 to 56 hours, since

“a basic training day of 8 hours is not realistic [because] much of the curriculum is not of an academic nature.” However, whether the fundamental philosophy of BMT should change would be the subject of study through the end of the war.¹⁹³

General Harper was more concerned about the impression BMT made on recruits. “I feel strongly,” he wrote to Headquarters Air Force on 22 March 1952, “that the impressions and concepts created during the basic training period are all-important in determining the airman’s attitudes, susceptibility to training and discipline, and esprit-de-corps throughout his military career.” He wanted a return to the 13-week course. He won a partial victory in July when USAF allowed a BMT to go to a 12-week course. With the number of incoming recruits down and the flow stable—at least of a time—at around 13,000 per month, the war in Korea at a stalemate, and three “gateways” established, the Air Force could afford to return to a longer BMT. But there were other BMT issues ATC and the Air Force would have to study over the next year.¹⁹⁴

OFFICER BASIC MILITARY COURSE

While the Air Force needed more pilots, it also needed more administrative officers. The Officer Candidate School had been a source of officers since early in World War II. Candidates were enlisted troops judged to have the qualities and skills necessary to become an officer.

During Korea, however, a large proportion of serving officers came from the reserves. Some of the reservists had no prior active duty experience so in September 1951 ATC began a training program to equip these incoming reserve officers for life in the Air Force. The first two Basic Military Training courses began that month and were, surprisingly, composed mainly of

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women. However, these classes—46 women and 10 men for the first and 49 women and 17 men for the second—were considered aberrations. The first class of 1952 was composed of 280 men and 56 women, which became the normal pattern.¹⁹⁵ Students, whether male or female, went through an eight-week course that stressed administration, management, leadership, military justice, and general military training. Unlike BMT, such topics as camouflage, sanitation, and first aid were omitted.¹⁹⁶

STALEMATE

The beginning of negotiations in July 1951 meant a virtual end to maneuver warfare in Korea. The last 12 months had seen South Korean, US, and UN forces pushed to the southeastern corner of the country, a breakout that brought allied forces to the Yalu River, and back to the 38th parallel. As a US Army study noted, “Although the two principal parties to the conflict...[North and South Korea]...were more than willing to fight to the death, their chief patrons...[Red China, the Soviet Union, the United States and the UK]...were not.”



Members of Lackland’s OCS “Nan” Flight enjoy a Coke break, 1951. (AETC/HO Archives)

The result was a war of position and attrition. Both sides jockeyed for the best position on the line, while at the same time conducting raids and probes of enemy positions. In part, this was to keep Allied troops sharp in case the war turned more aggressive.¹⁹⁷

For their part, the Communists’ negotiating position was that of status quo antebellum—a return to the June 1950 border. Although this had been the UN’s stated position, returning to the old border only invited trouble.



Members of the 2nd Battalion just down from Heartbreak Ridge, October 1951. (US Army Photo)

The artificial line was hard to defend and invited future attacks.

The line of July 1951 offered UN forces and South Korea a stronger defensive position. With both sides at loggerheads, a hostile—at times silent—diplomatic war of position developed at the truce tent. On 23 August, the Communists broke off talks.¹⁹⁸

Allied response was the renewal of offensive operations, if on a limited scale. Instead of fighting all along the line, General Ridgway concentrated attacks at what became known as Bloody Ridge and Heartbreak Ridge. Although Allied forces would eventually take pos-

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session of Bloody Ridge, it would cost UN forces 2,700 dead, wounded, and captured. Communist losses were put at 15,000. During the month-long battle of Heartbreak Ridge the US 2nd Division suffered 3,700 casualties. Communist losses were put at 25,000.¹⁹⁹

Negotiations resumed on 25 October at P'anmunjom. The Communists dropped their demand to return to the 38th parallel. For its part, the UN agreed to establish a truce line before taking on other issues. In the meantime, fighting—again on a limited basis—would continue.²⁰⁰

Talks were agonizingly slow, especially considering that both sides wanted the bloody conflict to end. However, the thorny issue of prisoners of war became the main sticking point. Ordinarily, complete POW repatriation was the norm. But Korea was not a normal war. Truman had returned Soviet citizens in US hands at the end of World War II only to see many of them imprisoned or killed. As David McCullough noted in *Truman*, “At the end of World War Stalin had executed or sent to Siberia thousands of Soviet soldiers whose only crime was to have been captured by the enemy. ‘We will not buy an armistice by turning over human beings for slaughter or slavery,’ Truman declared, and he would not be budged.”²⁰¹ Korean and Chinese POWs would be given a choice. Ultimately 40,000 South Koreans who had been pressed into the Communists’ ranks were reclassified civilian detainees—and thus not liable for repatriation. This did not seem to disturb the Communists. But when only 70,000 of the 170,000 other prisoners opted to stay with the Allies, the Chinese “dug in their heels....” Peace talks be-



P'anmunjom truce tents. (National Archives)

came “hopelessly deadlocked over the POW question.”²⁰²

As the situation on the ground stabilized during the summer of 1951, the Allied air forces improved their positions. The Royal Australian Air Force, the South African Air Force, USAF, and US Marines deployed aircraft to Kimpo, Chinhae, Taegu, Kunsan, and other locations in South Korea. UN forces flew close air support for ground forces and interdiction missions, especially against railroad and bridges.

In July, August, and September the Chinese tested UN air superiority, especially in the area known as MiG Alley. During September alone UN pilots engaged 911 enemy aircraft, bringing down 14 while losing 6.

Just as UN forces improved their South Korean airfields in order to bring great airpower to bear, so, too, did the North Koreans. In October 1951 they built three airfields north and northwest of Pyongyang. FEAF responded with B-29 night and later daylight raids. On 23 October FEAF bombers and their escorts encountered heavy Communist resistance. Three of the Superfortresses were lost as well as one F-84. But

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the MiGs did not get away untouched. Four MiGs were brought down that day. However, the loss of three medium bombers forced FEAF to rethink its tactics. Bombers returned to night raids. These raids failed to destroy the three bases.

The resumption of peace talks in November 1951 meant an end to the war of maneuver. Now the war would move to raids and limited offensives to gain tactical or political advantage. In the air the Chinese continued to challenge UN air superiority. To counter the MiG challenge, the US Air Force moved more of its best fighters, the F-86 *Sabrejet*, to Korea. These new units—many AETC trained—took to the air over Korea in December 1951. In a mere two weeks the 51st and 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wings downed 26 MiGs while losing only 6 of their own. The encounters of December evidently shook Communist confidence. They avoided direct confrontations with the *Sabrejets* after December, but still lost 127 aircraft between January and April 1952.

FEAF kept up the pressure on Communist ground troops as well. The campaign against railroads and bridges continued, this time with B-29 support. Although supplies continued to reach the Communist front lines, it was not enough for a sustained offensive. Still, the search for more effective ways to cut enemy supply lines went on.

Even as the war in Korea ground to a stalemate in the spring of 1952, the US Air Force was continuing to expand. ATC would continue to grow to meet the demand for more aircrews, more ground crews, and more support personnel. That meant more bases, more instructors, and more matériel.

Endnotes for Chapter III

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CHAPTER IV

AN EVEN LARGER AIR FORCE

MAY 1952- JUNE 1953

TOWARD 143 WINGS

In November 1951, President Truman approved the Air Force's goal of having 143 wings by mid-1955. This was one step among many the Air Force had taken since the late 1940s to become the size force its leaders believed it needed to counter the growing Soviet threat. During the first year of the Korean War, the Air Force's authorized strength went from 48 to nearly 95 wings, a goal it expected to reach by 30 June 1952. Even when the Air Force put forward its goal of 95 wings, it was already looking forward to a force of 163 wings. As one historian noted, "[Air Force Secretary] Finletter held that the Korean War finally broke the budgetary log jam maintained by the administration's fiscal experts." But by December 1951, with ground action at a stalemate, there was little presidential or congressional enthusiasm for excessive expenditures. Soon after President Truman approved of the Air Force's expansion to 143 wings, the Secretary of Defense capped spending at \$45 billion, with \$17 billion for the Air Force. This was not enough to man 143 wings at the ratio Air Force leaders wanted, nor would they see this large a force before 1957. To help get part of the way there, wing administrative and support personnel were cut as much as possible. The new units would be thinly manned.²⁰³

While the Air Force was looking beyond 95 wings, ATC was moving in several different directions. Flying training continued to expand, though it reached the limits imposed by the number of bases available to house such training. The Flying Training Air Force was close to producing 7,200 pilots per year but could not possibly reach 10,000 per year. Although there had been the danger of running out of aviation cadets, the main problem was construction delays at the new bases joining ATC. As the ATC history of the time noted,

It was simply not feasible to feed increasing number of students into the opening of the flight training pipeline when there was a break in the middle of the line that threatened to flood the whole flying program and was currently being mastered only by improvised bucket-brigade methods.²⁰⁴

As detailed below, ATC was also reaching the climax of its program to decentralize its growing operation. Creating the Flying and Technical Training Air Forces had been the first step. Next came a separate Crew Training Air Force (CTAF) during the first half of 1952. However, it, too, would have infrastructure problems.

Although FTAF, and later CTAF, added bases to reach production levels necessary for a 95-wing Air Force, and go beyond that, TTAF had reached a plateau. The Air Force had made the decision to man new wings at

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Fifth Air Force, Korea—The end of a full year of combat missions against the enemy arrived for "Ole 620" New Year's day, as the team that made the successful anniversary flight possible congratulate each other. In the cockpit of his 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing F-86 jet "620," Capt William S. Borders shakes hands with A/3C Jerry E. Young (left) crew chief, and A/2C William H. Bibbey, armament chief, who have kept "Ole 620" flying against the Communists. Pilots who flew "620" during the year shot down 6 1/2 MIG-15s, probably destroyed three, and damaged a number of other, of which Capt. Borders was credited with 1/2 destroyed and 2 damaged. December 1952. (USAF Photo and Caption)

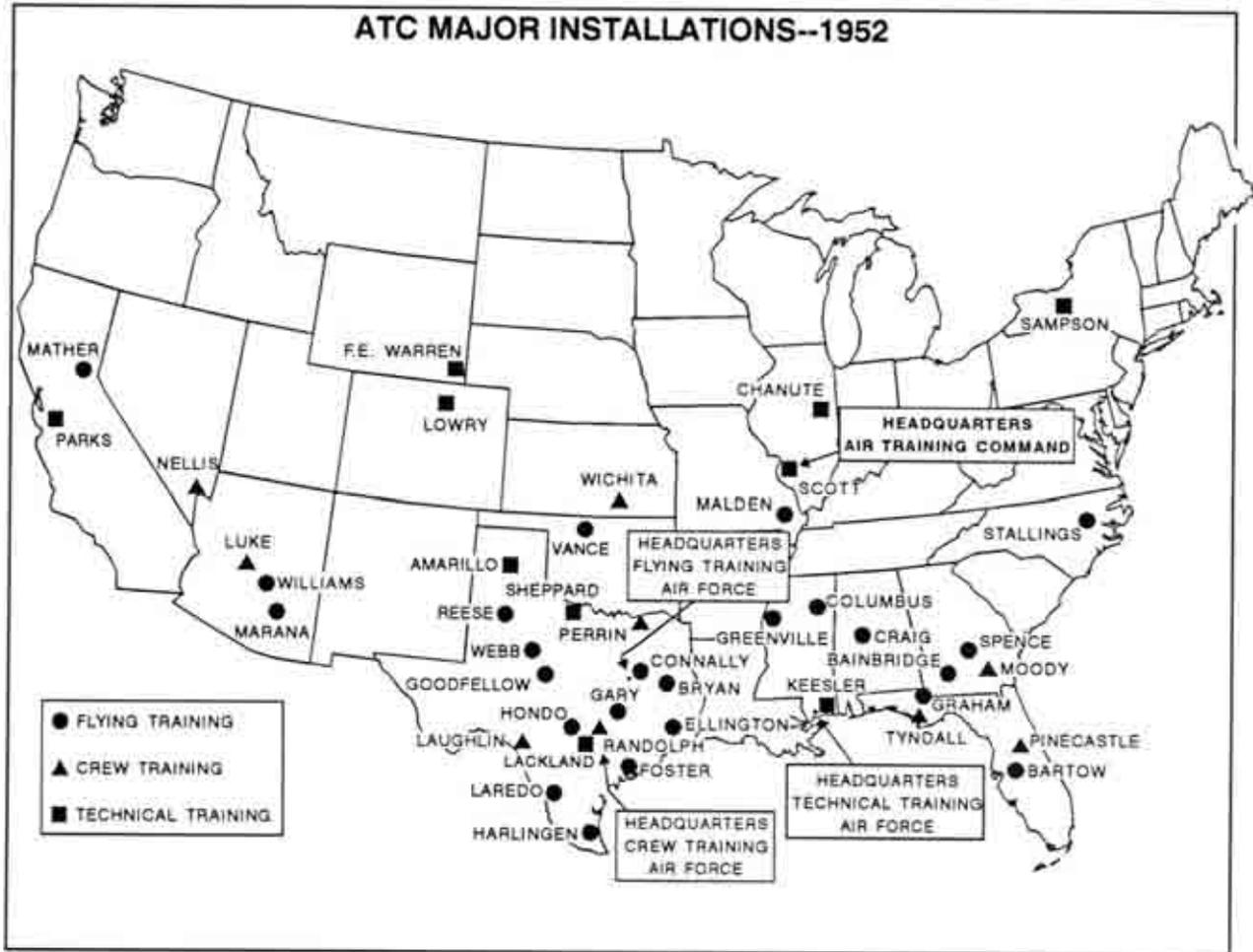
bare support levels. That decision was reflected in ATC's training program and infrastructure. TTAF reached its height in bases, personnel, and students during the latter half of 1951. The program had been set for a 95-wing Air Force and, as 1952 dawned, TTAF had reached that goal. Once the goal was reached, TTAF produced enough graduates to maintain that size force. This was true at both ends of the technical training pipeline. A steady, though smaller number of graduates were needed to make up for attrition and so a smaller number of recruits were needed in BMT. However, that did not mean ATC or the Air Force was satisfied with the BMT program. As 1952 progressed, BMT would come under further scrutiny.²⁰⁵

ATC bucked the personnel trend in 1952 and the early part of 1953. In December 1952, the Air Force announced that its personnel ceiling would drop from 1.06 million to 973,350 by June 1952. The Truman Administration and Congress were keeping a close eye on defense spending, forcing all services to cut personnel. ATC, however, grew during the first half of 1952, the command adding over 15,000 members to its roll. At the same time ATC's authorizations rose by only 9,631. In truth, ATC's overmanning was worse than 4,000 plus personnel. The command had over 13,000 airmen (now called Airmen Basic) above its authorization. Most were tech training graduates who were ready for duty but whose units could not take them. Taking into account the "stored" airmen, as they were called, ATC was within its personnel authorizations. Indeed, authorizations increased in 1952 to man four new bases.²⁰⁶

THE WAR

By April 1952, the weather in Korea had warmed and the usual time for maneuver warfare was at hand. But there would be no major spring offensives from either side. Since negotiations had begun the previous year, neither side wanted to move out of the extensive trenches and bunkers they had constructed across the peninsula. The result was a war of outposts and patrols. The Communists believed they could undermine Western resolve with a war of attrition while UN forces could not afford heavy casualties nor the political repercussions they would bring. The bloody seesaw battle for Old Baldy in July, August, and September 1952 discouraged newly installed Far East Commander, General Mark Clark, from moving to the offensive. Stymied on the ground, Clark turned to air power.²⁰⁷

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In May 1952, Fifth Air Force changed its tactics. Before, it had concentrated on interdiction sorties near the front lines. Now, Fifth Air Force shifted its attacks to supply and support targets away from the front lines. Depots, industrial targets, vehicle repair facilities, and munitions plants were high on the hit list.

A month later, General Clark wanted a way to demonstrate that the United Nations could inflict damage on the Communists. The result was a series of attacks on electric power complexes, which newly promoted FEAF commander, General Weyland, had suggested. The choice of these targets may have come as a result of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey. During World

War II, electric power plants were not specifically targeted; however, when they were hit, the loss of power severely handicapped German industry.²⁰⁸ What was clear was Clark's desire to inflict damage on the Communists to show UN resolve and to jog the stalled truce negotiations. The two-day Air Force and Navy offensive resulted in the destruction of 90 percent of North Korea's hydroelectric production capacity. Factories that were too dispersed to be attacked were virtually paralyzed. So, too, were industrial plants dependant on Korean power in Manchuria and the Soviet border area with North Korea.²⁰⁹

While Allied airpower had shown what it could do, political actions lessened its

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Five men . . . two dozen MIGs

THE five men above have 24 Mig's to their credit and more experience in handling Sabre-jets than the Communists care to think about. The five Nellis AFB Mig-killers—Capt. Robert Latshaw (5 Mig's), 1/Lt. Robert Moore (5), Capt. Iven C. Kinchelov (5), Major William T. Whisner, Jr. (5½) and Lt. Col. George L. Jones (3½)—are now teaching the young lads of Crew Training Air Force what it's all about in the way of dive-bombing, air-to-air gunnery, rocketry and strafing. Combat returnees such as these are being used in increasing numbers throughout Air Training Command. (Nellis AFB Photo)

impact. Members of Britain's Parliament objected to the attacks, fearing they would provoke a third world war. At the same time, members of the US Congress asked why the power plants had not been attacked earlier. To the Communists this sent the signal that the Allies were not united and would pursue a policy of limited war.²¹⁰

Attacks against industrial and military targets continued apace during the latter half of 1952. In July, US and allied aircraft attacked military targets around Pyongyang. Nearer the front lines, UN air forces continued to provide between 2,000 and 4,000 close air support sorties per month.²¹¹

The summer of 1952 also marked the transition of the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing to the more advanced F-86F Sabres. This fighter was as agile as the MiG-15, and, with good pilots, proved more than a match for the enemy. Just as the 51st completed its transition, Communist pilots became more aggressive and came out of MiG Alley. But the F-86F and American tactics gave them an unpleasant surprise. By October, just as

the truce talks stalled over the issue of forced POW repatriation, allied pilots achieved an 8-to-1-kill ratio.²¹²

As the photo to the left indicates, ATC incorporated this aerial combat experience into the training program. Korean War aces, such as Latshaw, Moore, and Whisner, passed on their hard-won lessons to the next generation of fighter pilots.

FLYING TRAINING

While TTAF had reached its apex in terms of student numbers and bases, flying training continued to expand and evolve. But there were difficulties and delays.

The Air Force's goal was to produce 10,000 pilots per year by May 1952. However, that goal was unobtainable in large part because of the lack of bases. The official ATC history noted that

By far the most serious problem affecting the flying training program was the delay in the preparation of the new bases—Big Spring, Laredo, Foster and Laughlin—scheduled to offer basic single-engine training to students who had completed primary training.

The Air Force had seen this coming and planned to open new bases, but construction delays took their toll. As a result, the date for 10,000 pilots was pushed back to November 1952.²¹³

Big Springs (Webb) AFB

Of the five bases ATC opened during the first half of 1952, all were in Texas and three were in the Rio Grande Valley. Big Springs AFB was on the list of possible bases as early as 1950, but no decision was made until February 1951. As with other World War II-era bases, ownership of Big Springs had passed to the nearby city. The city was happy to return the base, with some minor considerations, and construction be-

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gan in May 1951. Soon thereafter a dispute arose between the government and the city over costs of city-owned property on the site, negotiations with owners of buildings on the base, expansion of the sewage plant, and restoration costs once the base was returned to the city. Although negotiations and construction continued at the same time, the government had made no clear decision on acquiring base property. Deprived of their buildings, the private owners became restless. Eventually, four of the five main issues were solved one by one, leaving the issue of Pioneer Air Lines. ATC wanted to buy out the company's lease or buy the old base terminal, now a restaurant, to house the airlines until its lease expired. However, a law prevented this solution. The issue dragged on through the end of June.²¹⁴



Webb AFB flight line, ca. 1953. (AETC/HO Archives)

Legal issues did not hinder base construction and rehabilitation, but there were delays. The runway was slated for completion on 1 January 1952, but was not ready until the end of April. Other projects suffered similar setbacks. Although the base was formally activated on New Year's day 1952, training single-engine pilot training did not begin until April. The following month, Big Springs was renamed Webb AFB in honor of 1st Lt James L. Webb, an area native killed in a F-51 crash off Japan in 1949.²¹⁵

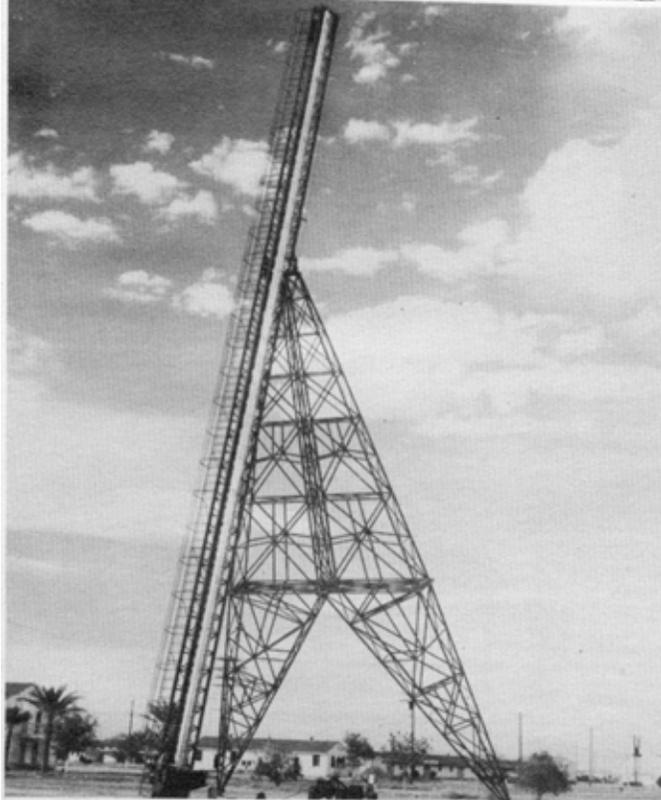
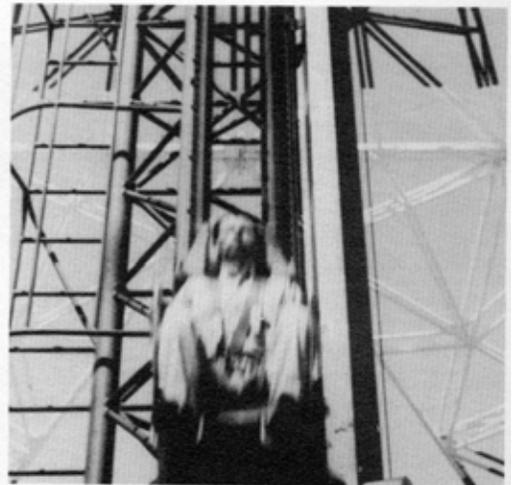
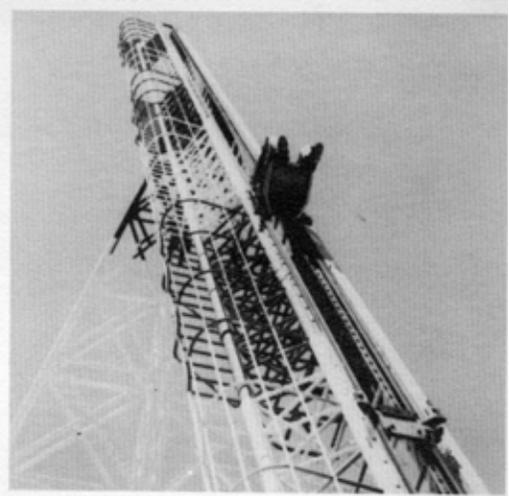
Harlingen AFB

Harlingen was first considered as an advanced flying training base in early 1951. An optimistic schedule had the base opening in November of that year; however Congress did not pass the defense appropriation until November, five months after the start of the fiscal year. That meant a delay. Construction problems, too, hampered the opening. Facilities were not ready until mid-1952. When Air Force needs changed, the base's mission went from advanced to basic flying training, resulting in more delays and higher costs.

Acquiring Harlingen's land and facilities was even harder than at Big Springs. Over 100 of the old base's buildings were privately owned and many had been converted to apartment buildings. It took over a year to either buy or gain the buildings through condemnation.

The project engineer had planned a construction completion date between February and May 1952, however, contracts were not

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A wild ride—ejection seat training at Williams AFB, Arizona, 1952. (AETC/HO Archives)

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let until February. As with Webb, construction delays did not prevent the base from being activated on 1 April, but they did delay the beginning of training until 27 June.²¹⁶

Laredo AFB

Laredo presented less of a problem than Webb or Harlingen. Although the base had been returned to the city after World War II, there were fewer private owners to deal with. Also, less construction was needed to ready the base for basic flying training.²¹⁷

That said, Laredo ran into construction delays due to lack of money. Congress' failure to pass the defense appropriation bill until November 1951 also meant no money for construction. Even with this unforeseen delay, Laredo AFB was activated on 1 April 1952; but had to wait until June for its first student.²¹⁸

Laughlin AFB

From a construction standpoint, Laughlin AFB, outside of Del Rio, Texas, was the most extensive and expensive. Used as an auxiliary field in World War II, Laughlin had few of the facilities that other bases did. That meant more construction—52 items—and a budget of \$13 million. By contrast, Laredo's projects cost only \$5.5 million.

Like the other bases, Laughlin was scheduled to begin training in April 1952, however, project delays pushed this date back to November. Despite these delays, the base activated on 1 May 1952. At the same time ATC activated the 3645th Pilot Training Wing, later changed to the 3645th Flying Training Wing (Fighter). The wing provided single-engine training in the F-84 and T-33 aircraft.²¹⁹

Foster AFB

Foster was different from the other four bases. The base had belonged to the US

government and been returned to local control at the end of World War II, with the understanding that it could be reclaimed if the need arose. Foster had been leased from private landowners during World War II and returned to them after the war. To reestablish Foster as a training base, the government had to buy the land. Fortunately, there



ATC conducted crew training during the Korean War. Shown here is a B-25 bomber on the ramp at Laughlin AFB, TX. (AETC/HO Archives)

were only two landowners involved, but the process meant gaining congressional approval. The Galveston District Engineer assumed that Congress would approve and set a planned completion date of November 1952. Congress, however, did not approve the purchase until May. This pushed the completion date into early 1953. Hard pressed for space, ATC started training at the base in January, “under very primitive conditions,” as the history of the time noted.²²⁰

DAMAGE CONTROL

During the first year of the war, the Air Force had faced a shortage of pilots. The combination of more active recruiting and a lowering of standards ended those concerns, though a high attrition rate was a worry.

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However, with construction at all of its expansion bases running far behind schedule, ATC faced the prospect of having no place to put primary flying training graduates. In May 1952, ATC hosted an “intensive 10-day meeting, where sessions often continued far into the hours of darkness; an interim, more or less hand-to-mouth, solution was hammered out.”²²¹

The solution was simple, but came at a price. Since basic flying training was divided into two phases, the first using conventional aircraft, primary graduates were kept at their base for the first phase of their basic flying training. ATC hoped the new bases would be ready in time for the second phase, jet training, and would provide an uninterrupted stream of students. But it forced the Air Force to delay the 10,000 pilot per year plan until November 1952. By August 1952, that date, too, proved impossible to meet. Delays at the new bases forced the continuation of Goodfellow, San Marcos, and Perrin as first phase basic flying training bases. The situation grew so acute that Connally AFB was pressed into service as a basic flying training base, changing its mission from advanced observer training. Other changes rippled through ATC. Sheppard, a TTAF base, took on observer training, as did Hurlburt. Craig AFB, which trained pilot instructors, took on the additional duty of single-engine jet training.²²²

PILOT TRAINING REVAMPED

The air war over Korea caused many changes both in tactics and in how to conduct an air campaign. No longer would masses of bombers and fighters gain and keep air superiority. The jet age had dawned and strategy had changed. While the new aircraft were faster, they were also more expensive to build and maintain. They were also more demanding to fly. As the



Cartoon from a 1953 Laredo class book.
(AETC/HO Archives)

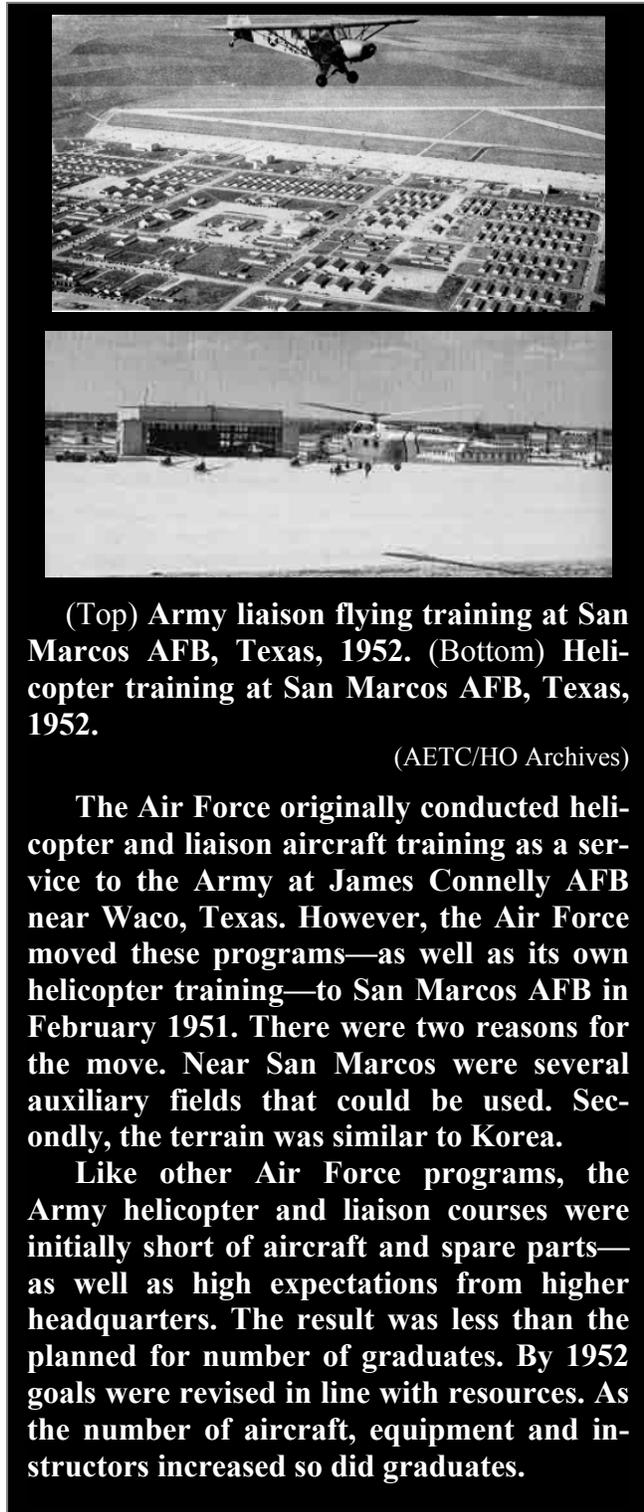
ATC history for the latter part of 1952 noted,

It was soon obvious that the average ‘aircraft driver’ of the sort turned out in World War II was not desired, since it appeared that strategic air war of the future would be conducted with small groups of expensive, intricate aircraft rather than the thousand-plane masses used in World War II.²²³

The Air Force, and ATC in particular, had to retool flying training to meet this challenge. It also had to overcome misgivings many potential pilots had about jets.

As mentioned in Chapter III, the Air Force had become concerned over the large attrition rate in flying training at the end of 1951. Over the course of the next year and a half, Headquarters Air Force, ATC, and the FTAF worked out a revamped, four-phase pilot training program. It had been a tough road to travel just to reach an agreement on training; it was just as difficult to implement the new plan.

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(Top) Army liaison flying training at San Marcos AFB, Texas, 1952. (Bottom) Helicopter training at San Marcos AFB, Texas, 1952.

(AETC/HO Archives)

The Air Force originally conducted helicopter and liaison aircraft training as a service to the Army at James Connelly AFB near Waco, Texas. However, the Air Force moved these programs—as well as its own helicopter training—to San Marcos AFB in February 1951. There were two reasons for the move. Near San Marcos were several auxiliary fields that could be used. Secondly, the terrain was similar to Korea.

Like other Air Force programs, the Army helicopter and liaison courses were initially short of aircraft and spare parts—as well as high expectations from higher headquarters. The result was less than the planned for number of graduates. By 1952 goals were revised in line with resources. As the number of aircraft, equipment and instructors increased so did graduates.

In May 1952, Headquarters Air Force, ATC, and FTAF reached agreement on implementing the new four-phase training plan.

FTAF wrote a detailed plan, which ATC approved, but the command had to quickly settle on training bases to carry out the pre-flight screen phase. It suggested inactivating Greenville and Columbus, the only Air Force run primary flying bases, rehabilitating them and turning them over to contractors. While Headquarters Air Force approved FTAF's basic plan, it did not approve inactivating the bases and turning them over to contractors. Nor would it give ATC additional money for rehabilitation. Considering it did not have enough money to rehabilitate the bases, ATC began looking for alternatives. It found them in Lackland and Keesler. With the reduction in BMT and technical training requirements, neither base was working at capacity. Nor would they need rehabilitation to take on the mission. Lackland eventually proved the better location and was selected for the new mission.²²⁴

Finding a suitable location was only part of the process. While the Air Force wanted to feed as many potential pilots into the pipeline as quickly as possible so it could meet the 10,000 pilot goal, the infrastructure could not take it. Lackland pointed this out when the Air Force wanted to double the number of pilot training classes from 8 to 16. The base objected saying it would unduly strain the support staff. ATC and Headquarters Air Force eventually agreed. But that still left the problem of synchronizing all four phases of training. The first class, 53-H, was already in training in November 1952 when the entry interval was decided. As a result, 53-H was broken into three parts, each fed into the next phase at two-week intervals.²²⁵

Acquiring suitable aircraft for the new training program was a longer-term problem. When the program went into effect in late 1952, Air Force leaders knew that training aircraft were not right for their purposes.

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The flight screening phase employed Piper Cubs while primary training used T-6 and T-28s. Basic flying training began with T-28s for the conventional phase, switching to T-33s for the jet phase. As the ATC history noted, “Advanced training utilized current tactical aircraft,” which were in short supply.²²⁶

ATC inaugurated a replacement plan that would last until 1959. The T-34 would be the first new trainer, coming into use in April 1954 to augment the T-6 and T-28. Two years later the Piper Cubs and T-6s would be retired. The planned two-place “TX” trainer would augment the T-28 in primary training and replace it in basic training phase one. By mid-1958, ATC expected to do away with conventional aircraft in basic training and use the T-33 and a Mach 1 trainer designated “TZ.” The last change would occur in mid-1959 when

light plane screening would be conducted on the T-34, primary on the TX and basic on the TZ...It was realized that realistic planning for six years in the future was not possible, though the plan was helpful in pointing toward the direction in which development should proceed.²²⁷

PROJECT TIGER

Attrition was another hindrance to realizing the 10,000 pilots-per-year goal. While fear of flying cases received considerable attention, they were relatively small in number. Indeed, fear of flying accounted for only 7.51 percent of the attrition rate. Lack of motivation, however, was a more pervasive reason causing an estimated 27.75 percent rate. Surprisingly, the lack of motivation received little or no attention until half way through 1952. As the ATC history noted, these “were men who simply saw no future in becoming pilots in the Air Force, and who apparently felt no pride at the thought of becoming a member of an elite

and unique corps of fighting men.”²²⁸

ATC directed FTAF to look at the problem. Why did well over a quarter of those who had wanted to be pilots become uninterested and unmotivated? After a vigorous debate between ATC and FTAF, the headquarters came to the conclusion that it was simply a matter of conditioning and training.



T-6s at Reese (above) and T-28s, which replaced the venerable T-6s. (AETC/HO Archives)

To find a solution, ATC set up Project Tiger to study the problem “from its origin in civil life through recruitment, classification, selection, training and delivery to a tactical organization....”²²⁹

The project team studied the problem in August 1952 and came to the conclusion that it was a psychological problem. Pilot production, it believed, should be “built around the assumption that each student was

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being trained to fly a jet fighter in combat.” Although not true—25 percent of all pilots would go into other types of aircraft—the team believed it would do no harm to instill an aggressive fighter pilot spirit.²³⁰

From recruitment onward, potential pilots were to be made to feel special. Recruiters were to screen applicants more closely and those selected would be told at a ceremony. Approved applicants were to be inculcated with Air Force élan, shown the latest combat footage from Korea, and, importantly, relieved of most of the tedious administrative details that seemed to have robbed earlier candidates of their desire to fly.²³¹



Reese AFB Link Trainer, 1952.

(AETC/HO Archives)

Flight instruction, too, would change. One of the issues discovered from earlier studies was skepticism concerning jet aircraft. Some of this may have come from early flight instructors, as the Tiger team suggested that all flight instructors go through jet orientation as soon as possible.

Also, keeping the same instructors throughout basic training was seen as an important change.²³² “It was believed student confidence would be improved if the same instructor carried students through both the T-28 and jet phases of the course.”²³³

At the heart of Project Tiger’s message was a change in attitude. While pilot candidates’ morale was to be constantly pumped up and an aggressive spirit encouraged, the Air Force was to remove the idea of pilots as “supermen” and replace it with the idea that “jet heroes were average men who had reached their elevated status through training and determination.”²³⁴

Project Tiger was not finished until late 1952, but it benefited the Air Force even before its findings were implemented. Once word of the project worked its way down to the training units, requests for basic training in fighter aircraft jumped from 39 to as much as 77 percent of graduates. At the recruiting end of the chain, Tiger’s recommendations were already being taken to heart.²³⁵

Project Tiger’s recommendations came at the same time as the new four-phased program. While the attrition rate under the four-phased program remained too high, the cause seemed to be more selection criteria and lowered standards than motivation.²³⁶

OBSERVER TRAINING

While the Air Force was having trouble meeting its goal of 7,200 pilots per year let alone 10,000, it had no trouble producing observers. Indeed, the training program was on track to meet its goal of 7,200 observers. Had it not been for a diversion of James Connally AFB from observer to basic single-engine pilot training, the command would have met the goal. During the first six months of 1953, the two primary ob-

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server training bases, Ellington and Harlingen, produced 1,755 and 531 primary observers, respectively.²³⁷

From primary training observers moved to basic at Mather AFB. Other courses were held at Sheppard, Lowry, and Keesler. Like the bases used for phase one of basic flying training, these TTAF bases were brought into observer training to fill the facilities gap. In all, Mather and Sheppard had 18 basic observer courses ranging from B-26 to B-57 aircraft. However, some courses were on their way out as airframes retired. The last class for B-50 observers started in April 1953. Likewise, refresher courses for B-29 radar operators were phased out in June.²³⁸

One possible reason ATC had no problem reaching its 7,200-observer goal was the way observer training differed from pilot training. Observers were not originally included in the new four-phase flying training program. That meant observers could receive the same type of commission a pilot did but without all the intensive instruction in duties and responsibilities. To rectify this perceived inequality, ATC began a pre-flight course for observers similar to that for pilots. The first class entered training in March 1953. At first the attrition rate was 22.5 percent, higher than that for pilots. Over the next few months, however, the trend moved downward. By the third class the rate was an acceptable 13.6 percent.²³⁹

FOREIGN FLYING TRAINING

Since World War II, the US had trained foreign airmen. Even during the lean interwar period, the US continued to train pilots from Canada, Latin America, Israel, and Arab states. When the Korean War started, the US began training more foreign students, primarily from NATO countries, under the

Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949.²⁴⁰

The French and Dutch were the first to take advantage of the Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP), training at Randolph, Tyndall, Ellington, and Goodfellow AFBs. Many foreign pilots received advanced training in the F-51 and F-80.²⁴¹



Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP) students talk fighter tactics, ca. 1953. (AETC/HO Archives)

In 1951, the US expanded MDAP to encompass fifteen European, Middle Eastern, and Asian nations.* As envisioned, MDAP would train the trainers. Students would take what they had learned and begin training programs in their own air forces. The goal was to train 6,000 MDAP students a year by Fiscal Year 1953, though this proved an impossible goal. During the first half of 1952 the number of students reached 1,917, in the latter half of the year that num-

* Europe: France, Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Greece, and the United Kingdom. Middle East: Iran and Turkey. Asia: the Philippines, Thailand, and the Republic of China.

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ber inched up to 2,097. MDAP students comprised around 95 percent of the total foreign students the Air Force trained in 1952.²⁴²

In August of that year, the Air Force expanded MDAP crew training in the F-51 and the F-84. Although these aircraft were no match for the MiG-15, they were still used extensively in Korea. Luke AFB was selected to conduct this training, but it could not take all of the MDAP pilots. Excess students went to Sheppard for a course “to familiarize prospective pilots with the mechanical functioning of the F-84 aircraft.”²⁴³

The program was not without its problems. As with its World War II counterpart, language differences proved the most difficult to overcome. Many students arrived in the US with little or no knowledge of English. But there were social differences as well. Many MDAP students found the American lifestyle difficult. For their part, many American pilots disliked the fact that foreign students were given priority in flying training slots. They believed foreigners were causing delays in entering classes. To combat this resentment, the Air Force mandated lectures to American students about the program and its purposes. ATC also recommended that, “wherever possible, USAF students who were awaiting training not be assigned to bases where MDAP students were already in training.”²⁴⁴

Even with these problems, MDAP continued to grow. By 1953, it graduated 2,600 students, the largest to date. Although far short of the planned 6,000 plus students, it was a considerable increase from the 2,000 graduates of 1952.

Although MDAP student numbers reached a plateau during the early part of 1953 and began to decline thereafter, the program was still politically important. Its graduates were already beginning to form

the core of new air forces. That was clearly evident in the Air Force’s plans for Fiscal Year 1954. Forty percent of the allotted slots were earmarked for West German students. Because of the Cold War, Germany was being reintegrated into western European defense less than nine years after the close of the bloodiest war in history.²⁴⁵



One of the first ATC-trained Nationalist Chinese jet pilots. (AETC/HO Archives)

FURTHER DECENTRALIZATION: CREW TRAINING AIR FORCE

At the same time ATC established FTAF and TTAF, it proposed the establishment of a crew training air force. Headquarters Air Force, however, disapproved the request undoubtedly because the size of the flying training mission at that time did not warrant the cost in manpower and funding. By the end of 1951, the situation had changed. The Air Force and ATC were expanding. FTAF was already planning to reach 33 bases by the summer of 1952 and with the Air Force going to 148 wings, that expansion would

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continue. It was becoming too difficult for FTAF to properly administer the crew training program along with its other responsibilities. General Harper was able to change Headquarter Air Force's mind in late 1951 and on 16 March 1952, Headquarters Crew Training Air Force was established at Randolph AFB. Two weeks later, on 1 April, CTAF formally activated with Maj Gen Julius K. Lacey in command. He had been the Mather AFB commander and was a veteran of the World War II bomber offensive over Germany.²⁴⁶

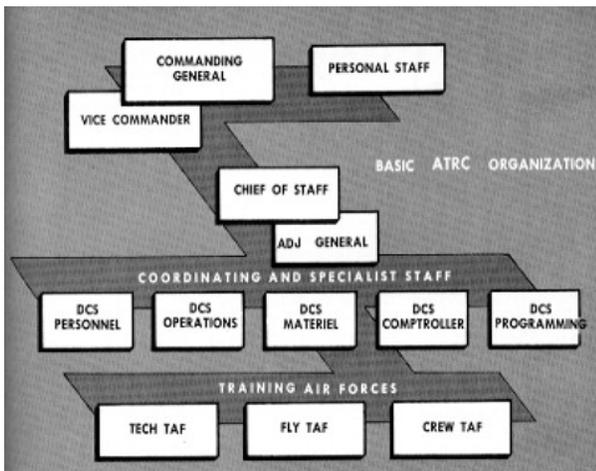
At the time of its activation, CTAF consisted of six bases and schools: USAF Air Crew School (Fighter Bomber/Escort) at Luke AFB; USAF Instrument Pilot School at Moody AFB; USAF Air Crew School (Fighter) at Nellis AFB; USAF Air Crew School (Medium Bombardment), Randolph AFB; USAF Air Crew School (Interceptor), Tyndall AFB; and USAF Air Crew School (Medium Bombardment), Wichita AFB. CTAF was also responsible for the gunnery school at Nellis, and the aircraft controller and air police schools at Tyndall. However, not long after CTAF took over these bases, the Air Force changed the name of the flying schools to USAF Advanced Flying School with the specialization listed parenthetically.

cally.²⁴⁷



Headquarters Crew Training Air Force, Randolph AFB, TX, ca. 1955.

But CTAF was about to grow. Plans were already in place to add another three bases: Perrin AFB, Pinecastle AFB, and Eglin Air Force Auxiliary Field Number Nine, or Hurlburt Field. Perrin was the first base CTAF added. It was supposed to start F-86 training in the fall of 1951 but construction problems caused delays. In the meantime, Perrin remained a FTAF base conducting B-26 transition training. By mid-1952 construction was on track for completion near the end of the year. This was when the first F-86 class was to begin; however there were other problems. The lack of gunnery ranges nearby and "the fact that authorized airspace was inadequate to conduct training operations," worried CTAF. It believed Perrin need a 100-mile radius, 19,000 foot high control zone.²⁴⁸



Air Training Command Organization, ca. 1952. (AETC/HO Archives)

Pinecastle was tied to the B-47 program. As noted in the previous chapter, the B-47

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program ran into problems of aircraft production and procurement, finding enough skilled maintenance personnel, and base construction. Delay after delay meant part of the B-47 training load was pushed further down the road.²⁴⁹

Pinecastle had another mission as well—or at least a portion of one. It was to have the secondary mission of training F-84 crews beginning in August 1952, until Hurlburt was fully operational and could take over the job. However, a survey of the base showed that Pinecastle was not able to take even this secondary mission until September or October, if then. But Pinecastle was not going to waste. FTAF had established jet instructor upgrade training in May 1952 and planned to move basic pilot training there. FTAF would control the base until other FTAF bases could take over these training missions. In the meantime, CTAF and FTAF shared the base and personnel responsibilities. The first cadre of CTAF maintenance personnel arrived in June 1952.²⁵⁰

Hurlburt Field, the third location, was one of the more thorny issues facing the new air force. The field belonged to Air Proving Ground Command (APGC) and was under the authority of the commanding officer of Eglin AFB. APGC believed that a fighter-bomber school at the field constituted a “special activity” and should come under Eglin control. Naturally, CTAF believed otherwise. As the history of the time noted, “Although concessions were made by both sides...on certain controversial functions such as public information and con-

struction of facilities, an impasse was reached relative to control of maintenance functions and courts-martial jurisdiction.”²⁵¹ Neither side would give an inch. CTAF pushed the issue up the chain of command and in June Headquarters Air Force issued its decision. APGC’s policies would rule. But there were other problems at Hurlburt.²⁵²



Who’s in that plane? Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, that’s who. He was in the back seat of this T-33 as it made a low pass at the Frenchman’s Flat, Nevada, target range. General Vandenberg was well escorted. Maj Gen Kenneth P. McNaughton, ATC Vice Commander, was in the rear seat of a chase plane, snapping this picture.
(AETC/HO Archives)

Differences with APGC aside, the more CTAF looked at Hurlburt the less favorable it appeared. A CTAF survey team found the surrounding airspace “saturated with Navy, Air Force, and Civil Airways flight operations.” There was no airspace over land for air-to-air gunnery, and the Navy, other Air Force operations, and civilian flying had the air-to-ground range space hemmed in. It was also doubtful that base construction would be completed by the time fighter-

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bomber training was to begin in March 1953. Indeed, virtually every facility an air base needed would have to be built almost from scratch. Even the weather was against the base. CTAF needed good flying weather to conduct air-to-ground gunnery practice and the Gulf Coast base had an average of only 25 percent good flying weather. CTAF's conclusion was that ATC should place "the fighter-bomber mission elsewhere and [select] a mission for Hurlburt more compatible with its facilities, location, and climatic conditions."²⁵³ Williams AFB, CTAF believed, believed was an ideal location.²⁵⁴

Despite problems with bases, a strike by union fuel workers, shortages of training aircraft, a shortage of replacement jet engines, and even a shortage of .50 caliber machine gun ammunition, CTAF had over 2,500 students in combat crew training in June 1952. However, the creation of CTAF marked the end of ATC's effort at decentralization. While the downward delegation of authority over some scattered issues would take place from time-to-time, these became fewer in number and importance. Indeed, there was a reversal of the trend dur-

ing the latter part of 1952. Headquarters Air Force was beginning to take some of its authority back.²⁵⁵



T-33 engine change.

(AETC/HO Archives)

BMT STUDIES AND EXPERIMENTS

With the manpower emergency receding and the war a stalemate, there was the inevitable round of studies. Perhaps because of the problems of 1950, BMT came under considerable scrutiny. What was the proper length, was it 8, 9, or 12 weeks? Did more intelligent recruits need the full course, and was it economical to fully train individuals with less than average intellects? The latter was the question the Office of the Secretary of Defense asked in 1952. The result was a Department of Defense study called Project One Thousand. As the title implied, it in-



One of Perrin's B-26s. (AETC/HO Archives)

volved 1,000 recruits. These were airmen of below average intelligence. Half were given the full 12-week BMT course while the others went to a 6-week course. After completing BMT, the airmen were sent in groups of 50 to ATC and SAC bases for eight-month assignments. They were tested all along the way.²⁵⁶

Not everyone was happy with the test. The Human Resources Research Center (HRRC) pointed to a major flaw in the test's underlying assumption. It believed the project would only test the length of BMT, not what to do with below average intelligent airmen. However, the test proceeded according to DOD directive.²⁵⁷

Project One Thousand got underway in July 1952 and continued into early 1953. However, by the end of 1952 the HRRC was able to make a preliminary report on the project. As it turned out, the six-week BMT graduates did better in spelling, language arts, and measured better in "attitudes" than the 12-week graduates. Both groups did equally well in mathematics and military studies, though the six-week course did not have a mathematics section while the 12-week course had 45 hours of instruction. Several explanations were offered: the six-week group had better spellers, better spellers were therefore better at language arts, or airmen identified at recruiting stations as sub-marginal really were not. Despite these observations, Lackland officials concluded there was no significant difference between the 6- and 12-week BMT course.²⁵⁸

TTAF was also looking at the length of BMT, and not just for sub-marginal airmen. The question was which was best, a 8- or 12-week course. Lackland and Sampson conducted tests and came to somewhat different conclusions. Lackland found that 8-week graduates were "slightly more satisfactory than the graduates of the 12-week course." Sampson, however, found 12-week



(AETC/HO Archives)

A "retrainee" arrives at Amarillo AFB, Texas. The 3320th Correction and Rehabilitation Squadron was a revolution in military justice, taking men with less than sterling records and giving them a second chance in the Air Force. The brainchild of Maj Gen Joseph Vincent Depaul Dillon, the squadron featured guards without weapons and training rather than detention. The aim was to reform from within as well as retrain wayward airmen. The first retrainees arrived on 4 February 1952. During the Korean War, more than 1600 retrainees passed through the 3320th, 50 percent were returned to active duty, around 40 percent were discharged, and the remainder were either discharged, transferred, returned to base of origin, or their cases were dismissed.

graduates better at technical training.

"Using [major] commands" were slightly in favor of 8-week BMT gradu-

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Lowry AFB B-47 and F-84 weapons training.
(AETC/HO Archives)

ates.²⁵⁹

The Lackland/Sampson experiment became mute during the first half of 1953. Headquarters Air Force ordered a reduction in BMT to nine weeks. The decision was not driven by studies or analysis but by budget concerns. It was simply cheaper to train airmen for nine weeks and then move them to productive jobs or technical training.²⁶⁰

There were other studies. One measured the effectiveness of an 8-week BMT course, while another one measured the 12-week course. Requests for studies came from several sources, such as the Human Factors Division or the Directorate of Training, and went to HRRC, while another went to the

TTAF. One proposed study about the 12-week course came after the Air Staff had already decided to shorten BMT to 9-weeks. Fortunately, some of these uncoordinated studies were short-circuited once it was dis-

covered the 3700th Medical Group at Lackland was already studying individuals going through BMT. The idea of the study was that if individuals with psychological problems could be identified and treated early, it would save money. Wisely, TTAF decided to use the group's information.²⁶¹

TECHNICAL TRAINING

Although the Air Force was still expanding in 1952, its technical fields had already reached their postwar peak and were in decline. In June 1951, there had been over 69,000 students in technical schools. By the end of 1951 that number was down to 62,685, and reached 60,904 in June 1952.²⁶²

Contract and Army Schools

Several results came out of this decline in student numbers. The first was that in 1952 TTAF added no new bases. Yet even with the total numbers going down, most TTAF bases experienced increases in enrollment during 1952 and the first half of 1953. Part of this seeming contradiction may be explained by what was happening in the contract technical training program.²⁶³

In mid-1951, the Air Force had over



Students at Keesler AFB learn how to work a horizontal plotting board for radar defense operations. (AETC/HO Archives)

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Technical training at Webb AFB. (AETC/HO Archives)

15,000 personnel at civilian schools. The Air Force contracted 8 courses taught by 53 schools. This declined rapidly over the next year. At the end of 1951, there were only 9,500 Air Force students in civilian schools. Six months later that number was down to a mere 2,050. While the number of courses taught had increased to ten, the number of schools dropped to five. Contract courses continued to decline. At the beginning of 1953, civilian schools only taught four courses. This number dropped to three by the time the war ended.²⁶⁴

Air Force personnel also received tuition at Army technical schools and, like its civilian counterpart, the Army courses were on the decline. At the end of 1952, 691 Air Force members were taking 40 Army courses. Six months later there were only 367 students taking 29 courses of study.²⁶⁵

While the Air Force was reducing its use of contract and Army courses, it was also suffering a triple crunch in its own programs. The austerity programs of both the Truman and, in early 1953, Eisenhower administrations were biting into all budgets, including ATC. Equipment was in short

supply at a time of technological change. Nor were there enough spare parts for new radars and encryption devices. To get spare parts for training equipment, one representative from Keesler hand carried a request to an Air Materiel Command depot and waited there “as a constant reminder to depot personnel until the order was filled.” Other shortages included generators, communications, and weather equipment. What resulted were graduates that were less than the desired quality.²⁶⁶

Equipment was not the only item in short supply. TTAF lacked enough qualified instructors, especially in “new or extremely complex” subjects. As an example, the B-47 program was finally getting off the ground in early 1953 but there was a shortage of instructors for the maintenance course. Even though the Air Force did not have enough instructors to go around as it was, the Air Force decided to divert 1,500 jet fighter maintenance students to the new aircraft. To make up for the lack of qualified instructors, the Air Force decided to shift jet fighter maintenance instructors to the bomber. But this was playing catch-up the hard way and was considered to be “a task of considerable proportions.”²⁶⁷

In late 1952 and early 1953, the Air Force had an increasing number of students at TTAF’s seven bases, but did they have the right type of student? In many cases the answer was no. Amarillo found that students “simply did not possess the background and experience needed to satisfactorily absorb advanced training” for the F-86 maintenance course. The problem was not limited to advanced fighter aircraft. Lowry found that students arriving for a course in accounting machines had “so little knowledge of com-



THE KOREAN WAR

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General Dwight D. Eisenhower held a unique place in American politics in the early 1950s. Although his political affiliation was unknown at the time, both parties saw him as a potential candidate. Truman virtually offered him the Democratic Party's nomination. Both men had been evasive on whether they would run. Truman would run if Senator Robert Taft ran as the Republican candidate, but would not if the Republicans nominated Eisenhower. However, Eisenhower refused to announce his candidacy until his job as NATO commander was completed on 1 June 1952. That did not stop Eisenhower Clubs from springing up or prominent Republicans pressuring Eisenhower to run. Once Eisenhower had, to his satisfaction, wrapped up his tenure at NATO, he announced his intention to run. Truman, who was convinced Eisenhower would run, had already announced he would retire.²⁷⁰

310th Fighter Squadron F-84s being prepared for cold weather in Korea, February 1953. (310th Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, photo)

mercial accounting procedures that it was necessary to give 60 hours of basic accounting to such students before they could begin training on the accounting machines.”²⁶⁸

Other problems hampered the flow of graduates. The cryptographic course at Scott AFB was “generally short of students” because they could not get security clearances fast enough. Eventually Scott would only train students the major commands sent. At Amarillo one course that was geared for entry-level mechanics was suddenly filled with experienced hands.²⁶⁹

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President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower visits Korea, keeping his promise “I will go to Korea,” 4 December 1952. (Eisenhower Library)

AN EVEN LARGER

Although Korea was far from Eisenhower's main concern—Europe, the Soviets, and the economy were—it was a major issue with the electorate in 1952. Eisenhower's statements on the subject were brief and to the point. He was not in favor of winning the war at almost any cost, as Taft and MacArthur were. Nor was he for pulling out altogether. He had no magical plan to end the war, he told the press, but he was determined to end it. At a campaign stop in Detroit, he said that immediately after his election, he would “forgo the diversions of politics and concentrate on the job of ending the Korean war. That job requires a personal trip to Korea. I shall make that trip. Only in that way could I learn how best to serve the American people in the cause of peace. I shall go to Korea.”²⁷¹

Eisenhower easily defeated the Democrat Adlai Stevenson in the November election and within a month was in Korea visiting troops and sizing up the situation. At the time there were many who read their own desires, or fears, into his visit—whether to end the war with victory or negotiation. But Ike wasn't saying which path he would take. Indeed, he had no solution to the problem. Eisenhower's silence perhaps worried the keenest observers of the war in Korea, the enemy.

Communist uncertainties over what the new president would do were compounded by events in the Soviet Union.

A month and a half after Eisenhower was sworn in as the 34th president, Joseph Stalin died of a cerebral hemorrhage. His death caused a power struggle in the Soviet hierarchy that forced the leadership to focus inward rather than on events in Korea. Ten days after Stalin's death, Georgi M. Malenkov emerged as his successor and told the United States “that there was no issue between Moscow and Washington that could not be resolved by peaceful means.”



The B-26 was a workhorse of the interdiction campaign in Korea and the 17th Bombardment Wing flew them hard. In May 1952, the 17th Bombardment Wing activated in Korea, taking on the men and aircraft of the 452nd Bombardment Wing. Flying from Pusan-East Air Base (known as K-9), the 17th flew nighttime missions against Communist supply depots, roads, railroads, trains, and trucks. Near the end of the war, the 17th had some of its best success, using pairs of glass nosed (as shown below) and “hard” nosed B-26s to lure the enemy into a false sense of security. The glass nose planes would locate the enemy then fly off. Minutes later, after the enemy believed the B-26s had moved off, the hard nose B-26 with its 12 to 14 .50-calibre machine guns would attack with devastating results.

During its time in Korea, the wing flew nearly 11,000 combat sorties, dropping more than 22,000 tons of bombs.



(17th Training Wing History Office)

A fortnight later the Communists in Korea proposed an exchange of wounded prisoners.

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7th Division troops return from Pork Chop Hill, July 1953. (US Army Photo)

While the door to peace in Korea seemed to be opening, bloody fighting lay ahead. In March, the Chinese and North Koreans had opened an offensive to gain ground before a truce became final. Fierce fighting at the mountain called Old Baldy in March consumed men on both sides. After hard fighting, UN forces finally gave up the seesaw battle for control of the peak. UN commander, General Mark Clark, had concluded that the real estate was not worth the price.

On 26 April 1953 negotiations resumed, this time with the Communists agreeing to voluntary prisoner repatriation, the main stumbling block. However, the fighting did not stop. Indeed, it intensified for the remaining two and a half months of the war. Repeated Communist assaults pushed South Korea forces back first three and then eight miles. In July, the Chinese attacked American positions on Pork Chop Hill. Again a seesaw battle raged with US infantry companies facing battalion sized attacks. On 11 July, Eighth Army commander, General Maxwell Taylor, withdrew forces from the hill. As with nearby Old Baldy, Pork Chop Hill was not worth the price.

FEAF, the Marines, and allied air forces were just as busy during June and July. During the months of stalemate, Fifth Air Force flew an average of 2,000 to 4,000 close air support (CAS) sorties per month. In June FEAF devoted half of its combat missions—a total of 7,032 sorties—to CAS. The Marines contributed another 1,348 and the allies a further 537 sorties. Although that number was down to 4,800 CAS missions in July, it was still a large proportion of sorties generated.

Fifth Air Force's F-86Fs continued to punish the Communists. From May to July, the numbered air force had its best quarter of the war. US pilots claimed downing 165 enemy aircraft while losing only three.

Bombers carried the war north of the front. Raids hit the Sui-ho power complex while the 58th Fighter-Bomber Wing, flying F-84s out of Taegu, hit the Toksan dam on 13 May.[†] Other dams were hit in subsequent raids. Bombing dams caused damaging floods that washed away rice fields, roads, bridges, and even put two rail lines out of commission for several days.²⁷²

On 20 July 1953, after three years and one month of war, the United Nations, North Korea, and Communist China agreed to an armistice, which was signed on the 27th. The war was over. The sovereignty of South Korea had been preserved, and its territory had even been expanded. But the Korean people would remain divided.²⁷³

AFTERMATH

[†]Until this point in the war, dams had been prohibited targets.



BIGGER AIR FORCE

General Mark W. Clark, U.S. Army, Commander in Chief Far East Command signs the Korean Armistice agreement at Panmunjom, Korea, 27 July 1953. Seated beside him to his left are Vice Admiral Robert P. Briscoe, USN, Commander Naval Forces Far East, and Vice Admiral Joseph J. Clark, USN, Commander Seventh Fleet.

(National Archives photo and caption.)

The cost of the war had been horrendous. By one estimate 4 million people had been killed or wounded. US casualties numbered 33,629 combat deaths and 93,134 wounded. FEAF lost 1,041 aircraft to enemy action—mostly ground fire—and suffered 1,841 casualties. At the same time, UN air forces “claimed to have destroyed 976 enemy aircraft, 1,327 tanks, 82,920 vehicles, 963 locomotives, 10,407 railway cars, 1,153 bridges, 118,231 buildings, 65 tunnels, 8,663 gun positions, 8,839 bunkers, 16 oil-storage tanks, and 593 barges and boats.” Added to that was a claim of killing 184,808 enemy troops.²⁷⁴

ATC had done its part in fighting the war. From 1950 to mid-1953, it had grown from 22 primary installations and 110,000 permanent party personnel to a height of 43 installations and, in 1952, nearly 170,000 personnel. With these resources, ATC and its subordinate training air forces produced 11,947 combat-ready pilots and over 1 million trained personnel.²⁷⁵

The end of the Korean War did not mean ATC, or the Air Force, would experience a

destructive demobilization similar to that after World War II. In the larger scheme of things, Korea had been a catalyst but not the sole cause of the US military expansion. During and after Korea, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations had been more concerned with Communist expansion in Europe, and increasingly in Southeast Asia. Korea had long since been relegated as a containable, if bloody, sideshow of the Cold War.

However, Eisenhower, like Truman, was also concerned about the health of the American economy. Where Truman had seen waste in the military, Eisenhower saw danger in what he later called “the industrial-military complex.” In 1952, Truman’s Bureau of the Budget took a sharp knife to the Air Force’s construction plan—ending the dream of a 160-wing Air Force.

Not long after taking office, the Eisenhower administration froze all military construction projects and began a review. Approximately a third of ATC’s projects—totaling \$25 million—were either cancelled or deferred. It also made cuts, whittling down the Air Force’s goal from 143 to 120 wings. Even that number seemed unobtainable. While Eisenhower did approve an Air Force of 110 wings, this amounted to only four more units than were on hand at the time. Already thin manning was reduced even further under the new president. Overall, the Air Force lost 17,500 military positions. Civilian strength dropped as well, from 302,000 to 298,600.²⁷⁶ ATC’s permanent party declined by 500 officers during the first half of the year. At the same time, enlisted strength grew from 121,427 to 122,707. The greatest loss occurred in the civilian ranks. During the first six months of the year, the command lost 1,700 civilians, still 1,800 over its authorized manning level.²⁷⁷

In the Air Force’s initial budget for FY

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1953, ATC's share had been \$312 million. This was reduced that to \$160 million before the Bureau of the Budget cut it to \$139 million. Both the Air Force and ATC hoped, indeed counted on, a supplemental appropriation of \$170 million to see it through. As the official history of the time noted, "When the temper of the Eighty-Third Congress, which opened in January 1953, became known, however, this hope was extinguished. There was no supplemental bill."²⁷⁸ Indeed, Congress cut the Fiscal Year 1953 construction plan even further. Although Congress approved most of the projects ATC asked for, it did not give the requested money. For example, ATC asked for new dormitories and mess halls at a cost of \$2,000 per man. Congress permitted the projects, but at a reduced basis of \$1,700 per man in cold climates and \$1,400 in warmer climes.²⁷⁹

ATC was already cutting costs elsewhere. In January it had reduced BMT from 12 to 9 weeks, a significant retreat from General Harper's efforts to increase the BMT length since it was cut at the beginning of the war. Lackland was the first one to cut training time, with Parks and Sampson following soon thereafter. At the same time, the number of incoming recruits dropped from an average of 10,000 to 5,000 per month to 5,000. Parks was even shifted from recruit training to processing overseas returnees.

Scaling back the size of the Air Force also meant reducing its aim of producing 10,000 pilots per year. The goal for most of the war had been to produce 7,200 pilots per year, but it proved elusive. ATC and the Air Force thought it had reached that mark with the class entering training in November 1951, but high attrition rates kept it just out of reach. Finally, after the war ended, ATC was able to report that it had "virtual attainment of the goal...." With the war over, and

economic constraints preventing further growth, ATC had reached a plateau. It would maintain its level of production, fine-tuning its flying program.

The end of the Korean War spelled the end for B-26 and B-29 training. These two aircraft had played prominent roles in the interdiction campaigns of FEAF and Fifth Air Force, but they were obsolete in the jet age. As the training programs were phased out, individuals who would have gone down those paths were shifted to a new heavy aircraft training program using T-29, B-50, TC-54, and B-25 aircraft.

As the multi-engine piston-powered bomber program declined, a new program had not really taken off. The B-47 bomber had suffered more than its share of problems, some with the bomber and some with base construction. In all, ATC had produced few aircrews for the new bomber by September 1953. However, just as that training was about to expand, Headquarters Air Force decided to transfer it to the Strategic Air Command—the "using organization," as the history of the time called it.

While obsolete models like the B-26 and B-29 were phased out, other programs expanded. Pilot production for F-86s and F-94s increased considerably. Still, the problems of high attrition rates and the lack of training capability in the advanced crew training program would continue to nag ATC.

At the same time the Eisenhower administration instituted its austerity program, TTAF was experiencing an increase in the number of students in its courses. By June 1953, TTAF had over 66,000 in classes, compared with around 49,000 in December 1952. At the same time, the number of courses increased as new equipment, mostly electronic, came into use. The problem was how to train technicians on new equipment while older models were still in use. Scott

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AFB came up with a solution: train students on the closest model available, or “vehicle of instruction,” and use on-the-job training to complete the student’s education.

But the latest spike in student numbers was a short-term phenomenon. With the recruit flow cut by half, if not two-thirds, and the major commands reducing their training requirement, there was nowhere for the numbers to go but down. On 30 June ATC had 54,561 people in training, though it dropped to 34,743 in December.

Austerity plans had another effect on technical training. Although training numbers were up, if only temporarily, TTAF was already retrenching with an eye toward saving money. Factory training was moved to Air Force technical training centers. The command lengthened all advanced officer and airman courses to a maximum of 19

weeks in order to decrease the number of permanent change of station (PCS) moves.

There was also a change of philosophy—actually a reversion to an older way of doing things. During the war, technical training was on a six-day week, at times in shifts. With the war over, training reverted to a five-day academic week. At the same time, training became more specialized.

Despite cutbacks, curtailments, and shortages of equipment and instructors, the Air Force that emerged from Korea was a different entity than it was in 1950. It was larger, with better facilities, better trained airman and newer equipment. It was also a jet modern air force. Though pistons and props would remain for a little longer, the Air Force was forever changed, and ATC would continue to adjust to these changes through professional training.

END NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

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²²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

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²³² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

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²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*; ATC Hist, Jan-Jun 53, p. 41

²³⁷ ATC Hist, Jan-Jun 53, p. 63.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

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