SAC HISTORICAL STUDY NO. 61

THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND, A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY 1946-1956 (U), Undated

HISTORICAL DIVISION
OFFICE OF INFORMATION
HEADQUARTERS STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND

21 March

Headquarters Continental Air Forces (CAF) Redesignated Headquarters Strategic Air Command (SAC)

Location:

Bolling Field, Washington, D. C.

Command:

The first commanding general of the Strategic Air Command was General George C. Kenney, former air commander in the Pacific during World War II; his deputy commander was Major General St. Clair Streett, who had occupied the same position with the Continental Air Forces.

Background:

Army Air Forces (AAF) Reorganization

The redesignation of Headquarters Continental Air Forces as Headquarters Strategic Air Command was only part of an extensive reorganization of the Army Air Forces in the Zone of the Interior which laid the groundwork for a potent post-World War II air force. To fulfill the unprecedented requirement of the United States for the maintenance of a combat-ready force in peacetime, the maturing Army Air Forces relied on specialization, replacing the Continental Air Forces with three new commands, which were each charged with a specific role in the air defense of the nation: Strategic Air Command (SAC), Air Defense Command (ADC), and Tactical Air Command (TAC). Headquarters First Air Force (CAF) and Headquarters Fourth Air Force (CAF) were assigned to the Air Defense Command, which was activated at Mitchel Field, New York; and Headquarters Third Air Force (CAF) and Headquarters IX Troop Carrier Command (CAF) were assigned to the Tactical Air Command, whose headquarters was established at Tampa, Florida. Headquarters Second Air Force (CAF) was assigned to the Strategic Air Command.

The Tactical Air Command and the Air Defense Command were inactivated on 1 December 1948 / q. v. / and reactivated respectively on 1 December 1950 / q. v. / and 1 January 1951 / q. v. /.

STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND ESTABLISHED (Continued)

The Continental Air Forces

The Continental Air Forces had had a relatively short existence, having been activated on 15 December 1944, prior to the surrender of Germany, to relieve the Air Staff of the burden of operations in the Continental United States so that it might devote more of its time to matters of policy. No units had been assigned to the Continental Air Forces until 16 April 1945, and it had not assumed operational control of them until 10 May 1945.

Through its four numbered air forces and the IX Troop Carrier Command, the Continental Air Forces had executed a heterogeneous mission, bearing all Army Air Forces' responsibilities in the Zone of the Interior, including the redeployment of air power from the European to the Pacific Theater, the air defense of the United States, joint air-ground training, and the formation and command of a Continental Strategic Reserve on completion of redeployment. During the last four months of 1945 the Continental Air Forces had also been responsible for the demobilization of Army Air Forces personnel stationed in the Zone of the Interior.

Significance:

The creation of the Strategic Air Command represented a recognition of the efficacy of strategic bombing in World War II. In Germany the Nazi war potential had been destroyed and the country decimated. The dropping of an atomic bomb by a B-29 on Hiroshima had offered dramatic and undebatable proof of the capabilities of a strategic air arm. This one devastating strike brought about for the first time in the history of warfare the capitulation of a major enemy homeland without full-scale invasion by ground troops. It also augured a new era of warfare, the atomic, in which the Strategic Air Command was to figure prominently.

Because of the tremendous destructive power provided the possessor of an atomic bomb, in future wars great advantage would accrue to the country striking first. The only way to preserve the peace would be to deter such an attack by the threat of massive retaliation. The Strategic Air Command was created as

such a deterrent force. During the first decade of its existence it developed the capability to deliver more destruction in the first weeks of any future war than all the combined American military forces were able to accomplish throughout World War II.

Interim Mission:

An Interim Mission was assigned to the Strategic Air Command even before its official existence, on 12 March 1946. At that time General Carl Spaatz, commanding general of the Army Air Forces, in a letter to the commanding general of the Strategic Air Command, defined the Strategic Air Command's mission as follows:

> The Strategic Air Command will be prepared to conduct long range offensive operations in any part of the world either independently or in cooperation with land and Naval forces; to conduct maximum range reconnaissance over land or sea either independently or in cooperation with Naval forces; to provide combat units capable of intense and sustained combat operations employing the latest and most advanced weapons; to train units and personnel for the maintenance of the Strategic Forces in all parts of the world; to perform such special missions as the Commanding General, Army Air Forces may direct.

Though lesser responsibilities were subsequently added and the mission redefined from time to time, the Strategic Air Command's mission throughout the first decade of its existence remained essentially as it had been originally defined by General Spaatz. On 10 October 1946 / q. v. / the first regulation governing the Strategic Air Command mission was published.

Major Subordinate Commands Assigned:

Headquarters Second Air Force (Colorado Springs, Colorado) and all assigned units and stations were reassigned from the Continental Air Forces to the Strategic Air Command.

STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND ESTABLISHED (Continued)

However, inactivation of the Headquarters was directed to be effective 30 March 1946. Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force was assigned to the Strategic Air Command, with activation to be effected 31 March 1946 at Colorado Springs, Colorado, utilizing personnel and equipment of the inactivated Headquarters Second Air Force.

Units Assigned:

The Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of all Continental Air Forces units except the Headquarters of the First, Third, and Fourth Air Forces and Headquarters IX Troop Carrier Command, which were assigned to the Air Defense Command and the Tactical Air Command / see above /. These units had made up approximately one-half the strength of the Continental Air Forces. Most important of the units assigned to the Strategic Air Command were the Headquarters 311th Reconnaissance Wing (tenant at Buckley Field, Colorado) and assigned squadrons; Task Group 1.5 (Provisional) (Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico); Headquarters VIII Bomber Command (VH) (Colorado Springs, Colorado); Headquarters 58th and 73d Very Heavy Bombardment Wings (March Field, California (tenant) and MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, respectively); the 509th Composite Group (Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico); twelve Very Heavy bombardment groups (40th, 44th, 93d, 444th, 448th, 449th, 462d, 467th, 468th, 485th, 497th, and 498th) at various locations; and three single-engine fighter groups (36th, 86th, and 354th) at Bolling Field. Most of these units were inadequately manned, and the only unit capable of sustained combat operations and possessing an atomic capability was the 509th Composite Group of the 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing. Except for the 311th Reconnaissance Wing, Task Group 1.5, and the three fighter groups, all these units were reassigned from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the Fifteenth Air Force on 31 March 1946 / q. v. /.

Bases Assigned:

The Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of 55 airfields and installations, and reassigned 43 of them to the Fifteenth Air Force on 31 March 1946 / q. v. /. Many of

[redacted]

these stations had been World War II bases and were on an inactive status or were slated for early abandonment. Of the 55 bases assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 21 March, 15 were transferred from the command prior to 30 June, and between that time and 31 December another eight installations were transferred from the command. Following are the bases assigned on 21 March:

Abilene Army Air Field, Texas (sub-base of Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas)
Alamogordo Army Air Field, New Mexico
Andrews Field, Camp Springs, Maryland (under command jurisdiction of Bolling Field)
Arlington Auxiliary #4 (satellite of La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado)
Avon Park Army Air Field, Florida
Bolling Field, Washington, D. C. (under command jurisdiction of Headquarters Strategic Air Command)
Caddo Mills Auxiliary #1 (satellite of Majors Field, Texas)
Cash, Texas, Auxiliary #2 (satellite of Majors Field, Texas)
Castle Field, Merced, California
Center Auxiliary #2, Parma, New Mexico (satellite of Deming Army Air Field, New Mexico)
Chico Army Air Field, California (sub-base of Castle Field, California)
Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico
Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona
Deming Army Air Field, New Mexico (sub-base of Alamogordo Army Air Field, New Mexico)
Dow Field, Bangor, Maine
Fairmont Army Air Field, Nebraska (sub-base of Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska)
Fort Sumner Army Air Field, New Mexico (satellite of Deming Army Air Field, New Mexico) (technical ex post facto possession only; Fort Sumner Army Air Field was reassigned to the Corps of Engineers 5 March 1946)
Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas
Geiger Field, Washington (and Seven Mile Gunnery Range Auxiliary)
Gowen Army Air Field, Idaho (sub-base of Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington)
Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska

STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND ESTABLISHED (Continued)

Great Bend Army Air Field, Kansas (sub-base of Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas)
Greensboro-Highpoint Army Air Field, Greensboro, North Carolina (under command jurisdiction of Greensboro Oversea Replacement Depot (ORD))
Greensboro Oversea Replacement Depot (ORD), Greensboro, North Carolina (under command jurisdiction of Headquarters Strategic Air Command)
Grenier Army Air Field, Manchester, New Hampshire
Harvard Army Air Field, Nebraska (sub-base of Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska)
Headquarters Area, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska
Kearns Oversea Replacement Depot (ORD), Salt Lake City, Utah (under command jurisdiction of Headquarters Strategic Air Command)
Kirtland Army Air Field, Albuquerque, New Mexico
La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado (sub-base of Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico)
Las Animas Auxiliary #2, Colorado (satellite of La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado)
MacDill Army Air Field, Tampa, Florida
Majors Field, Texas (satellite of Abilene Army Air Field, Texas)
McCook Army Air Field, Nebraska (sub-base of Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska)
Mountain Home Army Air Field, Idaho (sub-base of Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington)
Oscoda Army Air Field, Michigan (sub-base /range of Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan)
Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Pratt Army Air Field, Kansas (sub-base of Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas)
Pueblo Army Air Base, Colorado (sub-base of Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico)
Rapid City Army Air Field, Ellsworth, South Dakota
Richmond Army Air Base, Virginia (under command jurisdiction of Bolling Field, D. C.)
Rocky Ford Auxiliary #1, Colorado (satellite of La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado)
Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico
Roswell Auxiliary #3, New Mexico (sub-base of Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico)

STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND ESTABLISHED (Continued)

Salt Lake City Army Air Field, Salt Lake City, Utah (under command jurisdiction of Kearns ORD)
Selfridge Army Air Field, Mount Clemens, Michigan
Seymour-Johnson Field, Goldsboro, North Carolina
Sioux City Army Air Field, Iowa (sub-base of Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas)
Sioux Falls Army Air Field, South Dakota
Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Salina, Kansas
South Auxiliary #1, Deming, New Mexico (satellite of Deming Army Air Field, New Mexico)
South Sulphur Auxiliary #3, Texas (satellite of Majors Field, Texas)
Tonopah Army Air Field, Tonopah, Nevada (sub-base/range of Castle Field, California)
Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington

25 March

Majors Field, Texas (satellite of Abilene Army Air Field, Texas) (Second Air Force) and its three auxiliaries (Caddo Mills Auxiliary #1; Cash, Texas, Auxiliary #2; and South Sulphur Auxiliary #3) transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

30 March

Headquarters Second Air Force Inactivated

Headquarters Second Air Force inactivated at Colorado Springs, Colorado, and assigned in an inactive status to the Air Defense Command, and its personnel and equipment used to man Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, which was activated the following day.

Headquarters Second Air Force was reactivated by the Strategic Air Command on 1 November 1949 / q. v. /.

31 March

Fifteenth Air Force Activated

Location and Command:

Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 21 March 1946 / q. v. /, was reactivated from World-

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FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ACTIVATED (Continued)

War II status at Headquarters Area, Colorado Springs, Colorado, under the command of Brigadier General Charles F. Born.

> General Born retained command of the Fifteenth Air Force until 15 April 1947 /q. v./.

Second Air Force Activities Continued:

Personnel and equipment of Headquarters Second Air Force, which had been inactivated the previous day, were used to man and equip Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force. Practically all stations and units of the Second Air Force, plus some additional ones from other sources, were absorbed by the Fifteenth Air Force, which carried on with the activities in which the Second Air Force had been engaged.

Mission:

Pending the assignment of a new mission by Headquarters Strategic Air Command, which occurred on 1 May 1946 /q. v./, the Fifteenth Air Force began operations with the same Very Heavy bombardment mission that had been assigned to the Second Air Force:

> To man, equip, operate, and train those groups to be deployed for "Project Wonderful" /see below/, and to train and deploy related tactical and service units.
>
> To supply replacement personnel for oversea replacement depot (ORD) shipments to various occupational zones.

The Fifteenth Air Force was also responsible, though not as part of its official mission, for participation in the Army Air Forces Recruiting Program, an activity which had been begun by the Second Air Force and which was continued by the Fifteenth Air Force until 30 November 1946 /q. v./.

Units Assigned:

As the only major Strategic Air Command operational command, the Fifteenth Air Force was assigned the Strategic Air Command bombing force of B-29s and most of the units and bases originally

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ACTIVATED (Continued)

assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 21 March, including a total of 43 bases and 162 units of a wide variety of sizes and types. Most of the units were of detachment size, many of them were not on Fifteenth Air Force bases, and some had missions foreign to that of the Fifteenth Air Force and hence were slated for early inactivation.

The three most important newly-assigned units were the Headquarters VIII Bomber Command (VH) (Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado); the 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing (a tenant at March Field, California), which was charged with Strategic Air Command responsibilities pertaining to the atomic bomb; and the 73d Very Heavy Bombardment Wing (MacDill Army Air Field, Florida). Below wing level the most important units were the 509th Composite Group (Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico) of the 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing, and the twelve Very Heavy bombardment groups originally assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 21 March:

Bomb Group	Location	Assignment
40th	March Field, California (tenant)	58th Bomb Wing
44th	Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas	VIII Bomber Command
93d	Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico	VIII Bomber Command
444th	Castle Field, California	58th Bomb Wing
448th	Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas	VIII Bomber Command
449th	Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska	VIII Bomber Command
462d	MacDill Army Air Field, Florida	Inactivated same date
467th	Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico	VIII Bomber Command
468th	Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico	Inactivated same date
485th	Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas	VIII Bomber Command
497th	MacDill Army Air Field, Florida	Inactivated same date
498th	MacDill Army Air Field, Florida	73d Bomb Wing

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ACTIVATED (Continued)

Combat Capability Limited:

Strategic Air Command combat capabilities at the time of its establishment, as vested in the Fifteenth Air Force, were extremely limited and remained so throughout 1946 and 1947. The 509th Composite Group, the only combat-ready unit, was preparing for participation in the atomic test CROSSROADS /_ see 1 July 1946 _/ as part of Task Group 1.5. The only other unit that was adequately manned and possessed any combat capability was the 498th Very Heavy Bombardment Group of the 73d Bombardment Wing.

The six Very Heavy bombardment groups assigned to Headquarters VIII Bomber Command were not only weakly manned but were slated for special overseas assignment under "Project Wonderful" /_see below_/. Because the Strategic Air Command was faced with manning requirements that it could not fulfill, on 29 March 1946, two days prior to their assignment to the Fifteenth Air Force, manning requirements were reduced to 1:1 for the 462d, 468th, and 497th Very Heavy Bombardment Groups, and they were later inactivated effective the same date they were assigned. The two groups assigned to the 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing, the 40th and 444th, were only partially manned and neither group occupied an important role in the training program nor had a commitment schedule prior to their inactivation on 1 October 1946 /_q. v._/.

The VIII Bomber Command: "Project Wonderful":

Headquarters VIII Bomber Command was unmanned when it was assigned to the Fifteenth from the Second Air Force and remained so until 14 May when personnel from the Headquarters 73d Bombardment Wing, which was inactivated on 31 May /_q. v._/, were transferred to it. Headquarters VIII Bomber Command was charged with executing "Project Wonderful," which had gone into effect on V-J Day. The project called for the manning, training, and permanent-change-of-station overseas deployment of all Very Heavy bombardment tactical and service units of the Second Air Force (44th, 93d, 448th, 449th, 467th, and 485th Groups) that had originally been scheduled for overseas deployment through February 1946. The original target date for completion of the deployment was 1 September 1945, but delays and extensions of overseas commitment dates followed.

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ACTIVATED (Continued)

When the Fifteenth Air Force assumed the Second Air Force mission, on 31 March 1946, not one "Wonderful" unit had left the United States, and overseas deployment dates ranged from 1 August to 1 October 1946. In June for all practical purposes "Project Wonderful" came to an end as it was de-emphasized as a Fifteenth Air Force mission and soon thereafter abandoned. The 44th Very Heavy Bombardment Group was inactivated 12 July 1946 / q. v. / and four of the other five groups (448th, 449th, 467th, and 485th) were inactivated 4 August 1946 / q. v. /. The 93d Very Heavy Bombardment Group was placed on minimum manning status in July. On 16 August 1946 / q. v. / Headquarters VIII Bomber Command was reduced to 1:1 manning and continued in that status until it was inactivated on 10 November 1946 / q. v. /. Apparently the main reason for the abandonment of "Project Wonderful" was the objection of overseas commanders to having such permanent-change-of-station personnel charged to their total manpower allotment.

Bases Assigned:

The Fifteenth Air Force assumed jurisdiction of 43 of the 55 fields and installations assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 21 March 1946.

Major Active Stations (7)

Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona (Very Heavy bombardment training)
Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas (Very Heavy bombardment training)
Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska (Very Heavy bombardment and reconnaissance training)
MacDill Army Air Field, Florida (Very Heavy bombardment and reconnaissance training)
Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico (Very Heavy bombardment training)
Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan (Very Long Range fighter training)
Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas (Very Heavy bombardment and reconnaissance training)

Active Stations (7)

(reduced manning)

Castle Field, California
Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ACTIVATED (Continued)

Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire
Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska
Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota
Seymour-Johnson Field, North Carolina
Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington

Inactive (23)

Abilene Army Air Field, Texas (sub-base of Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas)
Arlington Auxiliary #4, Colorado (satellite of La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado)
Center Auxiliary #2, New Mexico (satellite of Deming Army Air Field, New Mexico)
Chico Army Air Field, California (sub-base of Castle Field, California)
Deming Army Air Field, New Mexico (sub-base of Alamogordo Army Air Field, New Mexico)
Dow Field, Bangor, Maine
Fairmont Army Air Field, Nebraska (sub-base of Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska)
Geiger Field, Washington (and Seven Mile Gunnery Range Auxiliary)
Gowen Army Air Field, Idaho (sub-base of Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington)
Great Bend Army Air Field, Kansas (sub-base of Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas)
Harvard Army Air Field, Nebraska (sub-base of Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska)
La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado (sub-base of Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico)
Las Animas Auxiliary #2, Colorado (satellite of La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado)
McCook Army Air Field, Nebraska (sub-base of Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska)
Mountain Home Army Air Field, Idaho (sub-base of Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington)
Oscoda Army Air Field, Michigan (sub-base/range of Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan)
Pratt Army Air Field, Kansas (sub-base of Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas)
Pueblo Army Air Base, Colorado (sub-base of Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico)

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ACTIVATED (Continued)

Rocky Ford Auxiliary #1, Colorado (satellite of La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado)
Roswell Auxiliary #3, New Mexico (sub-base of Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico)
Sioux City Army Air Field, Iowa (sub-base of Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas)
Sioux Falls Army Air Field, South Dakota
South Auxiliary #1, Deming, New Mexico (satellite of Deming Army Air Field, New Mexico)

Special (6)

Alamogordo Army Air Field, New Mexico, (bombing and gunnery range)
Avon Park Army Air Field, Florida (inactive bombing and gunnery range)
Headquarters Area, Colorado Springs, Colorado (Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force)
Kirtland Army Air Field, New Mexico (Flight Test Section for atomic bomb)
Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado (flight facilities for Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force)
Tonopah Army Air Field, Tonopah, Nevada (inactive sub-base/range of Castle Field, California)

31 March

36th, 86th, and 354th Fighter Groups (Single Engine)(Headquarters Strategic Air Command), Bolling Field, D. C., inactivated.

1 April

Eight bases and seven sub-bases transferred to the Air Defense Command, 43 bases and 36 sub-bases transferred to the Tactical Air Command, and one base transferred to the Air Materiel Command.

These bases had never officially been assigned to the Strategic Air Command. However, apparently because Headquarters Strategic Air Command was the successor of Headquarters Continental Air Forces, Headquarters Strategic Air Command handled the assignment of these Continental Air Forces bases to the two other newly-activated major commands.

MEDIUM-RANGE RECONNAISSANCE ACTIVITIES, 1946-1949 (Continued)

the East Reconnaissance Group (Provisional) of the 311th Wing. In 1948, shortly after the initiation of the Berlin Blockade by the Russians / see 27 June - 17 July 1948/ reconnaissance forces in Europe were augmented by the dispatch of five RB-29s of the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Group to the United Kingdom. From then on until 1950, when there was an even greater expansion of reconnaissance activities in Europe, small detachments were continually rotated to Europe. But it was not until late in 1949 that the first reconnaissance squadron was rotated to Europe as part of the rotation program / see 1 December 1949 - 6 March 1950/. In 1948 the 311th Wing participated in the atomic energy test Operation SANDSTONE / see 9 January 1948 - 7 June 1948/.

In 1949 and 1950 two 311th Air Division RB-17s accomplished a geological survey of Brazil by means of aerial photography, in cooperation with the government of Brazil. The specific purpose of the project was to survey and locate deposits of highly strategic minerals and sight possible transportation routes. In the summer of 1949 a detachment of the 55th Strategic Wing (311th Air Division) was assigned to Alaska, where it accomplished two TOP SECRET mapping projects and 9,000 miles of acceptable Shoran photography of the Fairbanks area. Two RB-29s and six C-82s were utilized in the latter project. Four RB-29s were also committed to various projects calling for visual and radar photography of the Alaskan mainland, and two RB-29s were assigned to Electronic Counter Measures (ECM) operations designed to determine the nature of foreign electronic emissions in the area.

30 April

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Casper Army Air Field, Casper, Wyoming, and Pocatello Army Air Field, Pocatello, Idaho, from the Air Materiel Command and assigned them on an inactive status to the Fifteenth Air Force.

The two fields were satellited respectively on Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota, and Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington. They were transferred out of the command respectively c. 1 August 1950 / q. v. / and 19 September 1948 / q. v. /.

On 4 August 1946 Casper Army Air Field was placed on active status for use as a fighter base. However, it was not used in this capacity during 1946, though it had been expected that the 4th

Fighter Group / see 9 September 1946 / would be moved from Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, to Casper Army Air Field by 10 October. Instead the 4th Fighter Group moved to Andrews Field, Maryland / see 1 April 1947 /. Casper Army Air Field remained a satellite of Rapid City Army Air Field until 24 September. On 4 November 1946 it was again satellited, this time on the 200th Army Air Forces Base Unit (AAFBU), Colorado Springs, Colorado.

30 April

Greensboro Oversea Replacement Depot (ORD), North Carolina, Greensboro-Highpoint Army Air Field, North Carolina, Kearns Oversea Replacement Depot (ORD), Utah, and Salt Lake Army Air Field, Utah, transferred from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the Army Air Forces Training Command (AAFTC).

1 May

First Operational Fighter Unit Activated

56th Fighter Group, Single Engine (Very Long Range), activated at Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, and assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force.

The 56th Group had 21 Republic P-47 Thunderbolts assigned to it when it was activated. In June replacement of the P-47s began. In that month six North American P-51 Mustangs were assigned, and by 31 December 1946 the total reached 82. The last P-47 was phased out by 1 April 1947. The first jet (P-80) aircraft were not assigned to the 56th Group until early in 1947 / see 23-24 April 1947 /.

The 56th Group was reassigned from the Fifteenth Air Force to Headquarters Strategic Air Command on 1 October 1947 / q. v. /, redesignated as a Fighter Wing on 1 August 1948 / q. v. /, and transferred to the Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948 / q. v. /.

Responsibility for long-range fighter-escort training and operations was not officially assigned to the Strategic Air Command as part of its mission until 10 October 1946 / q. v. /.

THE FIGHTER PROGRAM, 1946 - 1952

Two Distinct Eras: 1946-1952 and 1953-1956

Fighter activities and capabilities in the first decade of the Strategic Air Command fall into two distinct eras: 1946-1952 and 1953-1956 / for fighter activities 1953-1956, see 20 January 1953 /. During the first period all fighter units had a primary mission of bomber-escort. It was also a period of great instability and fluctuation, both in units and individual personnel, which seriously hampered training. Units were gained and lost regularly, and the transfer of large numbers of pilots to the Far East following the outbreak of the Korean conflict / see 25 June 1950 - 27 July 1953 / made a very serious inroad into the fighter program. A shortage of suitable up-to-date aircraft was a constant problem. The 1946-1952 period was also characterized by a rather weak fighter capability, especially in the first half of the period, as compared to the 1953-1956 era.

By 1952 the fighter program began to reach maturity. In that year, with the Korean conflict almost ended, a greater stability developed. More important, fighter capability was immeasurably enhanced by the addition of an air refueling capacity / see 19 July 1948 /. An increased integral range, plus an in-flight refueling capability, gave the fighters the mobility they needed to cross oceans in hours rather than days, and to deploy from one side of the globe to the other just as the bombardment wings deployed.

The general maturity attained by the fighter program by 1952, and especially the addition of the air refueling capability, culminated in 1953 in the Fighter-Escort wings being redesignated Strategic Fighter Wings and undertaking the development of a capability to deliver nuclear weapons / see 20 January 1953 /. At the same time their primary mission was changed from bomber-escort to atomic-weapons delivery. Fighter wings, equipped with nuclear weapons, became in themselves powerful strategic striking forces. And in the years 1953-1956, in contrast to the earlier period, the fighter program was very stable. Two new wings were activated in 1953, but the wing strength then remained at six throughout 1954 and 1955 and no further changes were anticipated in 1956.

Development of the Fighter Force

Until 1952 the number of fighter units assigned to the Strategic Air Command fluctuated to a considerable degree. Following the activation of the 56th Fighter Group on 1 May 1946 / see above /, the

THE FIGHTER PROGRAM, 1946 - 1952 (Continued)

second fighter group, the 4th, was activated on 9 September 1946 / q. v. /. However, manning of this unit was not begun until March of 1947 / see 1 April 1947 /. In 1947 three new fighter groups were activated, the 27th, 33d, and 82d / see respectively 25 June 1947, 25 August 1947, and 12 April 1947 /, their manning being initiated shortly after their activation. In 1947 Headquarters Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of three of the fighter groups, the 4th, 56th, and 82d / see respectively 1 April 1947, 10 October 1947, and 1 August 1947 /. When activated, the 27th and 33d Fighter Groups were assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command, but about a month after their activation they were assigned respectively to the Eighth Air Force on 16 July and 16 September 1947 / q. v. /.

On 1 August 1948 / q. v. / the five fighter groups (4th, 27th, 33d, 56th, and 82d) were redesignated fighter wings. To conform to its authorization of two fighter wings under the 70-group program, late in 1948 / see 1 December 1948 / the Strategic Air Command reassigned three of its fighter wing (4th, 33d, and 56th) to the Continental Air Command; and in mid-1949 / see 22 August 1949 / it lost still another wing, the 82d, to the same command. This left assigned to the Strategic Air Command only the 27th Fighter Wing, which was redesignated a Fighter-Escort Wing on 1 February 1950 / q. v. /. A second wing, the 1st Fighter Wing, was assigned to the command for a comparatively short time. It was assigned on 1 May 1949 / q. v. /, but was redesignated a fighter-interceptor wing on 16 April 1950 / q. v. / preliminary to its transfer to the Continental Air Command on 1 July 1950 / q. v. /. Thus, at the end of 1949 Strategic Air Command had only two fighter wings, neither of which was equipped for long-range missions.

The loss of the 1st Fighter-Interceptor Wing on 1 July 1950 was offset by the gain of the 31st Fighter-Bomber Wing on the same date / see 1 July 1950 /. The 31st Fighter-Bomber Wing was redesignated as a Fighter-Escort Wing on 16 July 1950 / q. v. /. Under the 95-group program, the number of fighter wings increased from two in mid-1950 to seven by the end of April 1951, only to drop to three by the end of the year. The third fighter-escort wing, the 12th, was activated on 1 November 1950 / q. v. /. Four more fighter wings were added to the fighter force early in 1951, when four Air National Guard Units, the 108th, 131st, 132d, and the 146th, were called to active duty and assigned to the Strategic Air Command / see 10 March 1951, 16 March 1951,

THE FIGHTER PROGRAM, 1946-1952 (Continued)

16 April 1951 and 17 April 1951 /. These four wings, however, were assigned for only a short time, being redesignated fighter-bomber wings a short time after their assignment / see 9 April 1951 and 1 June 1951 / and reassigned to the Tactical Air Command on 16 November 1951 / q. v. /.

The 508th Fighter-Escort Wing was activated on 1 July 1952 / q. v. /, bringing the number of wings to four: the 12th, 27th, 31st, and 508th. Two new wings were activated in 1953 / see 20 January 1953 /, and the number of fighter wings remained at six throughout 1954 and 1955 and no further activations or inactivations were anticipated in 1956.

Fighter Aircraft

The lack of fighter aircraft with an adequate long-range capability was a very serious problem until 1952, hindering the development of an effective bomber-escort program. In 1952 fighter wings developed an air refueling capability and improved models of the F-84, Gs and Fs, were assigned to the command. However, in 1946 the Strategic Air Command's fighter aircraft consisted of a few obsolete World War II propellor-driven aircraft. World War II tactics would have been necessary if fighter units had been required to support bomber operations.

In 1947 the first jets (P-80s) were received / see 23-24 April 1947 /. The P-80s, which were assigned to the 4th and 56th Fighter Groups and which replaced propellor-driven Republic P-47 Thunderbolts, were considered tactically reliable, but their range was limited. In 1948 a jet with a greater range, the Republic F-84E Thunderjet, was introduced into the command, along with some propellor-driven North American F-82 Twin Mustangs. The three fighter wings activated in 1947, the 27th, 33d and 82d, were originally equipped with propellor-driven North American P-51 Mustangs / see 12 April 1947, 25 June 1947, 16 July 1947, and 25 August 1947 /. The 27th Wing equipped with F-82s in 1948, and in 1950 it converted to F-84Es. In 1948 the 33d Wing converted to F-84Es prior to its transfer to the Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948 / q. v. /. The 82d Wing retained its F-51s until it was transferred to the Continental Air Command on 22 August 1949 / q. v. /.

Though a great improvement over propellor-driven aircraft, the F-84Es presented many maintenance difficulties because of short engine life and the need for excessive engine changes. However,

THE FIGHTER PROGRAM, 1946 - 1952 (Continued)

on 1 December 1948 / q. v. / the Strategic Air Command momentarily lost all its jet aircraft when the 4th (F-80s), 33d (F-84Es), and the 56th (F-80s) Fighter Wings were reassigned to the Continental Air Command. The 1st Fighter Wing, assigned to the Strategic Air Command for a few months in 1949-1950 / see 1 May 1949 and 1 July 1950 / was equipped with North American F-86 Sabres, which had little long-range potential and were used primarily as an interceptor. All F-51s were phased out of the command by the end of 1949, but three of the four Air National Guard Units assigned to the command for a short time in 1951 were equipped with F-51s, one of them being equipped with F-47s. The 31st Wing, assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 1 July 1950 / q. v. /, was equipped with F-84Es. The 12th Fighter-Escort Wing, activated on 1 November 1950 / q. v. /, equipped with F-84Es in 1951. Late in 1951 F-84Gs, possessing an air refueling capability, were introduced into the command, and the conversion program continued into 1953 / see 19 July 1948 and 20 January 1953 /. The 508th Fighter-Escort Wing, activated on 1 July 1952 / q. v. /, began equipping with F-84Gs in 1953.

Fighter Activities

Fighter-escort strength of the Strategic Air Command in the first few years of its existence, as in the bombardment / see 31 March 1946 / and reconnaissance / see 22 April 1946 / programs, was extremely limited. Fighter capabilities were restricted by obsolete World War II aircraft and by extreme fluctuations in units and personnel. But, like the bombardment and reconnaissance programs, the fighter program gradually developed into a strong strategic force. During the 1946-1952 period several distinct trends are evident.

In 1946 and 1947 fighter units were beginning their conversion from Conventional World War II-type aircraft to jets. The units were also hampered by numerous, supply, organizational, and manning problems. During these early years their most important operational training, like that of bombardment and reconnaissance units, was in the Arctic / see 29 October 1946 /. In the winter of 1946-1947 one squadron of the 56th Fighter Group trained in Alaska / see 18 December 1946 /, and the entire 82d Fighter Group deployed to Alaska in 1948 / see 1 April - 30 June 1948 /.

By the end of 1949 Strategic Air Command fighter strength was reduced to two wings, the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing and the 1st Fighter

THE FIGHTER PROGRAM, 1946 - 1952 (Continued)

Wing, neither of which was prepared for long-range missions. As a result, fighter aircraft had to be excluded from war plans calling for long-range missions. Strategic Air Command fighter resources were further depleted following the outbreak of the Korean conflict in 1950, when the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing was assigned to the Far East to support United States Air Force operations there / see 25 June 1950 - 27 July 1953 /. The transfer of 90 fighter pilots to the Far East at the same time further decimated fighter personnel ranks. The loss of these experienced pilots was keenly felt, especially because of the activation of a new wing, the 12th, on 1 November 1950 / q. v. /. At the same time, there was an input of inexperienced Reserve personnel into the command, and discharges and transfer quotas further reduced the fighter personnel ranks. On the positive side, the Korean conflict brought about a renewed recognition of the place of fighter-escort operations in modern aerial warfare. Therefore, in late 1950 and 1951 the proportional increase in fighter units far exceeded that in bombardment units.

From 1948 through 1952 the Strategic Air Command pioneered the trans-oceanic mass jet flights that later came to be accepted as routine by other United States Air Force commands. It was with good reason that the Strategic Air Command emphasized this activity. Before jet fighters could effectively support bombers in their global missions, a way had to be found to make them more mobile and to deploy them rapidly from the Zone of the Interior to either Europe or the Far East. Otherwise the advantage of speed would be sacrificed because of overnight stops.

From 1948 through 1951 the trans-oceanic mass flights were accomplished without the advantage of air refueling. Therefore, the jets had to make numerous stops enroute. The first of the pioneering flights was known as FOX ABLE ONE, and consisted of the flight of 16 P-80s of the 56th Fighter Group to the United Kingdom on 16 July 1948 / q. v. /. Late in 1950 / see 15 September - 28 October 1950 / in FOX ABLE THREE the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing ferried 180 F-84Es from Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas, to Germany. A smaller-scale mass flight of 55 F-82s to the Caribbean was made by the 27th Fighter Wing during the period 1-10 February 1949 / q. v. /. FOX ABLE TEN, accomplished by the 31st Fighter-Escort Wing late in 1950 / see 14 December 1950 - 6 January 1951 /, consisted of the deployment of the entire wing to England. The unit returned less aircraft to the United States in July 1951, being replaced by the 12th Fighter-Escort Wing, which deployed to England less aircraft / see 16 July - 22

December 1951 /. In mid-1950 FOX ABLE SIX was accomplished by the 20th Fighter-Bomber Group (Continental Air Command) under the operational control of the Strategic Air Command / see 18 July - 12 August 1950 /, the group deploying to the United Kingdom. Its return flight to the United States was known as FOX ABLE EIGHT.

In 1952 two epochal transpacific mass air refueling flights were made. The first of these, FOX PETER ONE, was performed during the period 4-17 July 1952 / q. v. / by the 31st Fighter-Escort Wing, when it deployed from Turner Air Force Base, Georgia to Japan. Air refueling was accomplished on the Travis-Hickam leg of the flight. Accomplished on very short notice and at a time when fighter units had little air refueling experience, the flight brought out several deficiencies and problems in the air refueling of fighter aircraft that needed correcting. Late in July 1952 / see c. 26 July 1952 / 46 aircraft of the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing tested the basic tactics for mass air refueling that had been developed during FOX PETER ONE in Operation CHECKOUT, during which they provided fighter escort for bombers "striking" at Chicago. Capitalizing on the lessons learned during FOX PETER ONE and Operation CHECKOUT, in October the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing made the second record-breaking transpacific flight of the year, FOX PETER TWO. Even though mass refueling was accomplished on two legs of the flight (Travis-Hickam and Midway-Misawa) instead of only on the Travis-Hickam leg as in FOX PFTER ONE and was therefore much more difficult, the flight was conducted with exceptional success. This was in marked contrast to the first mass refueling flight of 1952 which the 27th Wing had made in June of 1952 / see 17-20 June 1952 /, from Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas, to Ramey Air Force Base, Puerto Rico, and during which scores of difficulties were encountered. By the time of FOX PETER TWO, mass air refueling flights had come of age, and a new dimension had been added to fighter strength.

1 May

Fifteenth Air Force Mission Revised; Atomic Mission Assigned

Until 1 May the Fifteenth Air Force was charged with the same mission as that of its predecessor, the Second Air Force / see p. 8 /. On that date the Fifteenth Air Force was assigned a new strategic bombardment mission by Headquarters Strategic Air Command. The Fifteenth Air Force was charged with manning, training, and equipping the 58th

Bombardment Wing and any other assigned units, and maintaining these units in a state of readiness to permit the conduct of long-range offensive air operations in any part of the world, either independently or in cooperation with land and naval forces. It was further charged with training units and crews for maintenance of Strategic Striking Force units assigned to separate theaters. The Fifteenth Air Force was also assigned responsibility for the manning, training, and equipping of the 311th Reconnaissance Wing and the accomplishment of such photographic or reconnaissance missions in the Zone of the Interior as required / see following entry /. Finally, the Fifteenth Air Force was directed to develop the 58th Wing as the sole Army Air Forces agency to coordinate and direct Army Air Forces activities concerned with the atomic bomb. The 58th Wing was also to assist the Manhattan District in aerial experimentation and development, and to act as the Army Air Forces Liaison Agency with the Manhattan District.

No further change was made in the Fifteenth Air Force mission until 1 November 1946 / q. v. /.

1 May

311th Reconnaissance Wing reassigned from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the Fifteenth Air Force for administration and logistical support. Headquarters Strategic Air Command retained operational control of the unit, though the Fifteenth Air Force was charged with this responsibility by its mission / see above entry /.

On 1 April 1947 / q. v. / Headquarters Strategic Air Command took over complete control of the unit.

1 May

Rocky Ford Auxiliary #1 and Las Animas Auxiliary #2, Colorado (Fifteenth Air Force), both satellites of La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado, transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

4-9 May

Relocation of 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing Units

Because Headquarters 58th Bombardment Wing (Fifteenth Air Force) and its assigned 40th Bombardment Group were on tenant status at March Field, California, a base not destined for Fifteenth Air Force use, the two organizations were relocated. The Wing Headquarters

completed its move to Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, on 6 May, and the 40th Group began operations at Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona, on 4 May. To make Castle Field, California, available for use by the 93d Bombardment Group (VIII Bomber Command) / see 29 May 1946 / and to provide for better geographical control of 58th Wing units, the 444th Bombardment Group was moved from Castle Field, California, to Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona, beginning operations there on 9 May. The other tactical unit of the 58th Wing, the 509th Composite Group, remained in place at Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico.

6 May

Headquarters VIII Bomber Command (VH) (Fifteenth Air Force) began operations at MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, following its move from Peterson Field, Colorado.

For activities of the VIII Bomber Command, see pp. 10-11.

9 May

Geiger Field, Washington (and Seven Mile Gunnery Range Auxiliary) (Fifteenth Air Force) transferred to the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command (AAFTTC).

19 May

498th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, the only group assigned to the 73d Bombardment Wing, reassigned to Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force.

The 73d Wing was inactivated on 31 May 1946 / q. v. /.

29 May

93d Very Heavy Bombardment Group began operations at Castle Field, California, following its move from Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico.

31 May

Headquarters 73d Very Heavy Bombardment Wing (Fifteenth Air Force) inactivated at MacDill Army Air Field, Florida.

On 14 May it had been reduced to 1:1 strength and its personnel transferred to the unmanned Headquarters VIII Bomber Command, which

had recently completed its move to MacDill Army Air Field from Peterson Field, Colorado /see 6 May 1946/.

The inactivation of the 73d Wing left the Strategic Air Command with only one wing, the 58th.

1 June

Chico Army Air Field, California (Fifteenth Air Force), sub-base of Castle Field, California, transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

7 June

Headquarters Eighth Air Force Assigned

Headquarters Eighth Air Force relieved from assignment to the United States Army Forces, Pacific, transferred less personnel and equipment to MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, and assigned to the Strategic Air Command.

Manning of the Headquarters did not begin until 20 July 1946 /q. v./. It was attached to the Fifteenth Air Force for administration from 1 August to 1 November 1946, moved to Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, on 1 November 1946 /q. v./, and became operational there on 19 November 1946 /q. v./.

15 June ff.

Support of Air Defense Command Reserve Training Program

An Air Reserve Training Program was established in June 1946 by the Air Defense Command (ADC). The Air Defense Command was authorized by the Army Air Forces to activate Army Air Force Base Units (AAFBUs) at eight bases, all of which were Strategic Air Command bases or were satellites of Strategic Air Command bases:

Romulus, Michigan (parent base Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan)
Andrews Field, Maryland
Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire
Hensley Field, Texas (parent base Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas)
Richmond Army Air Base, Virginia (parent base Bolling Field, D. C.)
Wold-Chamberlain Field, Minnesota (parent base Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota)
Dow Field, Maine
Offutt Field, Nebraska (parent base Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska)

The Base Unit at Romulus was activated on 15 June, and the other seven on 1 July. T-6 and T-11 aircraft were to be used for Reserve training. Strategic Air Command base commanders were directed to render assistance within the limitations of facilities to Reserve detachment commanders, including messing facilities, transportation, tools and equipment, and other similar support.

Though the Strategic Air Command was not officially assigned responsibility for supporting the Reserve or Air National Guard Programs as part of its mission until 19 December 1947 /q. v./, such responsibility was assigned to the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces on 1 November 1946 /q. v./ and 4 November 1946 /q. v./.

SUPPORT OF RESERVE PROGRAM, 1946-1956

From 1946 to 1956 the Strategic Air Command continued to support the United States Air Force Reserve Program and Air National Guard Program in every way possible. Training was given to all Reserve or Air National Guard personnel that could be absorbed by stations and units. Usually the personnel trained resided within a 50-mile radius of Strategic Air Command bases. Flying and ground training was given to Reservists or Guardsmen during the normal work week when possible and on weekends to the maximum extent. Flying training was accomplished by the utilization of Reserve personnel as additional crew members on tactical aircraft. The Strategic Air Command also furnished demonstration units for active duty training periods of Reserve personnel. Beginning in 1952 Strategic Air Command also conducted annual summer encampments for the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps, /see 23 June - 23 July 1952/.

15 June

Sioux Falls Army Air Field, South Dakota (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

30 June

Richmond Army Air Base, Virginia, which had been under the command jurisdiction of Bolling Field, D. C., transferred to the Air Defense Command.

30 June

Headquarters Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Bowman Field, Louisville, Kentucky, and Headquarters Army Air Forces Personnel Distribution Command from the Army Air For[redacted]nnel Distribution Command (AAF PDC).

Headquarters Army Air Forces Personnel Distribution Command was immediately placed on temporary inactive status and was later inactivated effective the same date as its assignment. Bowman Field was transferred to the Corps of Engineers on 15 October 1946 / q. v. /.

1 July

A Strategic Air Command B-29, "Dave's Dream," under the control of Task Group 1.5 (Provisional) (Strategic Air Command), the Army Air Forces component of Task Force One, dropped a Nagasaki-type atomic bomb from 30,000 feet on 73 former Japanese naval vessels off Bikini Atoll on Able Day of Operation CROSSROADS. Five ships were sunk and nine heavily damaged.

On 25 July a second atomic bomb was exploded underwater, resulting in tremendous damage to the test vessels.

These were the fourth and fifth atomic explosions by the United States. The first had occurred on 16 July 1945 at Alamogordo, New Mexico, and the second and third on 6 August 1945 and 9 August 1945 respectively at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

For Strategic Air Command participation in other nuclear-energy exercises, see 15 April 1948 (Operation SANDSTONE), 27 January 1951 (Operation RANGER), 1 April 1952 (Operation TUMBLE-SNAPPER), 16 November 1952 (Operation IVY), 17 March 1953 (Operation UPSHOT-KNOTHOLE), and 1 March 1954 (Operation CASTLE).

PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION CROSSROADS
Earliest Strategic Air Command Activity in Atomic Program

Participation in Operation CROSSROADS was one of the most important activities of the newly-activated Strategic Air Command, the other most important activity being Arctic training / see 29 October 1946 /.

Task Force One was under the command of Vice Admiral Blandy, United States Navy, and the operational control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Task Group 1.5 force consisted of B-29 aircraft and crews competing for the privilege of dropping the bomb, the B-29s

OPERATION CROSSROADS (Continued)

and crews earmarked for dropping blast-gauge instruments, the C-54s and crews who provided the airlift from the United States, photo ships and technicians, supply aircraft and engineering personnel, aircraft and crews for weather reconnaissance, and public relations personnel and official observers.

Task Group 1.5, which was responsible for all Army Air Forces participation in CROSSROADS, was staffed by some 2,200 Strategic Air Command personnel and operated under the command during its organization and training period at Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico. The Group was originally activated on 13 February 1946 under the Continental Air Forces, and was assigned to the Strategic Air Command at the time of its activation /see 21 March 1946/. Shortly after President Truman's approval of the CROSSROADS project on 10 January, Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey, commanding general of the Strategic Air Command's 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing, was appointed as commander of Task Group 1.5. On 7 May 1946 Strategic Air Command responsibility ended when overseas deployment of the Group was completed.

The 320th Troop Carrier Squadron of the 509th Group used 26 C-54s to airlift personnel and equipment to and from the tests. On completion of its part in the exercise, the aircraft and personnel of the 320th Squadron were absorbed by the newly-activated 1st Air Transport Unit /see 10 July 1946/. The flyaway kit concept was fostered during CROSSROADS, and problems encountered in mobility during the exercise focussed on the need for a more effective Strategic Air Command mobility plan, which was finally established in 1948 /see 1 March 1948/.

Assigned to Task Group 1.5, which consisted essentially of the 509th Composite Group with augmentation, were an Air Attack Unit 1.51, Air Photographic Unit 1.52, Air Instrumentation and Test Requirement Unit 1.53, Air Transport Unit 1.54, Air Service Unit 1.55, Air Orientation Unit 1.56, and Air Weather Reconnaissance Unit 1.57. The 509th Composite Group and all Strategic Air Command personnel who participated in the test were attached to Task Group 1.5 for the duration of the exercise but remained assigned to the Strategic Air Command.

The 509th Composite Group, originally activated and manned in December 1944, was the Army Air Forces unit which employed the first atomic bombs to be used in warfare at Hiroshima and Nagasaki

OPERATION CROSSROADS (Continued)

in August of 1945. The group brought to Operation CROSSROADS all the experience they had gained during the training period for and the actual dropping of these first two bombs. The original group consisted of approximately 1,500 officers and included one bomb squadron, a special ordnance squadron, a troop carrier squadron, and a service group, which were augmented in January and February 1946 for the CROSSROADS project. During a training period of five months, involving the dropping of more than 70 facsimiles of the atomic bomb, a great many new lessons were learned that made an atomic bomb group unique among B-29 groups.

Task Group 1.5 was inactivated on 15 November 1946.

10 July

1st Air Transport Unit activated at Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico, and assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force.

The unit absorbed the personnel and aircraft of the 320th Troop Carrier Squadron, 509th Composite Group, which was finishing its activities in Operation CROSSROADS / see 1 July 1946 /.

On 1 November 1946 / q. v. / the 1st Air Transport Unit was reassigned from the Fifteenth to the Eighth Air Force. On 23 September 1947 / q. v. / it moved to Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, on 1 June 1948 / q. v. / was redesignated the 1st Strategic Support Unit, on 14 December 1948 / q. v. / moved to Biggs Air Force Base, Texas, and on 14 January 1949 / q. v. / was redesignated the 1st Strategic Support Squadron.

For history of Strategic Air Command air transport program, see 14 January 1949.

12 July

44th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas), a Fifteenth Air Force "Project Wonderful" unit / see pp. 10-11 / that had never had more than three people assigned to it, was inactivated.

15 July - 28 August

Planned Relocation of Headquarters Strategic Air Command and Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force

On 15 July, the Army Air Forces advised Headquarters Strategic Air Command that it would be moved to the Midwest. By the end of the month, the decision was made to move the Headquarters to Headquarters Area, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and to move Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force from that location to Fort George Wright, Spokane, Washington. A liaison officer was sent to Colorado Springs in early August to secure quarters for Headquarters Strategic Air Command personnel. Orders were issued and some personnel had shipped their household goods and were enroute to the new location when suddenly the movement orders were rescinded on 28 August 1946. The same situation existed at Colorado Springs, where the exodus to Fort George Wright had begun.

When the move of Headquarters Strategic Air Command to Colorado Springs was cancelled, two other locations were considered as a site for the Headquarters: Fort George Wright and Fort Worth, Texas. However, Headquarters Strategic Air Command remained at Bolling Field, D. C. until 21 October 1946 /q. v./, when it moved to Andrews Field, Maryland. Andrews Field had originally been rehabilitated for use by Headquarters Continental Air Forces and it was logical that its successor, Headquarters Strategic Air Command, should move there.

20 July

Manning of Headquarters Eighth Air Force Initiated

Manning of Headquarters Eighth Air Force, which had been assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 7 June 1946 /q. v./ at MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, was initiated by the activation of the 39th Army Air Forces Base Unit (AAFBU) at a strength of 1:1.

From 1 August to 1 November Headquarters Eighth Air Force was attached to the Fifteenth Air Force for administration and manning. On 16 August Headquarters Eighth Air Force received its first substantial assignment of manpower when personnel from Headquarters VIII Bomber Command, which was reduced to 1:1 manning, were assigned to it.

Headquarters Eighth Air Force moved to Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, on 1 November 1946 /q. v./, but did not become operational there until 19 November 1946 /q. v./.

25 July

Army Air Forces Staging Areas established at four Fifteenth Air Force bases: MacDill Army Air Field, Florida; Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas; Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas; and Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska.

30 July

509th Composite Group of the 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing (Fifteenth Air Force) redesignated the 509th Very Heavy Bombardment Group.

2 August

Project No. 5 (Operations FLOODLIGHT and POLARIS) Initiated

Before being transferred to the Alaskan Air Command on 19 August 1946 /q. v./, the 46th Reconnaissance Squadron, Very Long Range, Photo-Weather (later redesignated 72d Reconnaissance Squadron) had begun Project No. 5. This project consisted of aerial reconnaissance of the North Polar Area /for significance of Arctic operations during 1946-1948, see 29 October 1946/. Special attention was given to undiscovered land masses, the accumulation of meteorological data, and the possibility of a polar air route from Alaska to Iceland. The project was divided into two phases:

Operation FLOODLIGHT: Search for Land Masses

Operation FLOODLIGHT was begun in August 1946 and was completed long after the unit had passed out of Strategic Air Command control, in September 1948. Seventeen flights were made over the North Pole, and 288,000 nautical miles of flying were accomplished. During the course of 103 missions and 1,500 flying hours, it was determined that there was no land in the polar area covered, but a large ice field was discovered on which aircraft could be landed or a weather station established. "Target No. 1," as this phenomenon came to be known,

[redacted]

was discovered in August 1946, soon after the FLOODLIGHT flights began. The area was roughly 16 x 18 nautical miles, and was originally discovered about 310 nautical miles north of Point Barrow, Alaska.

Operation POLARIS: Study of Trans-Polar Air Route

Operation POLARIS was accomplished to determine the feasibility of regularly-scheduled Air Transport Command flights between Iceland and Alaska. The 46th Reconnaissance Squadron investigated navigational and communication difficulties involved and suggested procedures for overcoming them. The unit also studied the circulation of the Polar Air Mass and completed photographic and visual reconnaissance of landmarks along the proposed route in order to aid any future operations. By July 1947, after the unit had been transferred from the command, it had gone beyond the original directive by investigating magnetic variation and the true location of the Magnetic Pole, constructing a radar mosaic of the area, determining possible sites for emergency landing strips and weather stations, and recording weather data. Sixty-four missions had been credited to POLARIS by the end of 1947, and when FLOODLIGHT was completed in September 1948 the POLARIS project had only proceeded as far as the northern tip of Greenland. By the end of 1947 no deicision had been reached concerning the feasibility of an Iceland-Alaska route.

3 August

Sioux City Army Air Field, Iowa (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

4 August

448th, 449th, 467th, 486th (all "Project Wonderful" units /see pp. 10-11/) and the 498th Very Heavy Bombardment Groups were inactivated and in their places were activated respectively five Very Heavy bombardment groups bearing historically famous numerical designations: 92d, 28th, 301st, 97th, and 307th. Personnel and equipment of the inactivated units were utilized in manning and equipping the new groups.

The new units, which were all assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force, were located respectively at Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas; Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska; Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico; Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas; and MacDill Army Air Field, Florida.

[redacted]

The 92d, 97th, and 307th Groups were on training status throughout the remainder of 1946, but the 301st Group was on minimum manning status throughout the year. The 28th Bombardment Group was assigned to Alaska for Arctic training on 29 October 1946 / q. v. /.

15 August

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Fort George Wright, Spokane, Washington, from the Air Materiel Command and assigned it to the Fifteenth Air Force.

The base was apparently acquired as a site for Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, which was expected to move to Fort George Wright / see 15 July - 28 August 1946 /. When this action was cancelled, the base was transferred out of the command on 14 December 1946 / q. v. /.

16 August

Headquarters VIII Bomber Command (VH), MacDill Army Air Field, Florida (Fifteenth Air Force) reduced to 1:1 manning because of cancellation of "Project Wonderful" / see pp. 10 - 11 /.

Personnel of the Headquarters were reassigned to Headquarters Eighth Air Force / see 20 July 1946 /.

19 August

46th Reconnaissance Squadron, Very Long Range, Photo-Weather transferred to the Alaskan Air Command.

The Strategic Air Command, however, continued to receive technical and scientific data from the unit.

The 46th Reconnaissance Squadron had originally been assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 21 March 1946, and at that time had been attached to the 449th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska.

Shortly before its transfer to the Alaskan Air Command the squadron had initiated Project No. 5 / see 2 August 1946 /.

21 August

Eighth Air Force Mission Assigned

Though the Eighth Air Force did not become operational until 19 November 1946 / q. v. /, on 21 August its mission was assigned to Headquarters

Eighth Air Force. It was given responsibility for manning, training, and equipping units capable of employing the latest available equipment for long-range offensive air operations; and for training, administering, operating, and providing logistical support for all Strategic Air Command units deployed to the North Atlantic and North Pacific areas. The Eighth Air Force was also to be prepared to take over command jurisdictio: of air bases and other War Department installations located in those areas.

No further change was made in the Eighth Air Force mission until 4 November 1946 /q. v./.

25 August

Army Air Forces Staging Areas established by the Fifteenth Air Force at Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona, and Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico.

September

Beginning of Flying Safety Program

At Army Air Forces direction, flying safety schools were established in each unit having flying officers assigned. These schools reviewed and studied accidents so that pilots would learn from past mistakes.

FLYING SAFETY PROGRAM, 1946-1949

The Strategic Air Command Flying Safety Program in the period 1946-1949 developed very slowly, paralleling other command activity. /for 1950-1956 Flying Safety activities, see -- June 1950/. As a matter of fact, it was not until 1950, when the command underwent a tremendous expansion program, that the program reached full maturity. In the early years of the command Flying Safety was a relatively minor relegated duty, being mostly concerned with reviewing and evaluating accident and trend factors that would indicate a need for corrective action to prevent recurrence of similar-type accidents. This emphasis on the investigative phase of aircraft accidents produced results, lowering the accident rate approximately 50 percent in the period 1946-1950, but was far less effective than the new, more comprehensive program that went into effect in 1950.

Early in 1947 all levels of command, down to base level, were required to appoint part-time flying safety officers. These positions

FLYING SAFETY PROGRAM, 1946-1949 (Continued)

were originally established in the office of the Air Inspector, but in March 1947 were transferred from the Air Inspector to A-3, Operations. Strategic Air Command Regulation 62-3, "Flying Safety," 31 August 1948, extended the requirement for a part-time flying safety officer from base to squadron level. In 1948 standardization boards were also established for each bomber and reconnaissance group in the command. These boards conducted emergency procedure checks to insure standardization of emergency procedures and to evaluate the proficiency of all crews in these procedures.

In 1949 more personnel were added to the Flying Safety Program. Standard Operating Procedures were improved; standardization boards began to function effectively, checking crews in Standard Operating Procedures and emergency procedures. Special attention was given during Operational Readiness Tests (ORTs) to briefing procedures. A transition school was established to provide formal standardized transition for airplane commanders, pilots, and engineers / see -- March 1949 /. New and refined procedures developed by the school were incorporated in Strategic Air Command manuals. All pilots were required as Standard Operating Procedures to make all landings Ground Controlled Approach.

4 September

Dow Field, Maine (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Air Defense Command.

This installation, acquired by the Strategic Air Command on 21 March 1946 / q. v. /, had on 7 May 1946 been satellited on Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire. Strategic Air Command reassumed jurisdiction of Dow Air Force Base on 1 April 1951 / q. v. /, transferred it to Tactical Air Command on 15 November 1951 / q. v. /, and reassumed jurisdiction of the base on 1 July 1952 / q. v. /. As of 21 March 1956 the base was still assigned to the command.

9 September

4th Fighter Group, Single Engine (Very Long Range), activated at Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, and assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force.

The unit was on minimum manning status throughout 1946 and through February of 1947. Originally slated for transfer to Casper Army Air Field, Wyoming, late in 1946 or early in 1947 / see 30 April 1946 /, the unit was instead moved to Andrews Field, Maryland on 1 April 1947 / q. v. /, where it was manned and equipped with P-80 jet aircraft / see 23-24 April 1947 /.

1 October

40th and 444th Very Heavy Bombardment Groups, both located at Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona and assigned to the 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing (atomic), were inactivated. In their place were activated two new groups bearing historically-famous numerical designations: the 7th Very Heavy Bombardment Group and the 43d Very Heavy Bombardment Group. The 7th was activated at Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, and the 43d at Davis-Monthan Field. Personnel of the inactivated 40th and 444th Groups were absorbed by the newly-activated 43d Group, and 25 days later (on 25 October, q. v.) personnel of the 92d Bombardment Group, located at Fort Worth, were transferred to the newly-activated 7th Group and the 92d Group transferred less personnel and equipment to Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas.

Strategic Air Command bombardment groups as of 1 October 1946 totaled nine: the 7th, 28th, 43d, 92d, 93d, 97th, 301st, 307th, and 509th. Three of these, the 92d, 93d, and 301st, were on minimum manning status, and only three of the other six groups were active.

1 October

Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico, and its sub-bases Pueblo Army Air Base, Colorado, Castle Field, California, and Tonopah Army Air Field, Nevada, were satellited on the 200th Army Air Forces Base Unit (AAFBU), Colorado Springs, Colorado. Mountain Home Army Air Field, Idaho, and Pocatello Army Air Field, Idaho, which had been satellited on Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington, were also satellited on the 200th AAFBU.

3-4 October

10,000 Mile Nonstop Flight of a B-29

In a flight significant in aeronautical history, a specially-modified B-29, the "Pacusan Dreamboat," made a 10,000 mile nonstop flight from Honolulu, Hawaii, to Cairo, Egypt, via the near-Great-Circle route over Sitka, Alaska, and the Magnetic North Pole. The flight also passed over

Iceland, London, Paris, and Foggia, Italy. It was accomplished in 39 hours and 36 minutes, passing through two of the worst weather areas in the world. The plane, with a crew of nine commanded by Colonel Clarence S. Levine, carried 13,000 gallons of gasoline and took off with a gross weight of 147,000 pounds, 27,000 pounds o the maximum allowable weight of a standard B-29.

Conducted for the purpose of testing equipment over the polar regions, the flight climaxed the work of the first Operational Engineering Program. It brought new vistas to the use of strategic air power and demonstrated the effectiveness of cruise control for the range extension of all types of aircraft, a program that was established by the Strategic Air Command in the spring of 1947 / see 9 July 1947 /.

For other record flights of the "Pacusan Dreamboat" see 1-3 August 1947 and 31 August - 1 September 1950.

10 October

Strategic Air Command Mission Redefined and New Responsibilities Assigned

Strategic Air Command's Interim Mission of 12 March 1946 / see p. 3 / was redefined by Army Air Forces Regulation 20-20, 10 October 1946, which also assigned to the Strategic Air Command some new responsibilities. The new mission obligated Strategic Air Command to have a global striking force in readiness rather than preparing to furnish it at some future time. Instead of the words " . . . will be prepared to conduct long range offensive operations . . . " the new mission stated that the Strategic Air Command ". . . will provide and operate that portion of the Army Air Forces . . . for employment against objectives of air attack in any location of the globe . . . " As in the Interim Mission, Strategic Air Command continued to be charged with global strategic reconnaissance. New responsibilities included those concerning sea search and anti-submarine operations / see 14 January 1947 /, the training of long-range fighter crews and units for the performance of fighter-escort and joint Army-Navy operations, and the conduct of Universal Military Training as directed.

No further change was made in the Strategic Air Command mission until 19 December 1947 / q. v. /.

15 October

Bowman Field, Kentucky (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

The base had been assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 30 June 1946 /q. v./.

15 October

Army Air Forces Separation Points established by the Fifteenth Air Force at MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska, and Fort George Wright, Spokane, Washington.

The Fifteenth Air Force thereby resumed an activity that the Army Air Forces had been able to discontinue in February 1946.

21 October

Relocation of Headquarters Strategic Air Command

Headquarters Strategic Air Command began operations at Andrews Field, Maryland, following its move from Bolling Field, Washington, D. C.

Earlier in the year Headquarters Strategic Air Command had been slated for relocation at Colorado Springs, Colorado /see 15 July - 28 August 1946/. The move to Andrews Field was the first of two moves made by Headquarters Strategic Air Command during the first decade of its existence. It remained at Andrews Field until 9 November 1948 /q. v./, when it moved to Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

23 October

Army Air Forces Separation Points established by the Fifteenth Air Force at Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona; Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico; Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas; Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas; and Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan.

25 October

92d Very Heavy Bombardment Group transferred less personnel and equipment from Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, to Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas.

22 April

Headquarters 311th Reconnaissance Wing (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) began operations at MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, following its move from Buckley Field, Colorado.

The unit had been on a tenant status at Buckley Field.

MEDIUM-RANGE STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE, 1946-1949

From 1946 through 1949 Strategic Air Command reconnaissance capabilities were limited to medium range. In 1950, with the introduction of RB-36 aircraft, a long-range reconnaissance program was established / see 1 April 1950 / along side the medium-range program / for medium-range reconnaissance activities 1950-1956, see 6 July 1950 /. However, because of the addition of an in-flight refueling capability to RB-47 aircraft / see 19 July 1948 /, they were able to perform long-range missions. For this reason, the long-range reconnaissance program, utilizing heavy-type aircraft (RB-36s), came to an end in 1954 for all practical purposes when the heavy reconnaissance wings were given a primary mission of bombardment / see 1 June 1954 /.

The Nature of Strategic Reconnaissance

The dropping of the first atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima at the end of World War II revolutionized all concepts of military warfare / see p. 2 /. The Strategic Air Command itself had been established to defend the United States in any new "total" global war. It was charged with developing a strategic striking force capable of instant retaliation anywhere on the globe. World War II bombardment tactics were no longer applicable in the Atomic Age. The same was true in reconnaissance, an age-old military science.

In World War II bombing missions often had to be made without adequate target information and even without the navigational aids necessary for crews to find their way in and out of hostile territory. Such a lack of essential information would be suicide in the Atomic Era. At the beginning of World War II the need for more strategic information was highly apparent, for at that time less than one-tenth of the earth's surface had been charted. During World War II some progress was made in securing more

reconnaissance information. Nevertheless, Strategic Air Command at the time of its establishment was faced with a staggering reconnaissance requirement.

To destroy an enemy in a nuclear war it would be necessary to know what his vital targets were and where they were located. As a result, the responsibility for world-wide strategic reconnaissance was assigned to the Strategic Air Command as part of its very earliest mission /_see p. 3_/. Strategic reconnaissance consists of the examination and survey of a territory on a broad scale to gain an advantage in war. Unlike tactical reconnaissance which deals with the support of front-line armies, strategic reconnaissance is concerned with missions beyond the front lines, in seeking information that will make possible a long-range plan of attack that will inflict the greatest amount of damage on the enemy in places where it will hurt him the most. The primary task of strategic reconnaissance is collecting target information, but reconnaissance units also collect information on Bomb Damage Assessment (BDA), which is reporting on the degree of success achieved by a bombing mission.

Development of the Reconnaissance Force

In the years 1946 - 1949 the reconnaissance force was slowly built up. Units of the 311th Reconnaissance Wing, assigned to the Strategic Air Command at the time of its activation /_see 21 March 1946_/, were of squadron size only until the first half of 1947 when two groups, the 55th and 91st, were activated and assigned to the 311th Wing /_see 24 February 1947, 1 July 1947, 1 October 1947, and 29 June 1948_/. Manning of the 55th Group was begun in July of 1947, but manning of the 91st Group did not begin until the middle of 1948.

On 1 June 1947 /_q. v._/ Headquarters 311th Reconnaissance Wing moved from MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, to Andrews Field, Maryland, where early in 1948 /_see 16 April 1948_/it was redesignated the 311th Air Division, Reconnaissance. Shortly thereafter, on 20 July 1948 /_q. v._/it moved from Andrews to Topeka Air Force Base, Kansas. In the last half of 1948 the 55th and 91st Groups were redesignated Strategic Reconnaissance Wings /_see 19 July 1948 and 10 November 1948_/. On 5 January 1949 /_q. v._/ the 311th Air Division, Reconnaissance, was redesignated the 311th Air Division. Shortly thereafter the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was activated /_see 1 May 1949_/ and assigned to the 311th Air Division,

bringing the number of wings to three. A fourth wing, the 5th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, was activated on 16 July 1949 / q. v. /, but only a few months later / see 14 October 1949 / wing strength was reduced to three when the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was inactivated. / The 55th Wing was later reactivated on 1 November 1950, q. v. See also 6 July 1950. / On 1 November 1949 / q. v. / the 311th Air Division was inactivated, being replaced by the Second Air Force which for a short period of time after 1 November 1949 / q. v. / took over the mission, bases, and units (5th, 9th, and 91st Wings) of the 311th Air Division. Just prior to its inactivation on 1 November 1949 / q. v. / the 311th Air Division moved from Topeka Air Force Base, Kansas, to Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana / see 28 October 1949 /. In the Command reorganization of 1 April 1950 / q. v. / the reconnaissance mission was disseminated among the three Zone of the Interior numbered air forces, who were also each assigned reconnaissance units. This marked the end of Headquarters Strategic Air Command control of the specialized reconnaissance function, and a recognition of the integral role of reconnaissance in the Strategic Air Command mission. Headquarters Strategic Air Command had controlled operations of the 311th Wing and 311th Division from the time the unit was assigned on 21 March 1946 until it was inactivated on 1 November 1949, though the 311th had been assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force for administration and logistical support between 1 May 1946 / q. v. / and 1 April 1947 / q. v. /.

Early Reconnaissance Activities

Reconnaissance activities in the 1946-1949 period, like those in the bombardment and fighter programs / see 31 March 1946 and 1 May 1946 /, were limited in comparison to those from 1950 on, when all command activities matured and expanded. However, in the early years the groundwork was laid for an effective reconnaissance program. It was a period of unit buildup and training and the development of tactics and procedures. Activities were limited and little true strategic reconnaissance was accomplished. The year 1950 was a transition and maturation period for the reconnaissance program. A long-range program was established along side the medium-range program, and the reconnaissance function was disseminated among the three numbered air forces / see 1 April 1950 /. RB-50s, the first aircraft suitable for high-altitude long-range reconnaissance missions, were introduced into the command, as were RB-45s, the first jet

MEDIUM-RANGE RECONNAISSANCE ACTIVITIES, 1946-1949 (Continued)

aircraft to be used for reconnaissance purposes. However, until 1950 reconnaissance units were equipped with obsolete World War II RB-17s and RB-29s, along with some specialized aircraft such as C-82s and F-2s, F-9s, and F-13s. Reconnaissance units, like other units, suffered from serious shortages in equipment and trained personnel. The program in the early years was characterized by a long succession of mission changes and the utilization of interim equipment. All these shortages and problems were factors in limiting reconnaissance activities.

Most of the reconnaissance activities from 1946 through 1949 were specialized projects, a good share of them being accomplished for other agencies of the government. Reconnaissance units served all over the world, in Alaska, the Caribbean, North and South America, and Europe, frequently being assigned to the jurisdiction and operational control of theater commanders. Many reconnaissance projects were TOP SECRET and are therefore beyond the scope of this study. The general tendency in the early period was toward specialized projects, which were usually accomplished by small numbers of aircraft or even individual aircraft, whereas after 1950 the tendency was toward projects of larger scope. Also, after 1950 reconnaissance activities were more closely allied to support of the strategic bombardment mission and the Emergency War Plan (EWP).

The 311th Reconnaissance Wing, assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 21 March 1946 /q. v./, was the Army Air Forces' world-wide photographic and mapping unit. All mapping and charting agencies of the United States government were dependent on it for their area photography. From 1946 through 1949 the 311th was engaged in hundreds of separate projects / for Arctic reconnaissance activities of the 46th Reconnaissance Squadron, a separate squadron not assigned to the 311th Wing, see 2 August 1947/. It was also assisting in the remapping of the American Continent, and was engaged in Shoran (Short Range Navigational Control) tests to determine the adaptability of the Shoran technique to map-making / for Shoran program, see June 1952/.

One of the most important projects of the 311th Wing in 1946 and 1947 was Operation NANOOK, which consisted of the aerial mapping of parts of Greenland (Project EARDRUM) and the establishment of weather stations in the Greenland area / see c. 15 May - 4 September 1947/. The NANOOK Operation was accomplished by

Its personnel and equipment were transferred to the 7th Bombardment Group, which had been activated on 1 October 1946 / q. v. / at Fort Worth Army Air Field. The 92d Bombardment Group remained at Smoky Hill throughout 1946 with from 4-8 people assigned. On 20 June 1947 / q. v. / it moved to Spokane Army Air Field, Washington.

27-28 October

Riot of colored troops at MacDill Army Air Field, Florida.

28 October

Colonel Luther J. Fairbanks replaced Colonel Neil B. Harding as commanding officer of Headquarters Eighth Air Force.

Major General Paul B. Wurtsmith had been assigned as command-general of the Eighth Air Force on 13 September 1946, but he was killed in an airplane accident on the same day. On 1 November 1946 / q. v. / General Roger M. Ramey was assigned as first commanding general of the Eighth Air Force.

29 October

Beginning of Arctic Training of Tactical Units; First Overseas Deployment of a Strategic Air Command Bombardment Group

First increment of the 28th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Fifteenth Air Force) departed Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska, via Great Falls, Montana, Port of Aerial Embarkation for six months of Arctic training at Elmendorf Field, Alaska. The 28th Group was not only the first Strategic Air Command group deployed overseas, but it was also the first bombardment group equipped with B-29s to be assigned to Alaska. Approximately 33 aircraft and some 2,000 personnel participated in the Arctic training. The unit was under the operational control of the Strategic Air Command, administration and logistical support being provided by the Alaskan Air Command, until 4 February 1947 / q. v. /, when operational control also passed temporarily to the Alaskan Air Command. The unit returned to the United States on 19 April 1947 / q. v. /.

EMPHASIS ON ARCTIC OPERATIONS, 1946-1948

During the period 1946-1948 the Army Air Forces and the Strategic Air Command placed special emphasis on Polar operations and

training. This came about because of the concerted military opinion that the Great Circle air route across the Polar Basin from Europe and Asia would be the likely avenue of approach by any future aggressor. General Spaatz, in listing the main objectives of the Army Air Forces in October of 1946, declared: "Development of the defense of the Arctic frontier is our primary operational objective." It was planned that ultimately most Army Air Forces personnel and units would be trained in Arctic operations.

Strategic Air Command was to initiate the program by the assignment to Alaska of the 28th Group / see above / and one squadron of the 56th Fighter Group / see 18 December 1946 /. These units were to establish training periods, standards, and doctrines for the units that were to follow under the Army Air Forces rotational plan for Arctic training.

Even prior to the issuance of General Spaatz's directive, Strategic Air Command had started to give attention to Arctic training. Shortly after the Fifteenth Air Force was activated, on 31 March 1946, and the Strategic Air Command began operations, several units were slated for manning and training for ultimate assignment to the Arctic area. In mid-July a Polar Training Program was initiated. On 21 August 1946 / q. v. / the Eighth Air Force, though it did not become operational until 19 November 1946, was assigned responsibility for the administration, training, and logistical support of all Strategic Air Command units deployed to the North Atlantic and North Pacific. It was also charged with assuming command jurisdiction over air bases and other War Department installations located in those areas if such action was deemed necessary.

Another illustration of the emphasis placed on Arctic activities was the flight of a B-29 on 3-4 October 1946 / q. v. / from Honolulu, Hawaii, to Cairo, Egypt, via the Great Circle route to test equipment under Arctic conditions. Throughout the winter of 1946-1947 the 46th Reconnaissance Squadron was engaged in a special Arctic reconnaissance project, Project No. 5 / see 2 August 1946 /. The squadron, which was assigned to Ladd Field, Alaska, during a winter that broke all existing records for low temperatures, performed more Arctic flying than any other unit.

In 1947, 12 of the 18 formal reports issued by the Operations Analysis Office, Headquarters Strategic Air Command, concerned-

Arctic activities and problems. In the same year, during the period 17-19 March, a Polar Navigation Conference was conducted by the Fifteenth Air Force Operations Analysis office for Strategic Air Command group navigators. Approximately ten navigators from the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces participated. Both the Army Air Forces and The Aeronautical Chart Service were also represented. In July and August 1947 two Polar Mobile Training Units were formed to facilitate the indoctrination of personnel in Arctic conditions. During the winter of 1947-1948 the 98th Bombardment Group served a training tour in Alaska / see 2 December 1947 - 21 March 1948 /.

Arctic Emphasis Diminished; Trend Toward Global Mobility

In 1948 there was a shift in emphasis from the Polar regions to Europe and later to overall global mobility rather than emphasizing any particular region / for development of Strategic Air Command Mobility Plan, see 1 March 1948 /. The shift occurred abruptly in June 1948 when three full bombardment groups were assigned to Europe during the emergency alert occasioned by the Russian blockade of Berlin / see 27 June - 17 July 1948 /. Rotation of Strategic Air Command units to Alaska was continued, but that region lost some of its importance as a key area in the world-wide plan for retaliatory strategic bombing.

30 October

Army Air Forces Staging Area established by the Fifteenth Air Force at Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan.

1 November

Army Air Forces Assembly Station established by the Fifteenth Air Force at Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas.

1 November

Eighth Air Force Became Autonomous

Headquarters Eighth Air Force began operations at Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, following its move from MacDill Army Air Field,

Florida (Fifteenth Air Force). At the same time, the Eighth Air Force achieved autonomy as a Strategic Air Command numbered air force when Headquarters Eighth Air Force was released from the Fifteenth Air Force for administration and Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey assumed command.

General Ramey retained command of the Eighth Air Force until 12 November 1946 /q. v./.

Units and Bases Assigned:

Five major bases and their sub-bases and auxiliaries and the units located thereat were reassigned from the Fifteenth to the Eighth Air Force, but the Fifteenth Air Force retained administrative control of them until 19 November 1946 /q. v./, at which time the Eighth Air Force became fully operational. The units assigned to the Eighth Air Force consisted essentially of the 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing (atomic) and its three assigned bombardment groups.

Base	Unit
Alamogordo Army Air Field, New Mexico (bombing and gunnery range)	2315t Army Air Forces Base Unit (AAFBU) (Special)
Deming Army Air Field, New Mexico	
South Auxiliary #1, New Mexico Center Auxiliary #2, New Mexico	
Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona	43d Very Heavy Bombardment Group
Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas	Headquarters 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing 7th Very Heavy Bombardment Group
Abilene Army Air Field, Texas	
Kirtland Army Air Field, New Mexico (Flight Test Section for atomic bomb)	1st Ordnance Squadron, Aviation 428th Army Air Forces Base Unit (AAFBU)

[redacted]

1946

Base

Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico

Roswell Auxiliary #3, New Mexico

Unit

509th Very Heavy Bombardment Group

1st Air Transport Unit

Eighth and Fifteenth Air Force Missions Revised:

A revision in the missions of the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Force was a logical concomitant of the assignment to the Eighth Air Force of the 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing, which had always been responsible for Strategic Air Command participation in the atomic program. On 1 November 1946 /q. v. following/ the Fifteenth Air Force was relieved of its responsibilities concerning the atomic program, and these were assigned to the Eighth Air Force on 4 November 1946 /q. v./.

Final Manning of Headquarters Eighth Air Force:

Manning of Headquarters Eighth Air Force had been started on 20 July 1946 /q. v./. On 16 August 1946 a substantial number of personnel had been transferred to it from Headquarters VIII Bomber Command, which was reduced to 1:1 manning. But as of 1 November 1946 Headquarters Eighth Air Force was not fully manned. Therefore, Headquarters 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing was reduced to 1:1 manning and its personnel used to man Headquarters Eighth Air Force. Headquarters 58th Wing remained unmanned throughout 1946.

After the reorganization the Fifteenth Air Force had three active Very Heavy bombardment groups assigned: the 28th, 97th, and 307th. Three other groups were assigned, but these were unmanned throughout 1946: the 92d, 93d, and 301st. The Fifteenth Air Force lost the only wing that had been under its control, the 58th, to the Eighth Air Force.

1 November

Fifteenth Air Force Mission Revised; Atomic Mission Deleted

In a revision of the mission assigned to it on 1 May 1946 /q. v./, the Fifteenth Air Force was relieved of responsibility for participation

[redacted]

[redacted]

in the atomic bomb program because of the reassignment of the 58th Bombardment Wing to the Eighth Air Force / see preceding entry /. This responsibility was assigned to the Eighth Air Force on 4 November 1946 / q. v. /. No change was made in the strategic bombardment or reconnaissance mission of the Fifteenth Air Force. As part of its revised mission, however, new responsibilities were assigned, including those concerning sea search and anti-submarine patrol / see 14 January 1947 /, long range fighter and fighter-escort operations in any part of the world / see 1 May 1946 /, participation in Universal Military Training (UMT) as directed, and support of Reserve and Air National Guard activities / see 15 June 1946 ff. /.

Strategic Air Command was not officially assigned responsibility for the support of Reserve and Air National Guard activities as part of its mission until 19 December 1947 / q. v. /.

No further change was made in the Fifteenth Air Force mission until 16 September 1949 / q. v. /.

4 November

Eighth Air Force Mission Revised; Atomic Mission Assigned

The mission assigned to the Eighth Air Force on 4 November, which replaced the interim mission that had been assigned to it on 21 August 1946 / q. v. /, was exactly the same as that assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force on 1 November 1946 / q. v. /, but in addition to the responsibilities assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force the Eighth Air Force was charged with responsibility for the atomic bombing force and was to assist the Manhattan District in aerial experimentation in connection with the development of the atomic bomb and act as a liaison agency between the Strategic Air Command and the Manhattan District.

No further change was made in the Eighth Air Force mission until 15 September 1949 / q. v. /, though the above mission was restated by Headquarters Strategic Air Command on 10 January 1947. The only change in the restated mission was that no reference was made to the Eighth Air Force acting as a liaison agency between Strategic Air Command and the Manhattan District.

4 November

Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire, satellited on Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan; Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska; and Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington, satellited on the 200th

[redacted]

Army Air Forces Base Unit (AAFBU), Colorado Springs, Colorado. Also satellited on the 200th AAFBU was La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado, which had been satellited on Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico. All these bases remained assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force.

6 November

Great Bend Army Air Field, Kansas (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

10 November

Headquarters VIII Bomber Command, which had been responsible for the execution of "Project Wonderful" /see pp. 10-11/, inactivated.

It had been reduced to 1:1 manning on 16 August 1946 /q. v./.

10-19 November

Participation in Operation NULLUS

Six B-29 aircraft of the 509th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico (Eighth Air Force), participated as Task Unit 05.4.3 of Task Force 05 in Operation NULLUS. This operation, a joint Army-Navy exercise off the west coast of South America, consisted of a simulated attack on the Panama Canal by United States Navy Task Force 66 which was returning from Chile. On 14 and 15 November the fleet was intercepted and "bombed" by 509th aircraft.

Leaving their home station on 10 November, 509th aircraft staged from Rio Hato, Panama, and returned to Roswell Army Air Base on 19 November. They were supported by two C-54s of the 1st Air Transport Unit (Eighth Air Force).

12 November

Major General Clements McMullen replaced Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey as commanding general of the Eighth Air Force.

On 16 December 1946 Brigadier General Ramey assumed temporary command of the Eighth Air Force during the

absence of Major General McMullen, and on 10 January 1947 General Ramey again permanently assumed command of the Eighth Air Force.

13 November-4 December

First Flight of B-29s to Europe and First Post-World War II Use of Aircraft as Instrument of International Diplomacy

A flight of six B-29 aircraft and two spares from the 43d Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Eighth Air Force) left Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona, on 13 November for Rhein-Main Airfield, Frankfurt, Germany, via Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, Florida; Bermuda; and Lagens Field, Azores. The two spare B-29s remained at Morrison Field until the other six aircraft had arrived in Germany. The military-diplomatic flight, under the command of Colonel James C. Selser, Jr., presented a display of United States air power in Germany, England, France, and Italy, and returned to the United States on 4 December.

The B-29s crossed the Atlantic in groups of twos. The first two aircraft arrived at Rhein-Main Airfield on 17 November, being delayed for a day in the Azores because of weather conditions. The other two groups were also somewhat delayed because of inadequate weather reports and poor communications over the Atlantic. The B-29s were accompanied by two C-54s from the 1st Air Transport Unit (Eighth Air Force), Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico, which carried spare engines and supplies. On the return trip two aircraft departed 29 November via Rome; Orly Field, Paris; Azores; and Bermuda. Two aircraft departed 2 December and two departed 4 December via Paris, the Azores, and Bermuda.

Significance of the Flight

Though only a small number of aircraft were involved, this flight of B-29s to Europe was a highly significant one, not only to the Strategic Air Command but to the people of the United States as well. It symbolized growing sentiment in the United States for the thwarting of the aggressive actions of the Soviet Union in Europe by a show of force. For the first time in their history the American people were to support a large military force in peacetime. The Strategic Air Command was to be one of the main components of this force.

A New Era in Diplomacy

Giving as it did a special potency to aircraft, the atomic age ushered in a new era of international diplomacy. The Strategic Air Command's ability to deliver atomic bombs placed it in a position to take over the Navy's traditional role as the strong arm of the State Department. Although the flight of the six B-29s to Europe could not have been interpreted as a direct threat to Russia, the implications were obvious. The B-29 was widely recognized as the aircraft capable of dropping an atomic bomb, and the appearance of B-29s in Europe would cause speculation that they might be stationed there permanently.

The flight was made at a time when the international situation was particularly tense. Relations between the Soviet Union and the Western powers, already strained, became especially critical in August 1946 when two United States Air Transport Command C-47s were shot down over Yugoslavia, resulting in the death of five Americans. An Army Air Forces request for a round-the-world flight of B-29s as a demonstration of American air power was denied by the State Department, but the flight of six B-29s to Germany was approved. / For the first round-the-world flight of B-29s, see 22 July - 6 August 1948. /

Groundwork Laid for Strategic Air Command Rotation Program

Though the flight was made primarily for diplomatic purposes, some important military objectives were attained. Personnel in the American Zone of Occupied Germany were indoctrinated in the peculiarities of the B-29, which had been committed exclusively to the Pacific Theater during World War II. A survey was made of European airdromes to determine their suitability for B-29 operations, and other data was compiled that might be useful to Strategic Air Command units later assigned to Europe. The feasibility was established of deploying Strategic Air Command units periodically to European bases for tactical training, a program that went into effect on a limited scale in 1947 / see 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948 / and which became an integral part of the Strategic Air Command training program.

15 November

Task Group 1.5 (Provisional) inactivated.

It had been activated on 13 February 1946 by the Continental Air Forces (CAF) as the Army Air Forces component of Task Group One for participation in the Atomic test Operation CROSSROADS / see 1 July 1946 /.

19 November

Eighth Air Force Became Operational

The Eighth Air Force became operational as it assumed full control over the units and installations it had acquired on 1 November 1946 / q. v. / from the Fifteenth Air Force.

20 November

Headquarters Strategic Air Command assumed direct jurisdiction of Andrews Field, Maryland, from Bolling Field, D. C.

> This action was preliminary to the transfer of Bolling Field to Headquarters Army Air Forces on 16 December 1946 / see 15 - 16 December 1946 /.

30 November

Fifteenth Air Force Recruiting Program Ended

The Fifteenth Air Force was relieved of responsibility for participation in the Army Air Forces recruiting program. This program had been begun by the Second Air Force on 16 August 1945 and continued by the Fifteenth Air Force after it assumed the Second Air Force mission on 31 March 1946 / see p. 8 /.

> Between 16 August 1945 and 30 November 1946, 14,192 Regular Army Air Corps enlistments were obtained.

1 December

Kirtland Army Air Field, New Mexico (Eighth Air Force), transferred to the Air Materiel Command.

4 December

Arlington Auxiliary #4, Colorado (Fifteenth Air Force), satellite of La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado, transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

7 December

Harvard Army Air Field, Nebraska (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

14 December

Fort George Wright, Washington (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Air Training Command.

> Strategic Air Command re-assumed jurisdiction of Fort George Wright on 16 July 1947 /q. v./.

15 December

Fairmont Army Air Field, Nebraska (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

15-16 December

Bolling Field Transferred to Army Air Forces

On 15 December Bolling Field Command was established as a separate command under the Army Air Forces, and on 16 December Strategic Air Command transferred Bolling Field, D. C. and its off-base facilities to the Bolling Field Command.

> Headquarters Strategic Air Command had assumed direct jurisdiction of Bolling's sub-base Andrews Field on 20 November 1946 /q. v./. As of 31 December 1946 Andrews Field was the only base remaining under Headquarters Strategic Air Command jurisdiction.

18 December

62d Fighter Squadron to Alaska for Arctic Training

The flight echelon of the 62d Fighter Squadron of the 56th Fighter Group, Single Engine (Very Long Range) (Fifteenth Air Force), consisting of 28 P-51H aircraft, left Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, for Ladd Field, Alaska, arriving there on 28 December. The flight, under the command of Colonel David C. Schilling, was routed via Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota; Great Falls, Montana; Edmonton, Alberta; and White Horse, Yukon.

The P-51s were accompanied by three B-29s of the 97th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, which carried spare parts and maintenance personnel. The ground echelon of 10 officers and 217 enlisted men had preceded the flight echelon by rail and water, leaving Selfridge Army Air Field on 20 November and arriving at Ladd Field 5 December 1946. Training commenced on 2 January 1947 and ended 31 March 1947. The unit was under the operational control of the Strategic Air Command, administration and logistical support being provided by the Alaskan Air Command, until 4 February 1947 / q. v. / when complete control of the unit temporarily passed to the Alaskan Air Command. Alaskan Air Command retained control of the unit until it returned to its home station in April of 1947.

24 December

Consolidated Gunnery Training School for flexible aerial gunnery established at Alamogordo Army Air Field, New Mexico.

GUNNERY TRAINING, 1946-1956

First Schools Established

The Army Air Forces Central School for Flexible Gunnery was discontinued shortly after World War II. Therefore, when the Strategic Air Command was activated plans had to be made to establish a gunnery training program. In November of 1946 the Eighth Air Force began operating a flexible gunnery school and laid plans for a central school for the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces, which was officially established at Alamogordo Army Air Field on 24 December 1946. The gunnery training at Alamogordo was brought to an end when that base was transferred to the Air Materiel Command on 16 March 1947 / q. v. /. In May 1947, however, the program was resumed at Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, when the First Gunnery Training Squadron was activated. The first class commenced training on 8 July 1947, and in the following seven months a total of 44 officers and 97 airmen were trained. The school had to be closed on 16 February 1948 because of a lack of funds, and all formal gunnery training ceased.

GUNNERY TRAINING, 1946-1956 (Continued)

Emergency Training Program, 1950-1951

Nothing further was accomplished until the Air Training Command resumed a gunnery training program late in 1950. However, personnel from these schools did not begin flowing into the Strategic Air Command until late in 1951. In the meantime, because of requirements associated with the Korean War, the Strategic Air Command was forced to initiate an emergency training program for large numbers of combat crew gunners. This program was conducted at five bases: Biggs Air Force Base, Texas; Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico; Carswell Air Force Base, Texas; Hunter Air Force Base, Georgia; and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. Upon completion of this training, gunners were assigned to Air Training Command Combat Crew Training Schools (CCTSs) or to Strategic Air Command bombardment wings. A lack of gunnery ranges, trainers, and gunnery officers were serious problems in the gunnery training program until late 1950, when additional ranges and instructor personnel became available. Between July 1950 and June 1951, 6,000 gunners were trained.

Evaluation Program

Another step taken by the Strategic Air Command to improve the proficiency of aerial gunners pending the fruition of the Air Training Command program was an evaluation program that was established in December 1950 / see Strategic Air Command Regulation 50-24, 1 February 1951 /. Under this program individual gunners were evaluated to determine the amount of training necessary to bring them to the desired level of proficiency, and they were given aid in selecting a course of training to overcome their deficiencies. A point system was utilized, 85 points being necessary for assignment to a Lead Crew and 78 points for assignment to a combat-ready crew. Sub-marginal gunners were removed from crew duty.

The program was begun at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, in February 1951; Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico, and Matagorda Island, Texas, in March; and at Hunter Air Force Base, Georgia, in April. This program was carried on even after the Air Training Command began to meet Strategic Air Command requirements for gunners late

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in 1951. By June 1952 some 8,000 gunners had been evaluated and re-evaluated in Strategic Air Command medium and heavy bombardment units, the evaluation of heavy bombardment gunners having been begun in October 1951.

Crew Specialization Creates Excess Gunners

By late 1951 the Air Training Command was able to meet three-fourths of the Strategic Air Command requirements for gunners. In the period 1951-1956 no other emergencies arose such as that in Korea to tax the command resources, and the gunnery training program leveled off. As a matter of fact, instead of there being a shortage of gunners as in the earlier period, frequently there were surpluses. For example, in 1954 the B/RB-36 Featherweight Program / see 23 June 1948 / and the conversion of medium units to B/RB-47s / see 23 October 1951 / created an excess of about 2,000 gunners who were retrained in allied career fields. With the introduction of B-47 aircraft large numbers of gunners became excess because the gunnery function was incorporated into the duties of the observer in the highly-specialized three-man B-47 crew. The days of a full-time gunnery officer had ended.

B-36 Deficiencies Remedied

When B/RB-36s were introduced into the command in 1948 / see 23 June 1948 /, some serious deficiencies were discovered in their gunnery systems. However, through improvement in Standard Operating Procedures and the functional reliability of the gunnery systems, a significant improvement was made in fire-out rates. The fire-out rate for modified systems rose from 36 percent in July 1952 to 80 percent by the end of 1953. The average percentage of fire-out on routine B-36 missions rose from 60.8 percent on Featherweighted B-36s at the end of 1954 to 65.7 percent at the end of 1955. On non-Featherweighted B-36s the figure increased from 62.4 percent at the end of 1954 to 66.1 percent at the close of 1955.

B-47 Fire-Out Rate Increased

B-47s, introduced into the command late in 1951 / see 23 October 1951 /, also presented some serious defensive armament problems. Their gunnery capability was exceptionally

GUNNERY TRAINING, 1946-1956 (Continued)

low because of equipment deficiencies. It was decided in February 1951 to abandon the A-2 defensive armament system, which had originally been chosen for the B-47. Therefore, the first B-47s off the production line had no defensive armament system whatsoever. The B-4 system was installed during the modification of 244 B-47Bs that was completed in October 1953.

The first aircraft equipped with the A-5 system was delivered in June 1953 to the 303d Medium Bombardment Wing. This system was superior to earlier systems, but was still not entirely acceptable. In 1955 a modification was in the process of development that provided projection hoppers for the A-5 system. Fire-out in A-5 equipped aircraft increased from 69 percent in 1953 to 82.1 percent at the end of 1954 and to 88.5 percent by the close of 1955. On the other hand, percentage of fire-out in B-4 equipped B/RB-47s, which was 74 percent at the end of 1954, rose to 77.3 percent by the end of 1955.

E-26 Trainers and Radar Gunlaying Trainers

By the end of 1953 practically all wings were equipped with E-26 gunnery trainers. By 1955 AN/APG-T1A radar gunlaying trainers for the radar control of the tail gun were in place at all operating bases, having the configuration necessary for use in all types of assigned aircraft. In cooperation with the Air Force Personnel Training and Research Center at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, the Strategic Air Command established a standard scoring procedure incorporating five basic skills required of radar gunlaying operators.

Developments in 1955

A B-52 "G" gunner course was established in 1955 by the Air Training Command at Lowry Air Force Base, and the output of this course met Strategic Air Command schedules for B-52 conversion /see 29 June 1955/. By 1955 most of the gunnery officers assigned to the Strategic Air Command had attended or were training at the Primary Basic Observer Upgrading schools at Ellington Air Force Base, Texas, and Mather Air Force Base, California. It was anticipated that by the end of 1957 all gunnery Tables of Organization (T/O) vacancies would be filled by qualified observers.

9 January - 4 June

Provisional Wing Plan Established at Fifteenth Air Force Bases and Andrews Field, Maryland (Headquarters Strategic Air Command); Ascendancy of Tactical Group Commander over Station Commander

Until the Wing-Base Plan of station organization was made mandatory at all Strategic Air Command bases in the last half of 1947 / see 15 August - 1 December 1947 /, the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces were free to establish any form of station organization that was approved by Headquarters Strategic Air Command. Eighth Air Force bases were organized under an integrated base system, command of a base being exercised by the bombardment group commander. However, because of General Spaatz's dissatisfaction with any system where a tactical group commander was subordinated to a station commander, all Fifteenth Air Force bases had to be reorganized. The form of station organization chosen by the Fifteenth Air Force was the Provisional Wing Plan, which was also established at Andrews Field, Maryland (Headquarters Strategic Air Command). Between 9 January and 4 June 1947 eight Provisional Wings were activated:

Base	Wing and Assigned Group	Effective Dates (1947)
Andrews Field, Maryland (Headquarters Strategic Air Command)	3d Combat Fighter Wing, VLR (Provisional) (4th Fighter Group) (27th Fighter Group, an unmanned organization, moved to Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska, on 16 July 1947 / q. v. /)	1 April - 15 August
Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas	49th Combat Bomb Wing (VH) (Provisional) (97th Very Heavy Bombardment Group) (92d Very Heavy Bombardment Group, an unmanned organization, moved to Spokane Army Air Field, Washington, on 20 June 1947 / q. v. /)	9 January - 7 November
Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota	50th Combat Bomb Wing (VH) (Provisional) (28th Bombardment Group, which returned from Alaska on 19 April 1947 / q. v. /)	21 March - 15 August

PROVISIONAL WING PLAN (Continued)

Base	Wing and Assigned Group	Effective Dates (1947)
Castle Field, California	51st Combat Bomb Wing (VH) (Provisional) (93d Very Heavy Bombardment Group)	20 May - 15 August
Spokane Army Air Field, Washington	52d Combat Bomb Wing (VH) (Provisional) (92d Very Heavy Bombardment Group moved to Spokane Army Air Field on 20 June 1947 /q. v./ and manning of the unit was initiated) (98th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, an unmanned organization, moved to Spokane Army Air Field on 24 September 1947 /q. v./)	4 June - 5 December
Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan	65th Combat Fighter Wing, VLR (Provisional) (56th Fighter Group)	9 January - 15 August
Grenier Field, New Hampshire	66th Combat Fighter Wing, VLR (Provisional) (82d Fighter Group) /Grenier Field and all assigned units were transferred to the command jurisdiction of MacDill Army Air Field, Florida (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) on 1 August 1947, q. v./	10 April - 15 August
MacDill Army Air Field, Florida	94th Combat Bomb Wing (VH) (Provisional) (307th Very Heavy Bombardment Group) /MacDill Army Air Field and all assigned units were transferred to Headquarters Strategic Air Command on 1 April 1947 q. v./	9 January - 15 August

PROVISIONAL WING PLAN (Continued)

The inactivation of the Provisional Wings coincided quite closely with the establishment of Wing-Base organizations at Fifteenth Air Force bases /see 15 August-1 December 1947/.

Background

The recommendations of Major General Born, Commanding General of the Fifteenth Air Force, for the establishment of the Provisional Wing Plan of station organization had been approved in October 1946. Though original plans called for the reorganization to be effected on 1 November 1946, the task was more difficult than anticipated and the first unit of this type was not activated until 9 January 1947. Another plan of station organization considered by the Fifteenth Air Force at the time was the Hobson Plan, which was adopted by the Air Force as the Wing-Base Plan in the last half of 1947 and established Air Force-wide /see 15 August - 1 December 1947/. However, the Provisional Wing Plan had been chosen by the Fifteenth Air Force in 1946 in preference to the Hobson Plan.

Ascendancy of Tactical Commander

The World War II type of station organization in effect at Fifteenth Air Force bases prior to the initiation of the Provisional Wing Plan had subordinated the commander of the tactical group to the station commander and had required the complete integration of personnel of all Tables of Organization and Equipment (T/O & E) Units with station complement personnel who were assigned in bulk to the Army Air Forces Base Units (AAFBUs). In September of 1946, Carl Spaatz, Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, had expressed dissatisfaction with any system where the tactical group commander was subordinated to the station commander, and had directed that the situation be remedied.

Objectives of Provisional Wing Plan

The reasons for the establishment of the Provisional Wing Plan were: (1) to comply with the Spaatz directive; (2) to create an organization that would permit the appointment of officers to administer and operate combat stations who were

PROVISIONAL WING PLAN (Continued)

more experienced in station and personnel administration than the younger tactical group commanders; and (3) to create a station organization more economical of personnel and which would also eliminate problems concerning the jurisdiction of personnel that had existed because of the integration of all T/O & E personnel.

Heterogeneity the Keynote

The Provisional Wing Plan never attained a standard form, and almost as many different types of organization existed as there were bases. At least seven different plans, all incorporating specific modifications of the basic plan, were in effect at various times: Plan Able, Plan Baker, Plan Charlie, Plan Charlie - Revised, Plan Dick, Plan Dog, and Plan Easy. Under all the plans, however, the station organizations were considered as wing commands. They were, however, administrative in nature only, the tactical unit continuing to be the bombardment or fighter group. The major basic units of the provisional station organization were the bombardment or fighter groups, the air service group, and the Army Air Forces Base Unit (AAFBU) or Combat Airdrome Group. Personnel of these three major units who were performing the same or related functions were grouped together and assigned in various combinations of organization to the three major units or to the Provisional Wing Headquarters.

Years of Reorganization: 1947 and 1948

The heterogeneity of the Provisional Wing Plan forms of organization demonstrate the emphasis that was placed on wing organization in the early years of the command. 1947 and 1948, especially, were years of organization and reorganization, of trial and experimentation. Dissatisfied with the World War II type of organization, which was clearly incompatible with its needs, the Strategic Air Command in 1946 and early 1947 gave considerable attention to evolving an improved wing organization. The Provisional Wing Plan was the first probing step. In mid-1947, however, the Army Air Forces directed that the Wing-Base Plan, which had been devised by the Strategic Air Command as the Hobson Plan, be established Air Force-wide / see 15 August - 1 December 1947 /. The Wing-Base Plan proved highly successful,

PROVISIONAL WING PLAN (Continued)

but as time went on and as the Strategic Air Command expanded some amendments were necessary in the original Wing-Base Plan. Under both the Provisional Wing Plan and the original Wing-Base Plan the wings were administrative only in nature, the tactical unit being the bombardment or fighter group. In mid-1948 combat wings were organized to replace the existing administrative wings / see 12 July - 1 August 1948 /. The existing Very Heavy bombardment groups were redesignated medium or heavy bombardment groups and assigned to the combat wings. The fourth major reorganization occurred early in 1951 when air base group commanders were designated as installations commanders to free the wing commanders from the administrative management of their bases so that they could devote more of their time to the command of their tactical units / see 19 January 1951 /. As part of the same reorganization the "crew chief" maintenance system was discontinued and a Maintenance Control organization was established in the wing staffs. In 1951 air divisions were also activated to direct the activities at two-wing bases / see 10 February 1951 /.

10 January

Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey replaced Major General Clements McMullen as commanding general of the Eighth Air Force.

General Ramey had taken over temporary command of the Eighth Air Force from General McMullen on 16 December 1946. General Ramey retained his command until 15 June 1950 / q. v. /.

10 January

Major General Clements McMullen replaced Major General St. Clair Streett as deputy commander of the Strategic Air Command.

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14 January

Headquarters Strategic Air Command Assumed Operational Control of the 307th Very Heavy Bombardment Group; Beginning of Sea Search and Antisubmarine Program

THE ANTISUBMARINE PROGRAM, 1946-1956

Army Air Forces Background

Recognizing that Russia was programming and building a formidable submarine fleet that could do irreparable damage to United States shipping and coastal installations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff shortly after World War II programmed an antisubmarine campaign to be carried out in the event of war by surface forces and the air force working together. Early in the post-World War II period a Navy request that it be given some B-29s that it could modify for antisubmarine warfare was denied. The Army Air Forces was authorized to retain control of all B-29s because of their scarcity, the uncertainty of parts production and availability, and the importance of its strategic bombardment mission.

Antisubmarine Mission Assigned to the Strategic Air Command

Controlling as it did all B-29s, the Army Air Forces was assigned responsibility for sea search and antisubmarine training and operations on a global scale. This responsibility was, in turn, passed on to the Strategic Air Command as part of its mission on 10 October 1946 /q. v./. On 11 February 1947, the Strategic Air Command was directed by the Army Air Forces to designate a heavy bombardment unit to receive specialized training in the air phases of naval reconnaissance, antisubmarine warfare, and the protection of shipping. This unit would also be charged with establishing and executing a plan that would provide antisubmarine warfare training for all heavy bombardment units.

Mission Delegated to 307th Bombardment Group

Strategic Air Command, however, had anticipated this requirement, having delegated it in December of 1946 to the 307th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Fifteenth Air Force), located at MacDill Army Air Field, Florida. To monitor the activity

closely, on 14 January 1947 Headquarters Strategic Air Command assumed operational control of the 307th Group, the Fifteenth Air Force retaining administrative control of the unit until 1 April 1947 / q. v. /, when Headquarters Strategic Air Command assumed full control. The 307th Group began a 90-day training program on 1 February 1947, devoting all its resources to the antisubmarine project. All flying crews were qualified in the tactics of antisubmarine search and attack. Also, a planning section was organized within the group for the purpose of developing tactics and doctrine applicable to all Strategic Air Command units. An informal liaison was established with personnel at the submarine base at Key West, Florida, and at the Naval Air Station at Boca Chica.

Strategic Air Command Units Trained

During the period September 1947 - May 1948 eight Strategic Air Command squadrons were given an intensive 30-day training course by the 307th Group, each squadron reporting to MacDill Army Air Field with ten aircraft and their assigned crews. Four squadrons of the Eighth Air Force were trained in 1947, beginning in September with one from the 509th Bombardment Group. The 77th, 718th, and 717th Squadrons of the 28th Bombardment Group and the 327th Squadron of the 92d Bombardment Group, all Fifteenth Air Force units, completed their training before the end of May 1948. Early in that year, aware of the shortcomings in the training of the Strategic Air Command units, the 307th Group received permission from the Navy to send three officers at a time to a two-week introductory course at its antisubmarine instructor school at Norfolk, Virginia, and a four-week advanced course at Key West, Florida. Unfortunately, personnel who attended these schools had not returned to the 307th Group by the time the unit training program was halted in June 1948.

Aerial Mine-Laying Responsibility Added

On 28 November 1947 Army Air Forces directed the Strategic Air Command to begin an aerial mine-laying program. / This responsibility was not formally assigned to Strategic Air Command as part of its mission until 6 September 1951 q. v. /. After all Strategic Air Command units were trained, Strategic Air Command was to be prepared to train light bombardment units of the

THE ANTISUBMARINE PROGRAM, 1946-1956 (Continued)

Tactical Air Command. Aerial mine-laying was immediately incorporated in the antisubmarine training program of the 307th Group, and the four Fifteenth Air Force squadrons trained in 1948 each received nine days of training in aerial mining as part of their thirty-day course. Aerial mine-laying was a logical adjunct of the Strategic Air Command primary strategic bombardment mission. Aerial mining could be carried on by unmodified bombardment aircraft, and the techniques of employing aerial mines was similar to that of strategic bombing. A mining program would be conducted against enemy targets for the same reasons as would strategic bombing, the destruction of an enemy's ability to wage war.

Though Strategic Air Command responsibilities were later restricted in sea search and antisubmarine warfare, its responsibilities concerning aerial mine-laying remained in force. By the end of June 1952 a coordinated aerial mining program for Strategic Air Command had been developed and a training program undertaken. A selected group of officers and airmen were indoctrinated at the Norfolk Naval School so that they could train other unit personnel in the tactics of aerial-mining warfare. In June a training manual, "Tactical Doctrine, Aerial Mining" (Strategic Air Command Manual 55-7), was published, which established training criteria in this field. On 11 August 1952 training requirements for aerial mining were established (Strategic Air Command Regulation 50-41) for all medium and heavy bombardment units.

Formal Unit Training Program Ended

In June 1948, because of exigencies associated with the Russian blockade of Berlin, the 307th Bombardment Group was alerted for assignment to Europe / see 27 June - 17 July 1948 /, and the antisubmarine training for all Strategic Air Command units was temporarily suspended. The 307th Group returned from England in October 1948, but in February - May 1949 it was again rotated there / see 11 February - 3 May 1949 /. Because of the nature of these movements, all antisubmarine training of Strategic Air Command units was suspended during the period June 1948 - May 1949. From June - December 1949 the 307th Group continued limited antisubmarine training, but the training of Strategic Air Command units by the group was not

reinstated. Also, antisubmarine directives to the 307th Group were held in abeyance pending a clarification of the Strategic Air Command antisubmarine warfare mission. On 16 December 1948 / q. v. / the 307th was returned to the control of the Fifteenth Air Force by Headquarters Strategic Air Command, and the mission of the unit was revised to place antisubmarine warfare in a secondary position.

Problem of Unmodified Aircraft

The most persistent problem faced by the Strategic Air Command in meeting its sea search and antisubmarine warfare responsibilities was that Strategic Air Command could not obtain permission from higher headquarters to modify any B-29 aircraft for this highly specialized function. With the limited forces at its disposal to meet its strategic bombardment mission, Army Air Forces and United States Air Force would not authorize the modification of bombardment aircraft to enhance its effectiveness in meeting a secondary mission such as antisubmarine warfare if in so doing strategic bombardment capabilities were hindered. Because of the restrictions on the modification of aircraft, Strategic Air Command sea search and antisubmarine warfare capabilities were always seriously retarded. Since no Strategic Air Command aircraft were equipped with APS-20 radar, training had to be limited to the tactics and techniques of visual and APQ-13 radar sea search and the tactics of depth charge attack against submarines using visual and low altitude radar sighting with the APQ-5 bombing attachment.

Other Problems

The restriction on the modification of aircraft was not the only serious problem. The responsibility for antisubmarine warfare was a formidable one, and in the event of war could be accomplished only at the expense of the Strategic Air Command's planned deployment under the Emergency War Plan (EWP). Also, emphasis on speed and altitude in new aircraft such as the B-36 and B-47 / see 23 June 1948 and 23 October 1951 / was not compatible with the aircraft capabilities required by the antisubmarine mission. Besides, there was no way by which the Strategic Air Command could keep informed of the latest thinking in naval antisubmarine

circles. Recognizing that under existing circumstances its sea search and antisubmarine capabilities, especially as far as "hunter-killer" tactics were concerned, would always be very limited, Headquarters Strategic Air Command late in 1948 and throughout 1949 recommended to higher headquarters that its antisubmarine mission be modified but that it continue to develop an aerial-mining program, an area in which it could develop great proficiency.

Mission Modified

On 12 May 1950 United States Air Force redefined Strategic Air Command's antisubmarine mission. Instead of being responsible for ". . . sea search and antisubmarine training and operations on a global scale", Strategic Air Command was henceforth to be responsible for (1) Interdiction of enemy sea power through air operations, (2) Conduct of antisubmarine warfare and the protection of shipping, and (3) Conduct of aerial mine-laying operations. /These responsibilities were incorporated in Strategic Air Command mission regulations of 6 September 1951 (q. v.) and 25 March 1954 (q. v.)./

On the same date the United States Air Force granted the Strategic Air Command permission to relieve the 307th Bombardment Group of its antisubmarine warfare mission and to assign it to a small unit that would be authorized within the 306th Bombardment Group (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida). However, because Strategic Air Command's request for Table of Distribution (T/D) authorization was denied, antisubmarine warfare responsibilities became an additional duty for the 306th Group. The 306th became a mere planning agency that could initiate a training program and a limited offensive if called on to do so. The 306th was not allowed to modify any of its aircraft to fulfill its new mission. In early 1951 the antisubmarine mission was reassigned from the 306th Group to the 305th Group (also located at MacDill Air Force Base), but only temporarily since the 305th Group was programmed to receive new aircraft. At no time during 1951 was adequate equipment on hand with which to conduct a training program, nor was the mission fixed long enough with one unit to organize and begin an effective training program. On 4 April 1951 the United States Air Force, recognizing Strategic Air Command limitations in the antisubmarine

warfare program, notified the Strategic Air Command that responsibilities for the program were also being assigned as a secondary mission to the Tactical Air Command, Air Defense Command, Air Proving Ground Command, and Air Training Command. Strategic Air Command, as a compromise measure, was directed to designate bases near the sea perimeter and make the units assigned to those bases responsible for attacks against submarines when directed to do so by the United States Air Force. In May commanders of the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces were directed to build the forces with which to launch a limited attack on submarines from the following bases:

Second Air Force	Fifteenth Air Force
Hunter Air Force Base, Savannah, Georgia	March Air Force Base, Riverside, California
MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida	Castle Air Force Base, Merced, California
Ramey Air Force Base, Puerto Rico	Travis Air Force Base, California
	Fairchild Air Force Base, Spokane, Washington

Late in July 1951 the Continental Air Command was appointed as the United States Air Force agency for coordination with the Navy concerning antisubmarine warfare and for the promulgation of all policies pertaining to United States Air Force participation in the antisubmarine program. Continental Air Command also relieved the Strategic Air Command of participation in the antisubmarine program in the coastal waters of the United States. In June 1952 the Continental Air Command and the Chief of the Eastern Sea Frontier made an agreement concerning the Atlantic area. As a result, the Strategic Air Command relieved the 305th Group of its antisubmarine mission. At the end of 1952 an agreement between the Continental Air Command and the Chief of the Western Sea Frontier was pending.

2 February

Pratt Army Air Field, Kansas (Fifteenth Air Force), sub-base of Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

4 February

Control of Units in Alaska Transferred to Alaskan Air Command

28th Very Heavy Bombardment Group and the 62d Fighter Squadron, stationed at Elmendorf and Ladd Fields, Alaska, respectively, relieved from the command jurisdiction of the Strategic Air Command and attached to the Alaskan Air Command for the duration of their tours of temporary duty / for Arctic activities of these units, see 29 October 1946 and 18 December 1946 /. The two units, however, remained assigned to the Strategic Air Command / for transfer of 46th Reconnaissance Squadron to the Alaskan Air Command, see 19 August 1946 /.

Though relieved of direct responsibility for the training and activities of the two units, the Strategic Air Command was not relieved of responsibility for support of the Alaskan Air Command incident to the accomplishment of their missions. Reports of the units continued to pass through Strategic Air Command channels.

The Strategic Air Command lost control of its units in Alaska as a result of the Joint Chiefs of Staff policy of establishing unified command over component forces in overseas commands. At the same time, some confusion that had existed concerning Strategic Air Command's jurisdiction of these units was alleviated. Until 4 February the Strategic Air Command's responsibilities had not been clearly defined, the units being under the operational control of the Strategic Air Command with administration and logistical support being provided by the Alaskan Air Command.

14 February

Army Air Forces Assembly Stations established at three Fifteenth Air Force bases: MacDill Army Air Field, Florida; Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan; and Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota.

18 February

Roswell Auxiliary #3, New Mexico (Eighth Air Force), sub-base of Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico, transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

19 February

Thirty-six aircraft, 18 each from the 43d and 509th Very Heavy Bombardment Groups (Eighth Air Force), participated in an aerial review over Roswell, New Mexico.

20 February

Oscoda Army Air Field, Michigan (Fifteenth Air Force), sub-base/ range of Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, placed on active status.

22 February - 10 March

Goodwill Flight to South America

A flight of six B-29s from the 97th Bombardment Group (Fifteenth Air Force), led by Major General Charles F. Born, commanding general of the Fifteenth Air Force, participated in the inauguration ceremonies of the new Uruguayan president, Tomas Berreta, on 1 March 1947. The flight, which was known officially as United States Task Force No. 1, also took part in the dedication of Uruguay's new international airport, Carrasco Airport. The aircraft departed Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, on 22 February, stopping enroute to Montivideo at MacDill Army Air Field, Florida; Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico; and Natal, Brazil. They arrived at Montevideo, Uruguay, 26 February, and left Uruguay for the United States on 6 March 1947, returning via the same route. The planes arrived at their home base on 10 March. United States Task Force No. 1 consisted of hand-picked personnel: 56 officers, 70 enlisted men, and 11 correspondents.

One spare B-29 accompanied the flight as far as Natal, Brazil, and then returned to Smoky Hill. Three C-54 aircraft of the 1st Air Transport Unit (Eighth Air Force), which carried spare parts and supplies, followed the same route to Montivideo, except for refueling stops at Georgetown, British Guinea, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

24 February

55th Reconnaissance Group (Very Long Range) (Mapping) activated at MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, and assigned to the 311th Reconnaissance Wing (Fifteenth Air Force).

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Manning of the unit began in July. Until this time 311th Wing units had been of squadron size. For activation of the second reconnaissance group, the 91st, see 1 July 1947.

The 311th Wing had been assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force for administration and logistical support on 1 May 1946 /q. v./. On 1 April 1947 /q. v./, however, Headquarters Strategic Air Command took over complete control of the unit.

--March

Army Air Forces Retrenched to 55 Group Phase of 70 Group Program

Because of fund limitations, the Army Air Forces reduced the number of programmed groups from 70 to 55. The "55 Group Phase" as this program was known, was not intended to replace the 70 Group Program. Rather, the attainment of 55 group strength was to be a step toward the re-establishment of a 70 Group Program at a later date.

In July 1947 the Air Staff directed that the 55 Group Phase Program be "operationally efficient" by 1 January 1948. The goal was to man 55 groups by 31 December 1947 and to meet formal training requirements by 31 December 1948.

RETRENCHMENT FROM 70 TO 48 GROUPS, 1947-1950

Background

The dismantling of the Army Air Forces at the end of World War II had reduced the number of combat groups to approximately 50 by mid-1946, from a World War II peak of 273 combat air groups. Fund limitations in the 1946-1950 period further reduced the number of groups, first from 70 to 55 groups, and later to a mere 48 groups. The 70 Group Program had been instituted shortly after V-J Day, and plans called for all 70 groups to be activated by August 1947. However, even though by March of 1947 shortages that had been acute when the 70 Group Program was instituted were somewhat alleviated, 70 groups were still far from being a reality.

The retrenchment to the 55 Group Phase actually had little direct effect on the Strategic Air Command, only emphasizing

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RETRENCHMENT FROM 70 TO 48 GROUPS, 1947-1950 (Continued)

the austerity that all the United States Armed Forces were facing. As a matter of fact, Strategic Air Command capabilities were so weak, especially in 1946 and 1947, that the command dragged far behind the number of groups authorized to it by the Army Air Forces.

70 Group Program

The original 70 Group Program called for 419,355 officers and enlisted men organized broadly into 70 groups and 22 separate squadrons:

25	Very Heavy Bombardment Groups
25	Fighter Groups
5	Light Bombardment Groups
10	Transport Groups
5	Tactical Reconnaissance Groups
70	(plus 22 separate squadrons)

The number of groups or wings authorized the Strategic Air Command under the various programs was always subject to fluctuation. By September of 1946 the Strategic Air Command had been authorized 16 Very Heavy bombardment groups under the 70 Group Program, but it was apparent that the activation and manning of even this relatively small number of units was impossible. Therefore, and also because of heavy losses of civilian personnel, Strategic Air Command requested Headquarters Army Air Forces to reduce the interim tactical structure to six Very Heavy bombardment groups. This request, however, was ignored. Under the 70 Group Program the Strategic Air Command was authorized, in addition to the 16 Very Heavy bombardment groups, one Very Long Range reconnaissance group, three fighter groups, two separate squadrons, and one separate transport flight.

55 Group Phase

Under the 55 Group Program the total Army Air Forces authorization in the Zone of the Interior consisted of 32 groups plus eight separate squadrons. The balance of the units were allocated to six overseas areas. The Zone of the Interior

authorization was as follows:

11	Very Heavy Bombardment Groups
1	Light Bombardment Group
12	Fighter Groups
8	Reconnaissance and troop carrier groups
32	(plus eight separate squadrons)

The 55 Group Program went into effect in March 1947. During Fiscal Year 1948 the Strategic Air Command was authorized as its share of the 55 Groups 11 bombardment groups and five fighter groups. Later two additional bombardment and two additional fighter groups were added. Because of personnel shortages, a policy was established of manning all tactical units 100 percent before Maintenance and Supply Groups were manned above 50 percent.

48 Group Program

Throughout 1948-1949 the United States Air Force was operating on a sliding 48 Group Program, but during the last half of 1950 it began planning an expansion program first aimed at 70 groups and later 95 wings by the end of Fiscal Year 1952 /for 70, 95, 120, and 143 Wing Programs, see 29 August 1949; for 127-137 Wing Programs, see 27 October 1953/. The United States Air Force 48 Group Program was broken down as follows:

4	Heavy Bombardment Groups
11	Medium Bombardment Groups
1	Light Bombardment Group
17	Day Fighter Groups
3	All-Weather Fighter Groups
1	Tactical Reconnaissance Group
5	Strategic Reconnaissance Groups
6	Troop Carrier Groups
48	

The total number of groups authorized the Strategic Air Command was 19. Of the four heavy bombardment groups, only two were to be equipped with B-36s.

[redacted]

15 March

Gowen Army Air Field, Idaho (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

16 March

In an exchange of bases, Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Wendover Field, Utah, from the Air Materiel Command and transferred Alamogordo Army Air Field, New Mexico (Eighth Air Force) and its three sub-bases (Deming Army Air Field, South Auxiliary #1, and Center Auxiliary #2) to the Air Materiel Command.

> Wendover Field was assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force on inactive status, but the bombing and gunnery range was opened for use. For the training of Strategic Air Command units at Wendover in 1947, see 14-24 November 1947.

1 April

Headquarters Strategic Air Command Assumed Jurisdiction of MacDill Army Air Field

Headquarters Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction from the Fifteenth Air Force of MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, its range Avon Park Army Air Field, Florida, and all units located at MacDill. These included the Headquarters 94th Combat Bomb Wing (VH) (Provisional), the 307th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, and Headquarters 311th Reconnaissance Wing and its assigned 55th Reconnaissance Group. Also included in the transfer were the Army Air Forces Staging Area, Separation Point, and Assembly Station that were located at MacDill Army Air Field.

> This action, involving the reconnaissance and antisubmarine units at MacDill, created for all practical purposes a new command directly under the control of Headquarters Strategic Air Command. The Fifteenth Air Force maintained court-martial jurisdiction of the base until the middle of May, when this jurisdiction was transferred to the commanding general of MacDill Army Air Field. Operational control of the 307th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, which had a specialized sea search and antisubmarine mission, had been assumed by

Headquarters Strategic Air Command on 14 January 1947 /q. v./. Since 1 May 1946 /q. v./ the Fifteenth Air Force had been responsible for the administration and logistical support of the 311th Wing. The Fifteenth Air Force on 1 April 1947 was freed from all responsibilities toward the two units.

On 1 June 1947 /q. v./ Headquarters 311th Reconnaissance Wing moved from MacDill Army Air Field to Andrews Field, Maryland.

MacDill Army Air Field and the units located there were returned to the jurisdiction of the Fifteenth Air Force on 16 December 1948 /q. v./.

EMERGENCE OF HEADQUARTERS STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND AS AGENCY OF DIRECT COMMAND

During 1947 Headquarters Strategic Air Command emerged as an agency of direct command, and at the same time there was a reduction in the command responsibilities of the Fifteenth Air Force. At the beginning of the year all combat units were administered by the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces, the lion's share being assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force. The Eighth Air Force controlled three bombardment groups, the 7th, 43d, and 509th, which were assigned to Headquarters 58th Bombardment Wing. The Fifteenth Air Force controlled six bombardment groups: the 28th (serving in Alaska; see 29 October 1946), 92d, 93d, 97th, 301st, and the 307th (antisubmarine warfare mission). It also controlled the 4th and 56th Fighter Groups and the 311th Reconnaissance Wing (administration and logistical support only; see 1 May 1946).

By the end of 1947 Headquarters Strategic Air Command had assumed control of the 307th Bombardment Group /see above this entry and 14 January 1947/; the 311th Reconnaissance Wing /see above this entry/ and its two groups, activated in 1947, the 55th /see 24 February 1947/ and the 91st /see 1 July 1947 and 1 October 1947/; the 4th Fighter Group /see 1 April 1947/; the 56th Fighter Group /see 10 October 1947/; and through MacDill Army Air Field, the 82d Fighter Group, which was stationed at Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire /see 1 August 1947/. Also assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command at the end of 1947 were five inactive and unmanned bombardment groups: the 44th, 90th, 303d, 305th, and 306th

/see 1 July 1947/. Thus, by the end of the year the sprawling Fifteenth Air Force had been condensed, and it had become exclusively a bomber command. It then controlled the operationally active 28th, 93d, and 97th Bombardment Groups, and was faced with the problem of organizing and manning the 92d, 98th /see 24 September 1947/, and 301st Groups. The Eighth Air Force at the close of 1947 had assigned the same three bombardment groups as at the beginning of the year, the 7th, 43d, and 509th, still assigned to the 58th Bombardment Wing. Also assigned to the Eighth Air Force was the inactive and unmanned 2d Bombardment Group /see 24 September 1947/, and it had also been given the assignment of organizing and training the newly activated 27th and 33d Fighter Groups /see 16 July 1947 and 16 September 1947/.

1 April

4th Fighter Group, Single Engine (Very Long Range), reassigned from the Fifteenth Air Force to Headquarters Strategic Air Command, and its station assignment changed from Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, to Andrews Field, Maryland.

In March, just prior to the change in its station reassignment, manning of the unit was begun, and in April it began to receive P-80 jet aircraft /see 23 - 24 April 1947/.

The 56th and 82d Fighter Groups were also reassigned from the Fifteenth Air Force to Headquarters Strategic Air Command, later in the year /see respectively 10 October 1947 and 1 August 1947/.

6 April

Abilene Army Air Field, Texas (Eighth Air Force), sub-base of Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

11 April

Eighth Air Force Aerial Review Over Western United States; Biggest Flight of B-29s Since World War II

During an Army Week celebration a flight of seven squadrons from the three Eighth Air Force Very Heavy Bombardment Groups (7th,

43d, and 509th), consisting of 64 B-29s, provided an aerial review over Fort Worth, Dallas, Carlsbad, El Paso, Tucson, Phoenix, and Riverside enroute to a simulated bombing run on Los Angeles. The flight was made up of 21 aircraft from each group plus General Ramey's lead plane.

12 April

82d Fighter Group, Two Engine (Very Long Range), activated at Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire, and assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force.

Shortly after it was activated the unit began equipping with P-51s, and on 15 August 1947 / q. v. / it was redesignated as a Single Engine unit. By the end of 1947 it had a full complement of 72 P-51s. The 82d retained its P-51s until 22 August 1949 / q. v. / when it was transferred to the Continental Air Command.

The 82d Group was reassigned from the Fifteenth Air Force to Headquarters Strategic Air Command on 1 August 1947 / q. v. /.

The 4th and 56th Fighter Groups were also reassigned from the Fifteenth Air Force to Headquarters Strategic Air Command, on 1 April 1947 / q. v. / and 10 October 1947 / q. v. /, respectively.

15 April

Army Air Forces Staging Area at Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska, discontinued by the Fifteenth Air Force.

15 April

Colonel Charles Sommers temporarily replaced Major General Charles F. Born as commander of the Fifteenth Air Force.

Colonel Sommers retained command of the Fifteenth Air Force until 24 April 1947 / q. v. /.

19 April

28th Bombardment Group Returned From Alaska

Thirty B-29s of the 28th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, which had been assigned to Alaska for training since 29 October 1946 /q. v./, landed at their new home station, Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota. The Fifteenth Air Force reassumed command jurisdiction of the unit, which it had lost on 1 January 1947 and which had passed from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the Alaskan Air Command on 4 February 1947 /q. v./.

> Before being assigned to Alaska, the 28th Group had been stationed at Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska, but on 10 March 1947 the home station of the unit was changed to Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota, and Grand Island Army Air Field was transferred to the Corps of Engineers on 8 June 1947 /q. v./.

22 April

Eighth Air Force Maximum Effort Mission

In their second mass flight in the month of April /see also 11 April 1947/ the three Eighth Air Force groups (the 7th, 43d, and 509th) made a maximum effort "strike" at Kansas City. Seventy B-29s from a potential of 90 participated in the mission.

23 - 24 April

4th and 56th Fighter Groups Redesignated Jet Units; First Jets Assigned to the Command

On 23 April the 334th, 335th, and 336th Fighter Squadrons, Single Engine (Very Long Range), of the 4th Fighter Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), Andrews Field, Maryland, were redesignated Fighter Squadrons, Jet-Propelled (Very Long Range).

On 24 April the 61st, 62d, and 63d Fighter Squadrons, Single Engine (Very Long Range), of the 56th Fighter Group (Fifteenth Air Force), Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, were redesignated Fighter Squadrons, Jet-Propelled (Very Long Range).

Shortly prior to its redesignation as a jet unit, in early March 1947, the 56th Group received its first jets, Lockheed P-80 Shooting Stars. These new jet aircraft replaced the P-51 aircraft that had been assigned to the unit in 1946 / see 1 May 1946 /. The last of the P-51s were phased out by June of 1947 except for a few which were retained for administrative flights until the unit was transferred to the Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948 / q. v. /.

The 4th Fighter Group, which had been reassigned from the Fifteenth Air Force to Headquarters Strategic Air Command on 1 April 1947 / q. v. /, had a handful of P-47s assigned in March. It got its first P-80s in April and by the end of the month it possessed 27 P-80s and 12 P-47s. Throughout 1947 it got an increasing number of P-80s and by the end of the year all P-47s were phased out. The unit had a full complement of 84 jets by the end of February 1948.

Both the 4th and 56th Groups retained their P-80s until they were transferred to the Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948 / q. v. / along with the 33d Fighter Group.

24 April

Brigadier General Leon W. Johnson replaced Colonel Charles Sommers as commander of the Fifteenth Air Force.

General Johnson retained command of the Fifteenth Air Force until 3 August 1948 / q. v. /.

29 April

Twelve B-29s from the 7th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Eighth Air Force), Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, escorted President Aleman of Mexico in President Truman's private plane to Washington, D. C., for an official state visit. Near Washington the B-29s were joined by 24 P-80s of the Fourth Fighter Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), Andrews Field, Maryland. The B-29s landed at Andrews Field and returned to their home base on 30 April 1947.

May - October

Operation FINBACK: Squadron Rotation Program to Far East; First Formal Rotation Program for Strategic Air Command Units

Six Very Heavy bombardment squadrons served monthly tours in the Far East:

Month	Unit	Assignment
May	436th Squadron (7th Group)	Eighth Air Force
June	65th Squadron (43d Group)	Eighth Air Force
July	492d Squadron (7th Group)	Eighth Air Force
August	342d Squadron (97th Group)	Fifteenth Air Force
September	63d Squadron (43d Group)	Eighth Air Force
October	Composite Squadron (28th Group)	Fifteenth Air Force

Background

Though the Strategic Air Command did not achieve the capability to maintain an overseas rotation program for groups for 90-day periods until 1948 / see 18 February - 20 April 1948 and 27 June - 17 July 1948 /, in 1947 the command did succeed in rotating some groups and squadrons to Europe for short periods / see 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948 / and in establishing a monthly rotation program for squadrons to the Far East. No groups were rotated to the Far East until 1948 / see 10 May - 27 August 1948 and 20 August - 20 December 1948 /.

In May of 1947 the Strategic Air Command received permission from the Army Air Forces to initiate the Far East

rotation program. The plan had originally been recommended by Lieutenant General Ennis C. Whitehead, the commanding general of the Far East Air Force, and had envisioned the use of the visiting squadron as a fourth squadron with one of the groups assigned to the Far East Air Force. To conform with Far East Air Force practice, the rotating squadrons consisted of eight aircraft instead of the ten comprising Zone of the Interior-based units.

Program Temporarily Halted

Original plans called for squadrons to be rotated to the Far East for the last eight months in 1947, but the program came to a halt in November when the 9th Squadron of the 7th Group (Eighth Air Force) reached Hawaii and discovered that 100/130 octane gasoline was not available. Since Strategic Air Command aircraft were not modified to use 115/145 gasoline the squadron returned to the United States, and the scheduled rotation of a squadron of the 307th Group in December was cancelled. However, the shortage of gasoline was alleviated in a couple of months, and the squadron rotation program to the Far East was resumed in February 1948 / see February - April 1948 /.

Hawaiian Flights Also Temporarily Discontinued

The gasoline shortage in the Far East also prevented continuation of a program for small-sized training flights (not more than four aircraft) of bombardment aircraft to Hawaii, which had first been carried out during the period 27 July - 20 September 1947. The distance from the mainland made flights to Hawaii ideal for training in long-range navigation and cruise control / see 9 July 1947 /. A similar program set up for the period 16 November 1947 - 10 January 1948 could not be carried out because of the shortage of 100/130 gasoline in the Far East. The flights to Hawaii, however, like the squadron rotation program to the Far East, were resumed early in 1948. Another series of flights to Hawaii was authorized during the period 25 January - 20 March 1948. Under a program that was established beginning 31 March 1948, flights were made for only a short time because of the buildup of forces in Europe beginning late in June / see 27 June - 17 July 1948 /. Flight crews accomplished so much overwater flying that the importance of the flights to Hawaii diminished, but they were still made occasionally as were also similar training flights to the Caribbean / see 1 June 1947 /.

1 May

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Fort Dix Army Air Base, Wrightstown, New Jersey, and its off-base facility Fort Dix Army Air Base Radio Range from the Air Transport Command and assigned them on an inactive status to the Fifteenth Air Force.

They were satellited on Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, until 1 August 1947 /q. v./, when they were reassigned to Andrews Field, Maryland. Subsequent to this action the base was renamed McGuire Air Force Base, and on 16 August 1948 /q. v./ it was reassigned to the 311th Air Division, Reconnaissance. On 1 October 1949 /q. v./ the base was transferred to the Continental Air Command.

c. 15 May - 4 September

Project EARDRUM: Aerial Mapping of Greenland

The Tri-Metrogen aerial mapping of extensive areas of Greenland was accomplished in record time by the East Reconnaissance Group (Provisional) of the 311th Reconnaissance Wing. Logistical support of the unit was provided by the Air Transport Command. The coast of Greenland not previously mapped in 1946 was photographically mapped as were also central and cross strips across the interior so that some conception of the inland topography could be obtained. The urgency of the project had a diplomatic background because the Army Air Forces feared that United States rights in Greenland might be terminated in 1947.

The 311th Reconnaissance Wing was assigned the project on 3 March 1947. The Army Air Forces directed that six fully-equipped F-9 aircraft and a maximum complement of 200 men, including air and ground crews, be in place at Bluie West-8 not later than 15 May 1947. By the end of May the project was 90 percent completed and it was finally completed on 4 September 1947, well ahead of schedule.

OPERATION NANOOK

Project EARDRUM was part of Operation NANOOK, which consisted of the Arctic operations of the 311th Wing in the winter of 1946-1947 and in the spring and summer of 1947. Besides —

Project EARDRUM the 311th Wing also provided air support to the United States Weather Bureau, which was establishing weather stations in the Greenland and North Polar areas. The 311th Wing provided preliminary air reconnaissance and air-lift support from Bluie West-8 for the establishment of a weather station in the vicinity of Eureka Sound, Grantland, a joint project of the United States and Canadian Weather Bureaus. Eureka Sound was several hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle. During April 1947 the 311th Wing airlifted 125 tons of equipment and supplies with three C-47s and one C-82, landings being made on the ice at Slidre Fiord. By August of 1947 a unit of Army Air Forces engineer troops had constructed a 4,000 foot airstrip four miles north of the weather station.

A 55-man weather station was to be established at Winter Harbor, Melville Island, as soon as water transportation was feasible. The Strategic Air Command was to furnish necessary personnel to construct an airstrip at the location. When the airstrip was completed the 311th Wing was to conduct reconnaissance of Banks and Borden Islands to determine the location for the establishment of two five-man weather stations in the spring of 1948.

15 May

Army Air Forces Separation Point established at Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota (Fifteenth Air Force).

15 May

McCook Army Air Field, Nebraska (Fifteenth Air Force), sub-base of Peterson Field, Colorado, transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

On 1 December 1946 the field had been reassigned from Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska, as a satellite of the 200th Army Air Forces Base Unit (AAFBU), Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

16 May

Operation PACIFIC: Maximum-Effort Mission over Eastern Seaboard

The largest number of Strategic Air Command long-range bombers that could be mustered, 101 B-29 aircraft from the Eighth and Fifteenth

Air Forces, "attacked" New York City and flew over other Eastern Seaboard cities. General Kenney led the formation as Air Force Commander, and General Ramey of the Eighth Air Force participated as Deputy Air Force Commander. Assembling near New York City, the planes passed over that city and then flew over Danbury, Newark, Trenton, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, and Washington.

The exercise was under the direction of the Eighth Air Force. As an exercise to test the ability of the Headquarters Strategic Air Command and the major subordinate command staffs to plan a mission for the entire command and the ability of the tactical echelons to accomplish such a mission, the exercise was a success. However, much confusion existed and the operation was not conducted exactly as planned. All six Strategic Air Command bombardment groups that were operational at the time were represented: the 7th, 28th, 43d, 97th, 307th, and the 509th. /Non-operational groups at the time, all assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force, were the 92d, 93d, and 301st./. The 7th, 43d, and 509th were Eighth Air Force units, the 307th was assigned directly to Headquarters Strategic Air Command, and the other two groups were assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force. The total potential number of B-29 aircraft that could be mustered from the six groups was 180, but though the field orders called for 131 B-29s to participate only 101 aircraft took part in the mass flight.

25 May

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of the Aeronautical Chart Service, Washington 25, D. C., and assigned it to the 311 Reconnaissance Wing (Headquarters Strategic Air Command).

The Aeronautical Chart Service was transferred to the Air Materiel Command on 1 March 1950 /q. v./.

30-31 May

Ten B-29s from the 97th Bombardment Group (Fifteenth Air Force), Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, participated in an aerial review over Philadelphia.

1 June

Caribbean Training Flights Authorized

Training flights of not more than three aircraft were authorized by the Army Air Forces to the following Caribbean Defense Command bases: Rio Hato, Panama; Vernam Field, Jamaica; Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico; and Waller Field, Trinidad. Flights were also authorized to the Air Transport Command base at Kindley Field, Bermuda.

> In 1946 Strategic Air Command capabilities had been so limited and so much emphasis placed on organization and manning that almost no overwater flight training had been conducted. By 1947, with the achievement of a minimum capability, preliminary plans were made for a world-wide rotation program and some units were rotated to Europe and the Far East / see May - October 1947 and 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948 /. However, a great need existed for the indoctrination of individual crews in overwater flying as a preliminary to an effective world-wide rotation program. It was for this reason that the Strategic Air Command obtained permission for the Caribbean flights, as well as a similar series of flights to Hawaii / see May - October 1947 /.

1 June

311th Reconnaissance Wing began operations at Andrews Field, Maryland, following its move from MacDill Army Air Field, Florida.

> The 55th Reconnaissance Group, the one group assigned to the 311th Wing, remained at MacDill Army Air Field until 19 July 1948 / q. v. /, when it moved to Topeka Air Force Base, Kansas.

1 - 26 June

Project TRAINING: Goodwill Flight to England

Nine B-29s of the 340th Squadron of the 97th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Fifteenth Air Force) and one C-54 support aircraft departed Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, on 1 June for England, via Andrews Field, Maryland; Lagens Field, Azores; and Giebelstadt, Germany. The purpose of the goodwill-training flight, originally planned for a full bombardment group, was to repay a similar visit

by a Royal Air Force bomber squadron of Lancaster aircraft to the United States in 1946. The 340th Squadron arrived at Giebelstadt 5 June, and four days later flew to Marham, England. During the following week the squadron received a "red-carpet" welcome from the English. Sixty Royal Air Force personnel and 30 correspondents were given familiarization flights in the B-29s, and on 11 June the 340th Squadron flew over the principal English cities. On 16 June the squadron returned to Giebelstadt, and the following day performed an aerial review over the major German cities. On 24 June the squadron departed Giebelstadt for the United States, via Lagens Field, Azores; Kindley Field, Bermuda; and Westover Field, Massachusetts. The B-29s arrived at their home station on 26 June.

> Project TRAINING was one part of a special two-part European project assigned to the 340th Squadron in March of 1947 by the Army Air Forces. The other was Project HARKEN /see 12 July - 4 November 1947/.

8 June

Grand Island Army Air Field, Nebraska (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

10 June

Mass Demonstration of P-80 Jets in Chicago Centennial

In the largest mass flight of jets on record, 20 P-80 Lockheed Shooting Stars of the 56th Fighter Group (Selfridge and Oscoda Army Air Fields, Michigan), under the command of Colonel David C. Schilling, provided an aerial review for the Chicago Centennial celebration.

20 June

92d Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Fifteenth Air Force) transferred at 1:1 strength with organizational equipment only from Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, to Spokane Army Air Field, Washington.

> Spokane Army Air Field was occupied jointly with the Air Materiel Command from 5 June until 1 September 1947 /q. v./, when the Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of the installation.

25 June

Headquarters Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of the 27th Fighter Group, Single Engine (Very Long Range), from the Army Air Forces less personnel and equipment. The station of the unit was designated as Andrews Field, Maryland.

On 16 July 1947 /q. v./ the 27th Group was reassigned from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the Eighth Air Force and transferred less personnel and equipment to Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska, where the manning and equipping of the unit was begun.

1 July

2d, 44th, 90th, 98th, 303d, 305th, and 306th Very Heavy Bombardment Groups and the 91st Reconnaissance Group activated on a 1:1 basis at Andrews Field, Maryland, and assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command.

On 24 September 1947 /q. v./ the 2d Bombardment Group was assigned to the Eighth Air Force less personnel and equipment and its station assignment changed to Davis-Monthan Army Air Field, Arizona. On the same date /q. v./ the 98th Bombardment Group was assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force less personnel and equipment and its station assignment changed to Spokane Army Air Field, Washington.

On 6 September 1948 /q. v./ the 44th, 90th, 303d, and 305th Bombardment Groups, which had never been manned, were reassigned to the Department of the Air Force. Subsequently, however, the four groups were reactivated by the Strategic Air Command, but as medium rather than Very Heavy groups. The 44th, 90th and 305th Groups were reactivated 2 January 1951 /q. v./, and the 303d Group was reactivated 4 September 1951 /q. v./.

On 1 August 1948 /q. v./ the 306th Very Heavy Bombardment Group was attached to the 307th Medium Bombardment Wing (MacDill Air Force Base, Headquarters Strategic Air Command) and its station assignment changed from Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, to MacDill Air Force Base. On 16 December 1948

/ q. v. / MacDill Air Force Base and all assigned units, including the 306th and 307th Groups, were reassigned from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the Fifteenth Air Force.

The 91st Reconnaissance Group was reassigned from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the 311th Reconnaissance Wing on 1 October 1947 / q. v. /, but the unit was not manned until the middle of 1948.

3 July 1947 -
28 January 1948

Operation SUNFAST (originally PARKWAY): Beginning of Programmed Rotational Flights to Europe; First Full Group Deployed to Europe

Six units served short periods of tempo: ary duty in Germany:

Dates	Unit	Assignment
3 - 19 July*	97th Bombardment Group (Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas)	Fifteenth Air Force
21 July - 9 August	Two squadrons from the 307th Bombardment Group and one from the 28th Bombardment Group (MacDill Army Air Field, Florida, and Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota)	Headquarters Strategic Air Command and Fifteenth Air Force
12 August - 1 September	64th and 65th Squadrons of the 43d Bombardment Group (Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona)	Eighth Air Force
2 September - 20 September	7th Bombardment Group (Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas)	Eighth Air Force

* All deployment dates are based insofar as possible on the date the first increment of the main body of tactical aircraft left the home station of the unit, and the date the last aircraft returned. All units were equipped with B-29 aircraft, each squadron being authorized 10 aircraft.

Dates	Unit	Assignment
c. 15 November - 15 December	718th Squadron of the 28th Bombardment Group (Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota)	Fifteenth Air Force
12 December - 28 January 1948	371st Squadron of the 307th Bombardment Group (MacDill Army Air Field, Florida)	Headquarters Strategic Air Command

All units were based at Giebelstadt, Germany, except the 371st Squadron, which was stationed at Fürstenfeldbruck. They were under the operational control of United States Air Force in Europe (USAFE). Secrecy of the rotational flights was stressed because of delicate diplomatic questions involved. Nevertheless, the training program of all units was hampered because of diplomatic difficulties. The failure of some European nations to grant clearances for operational flights limited the scope of Strategic Air Command operations. Changes in route sometimes had to be made, and special formations had to be flown through the Berlin Corridor. Yet the periods of training away from their home stations were beneficial for the units. They performed familiarization flights and aerial reviews over Western Europe, as well as radar bombing and navigational training flights. Some units flew missions to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Background

Original plans, established by the Army Air Forces in May 1947, called for the assignment of a Very Heavy bombardment group monthly to Europe beginning on 1 September. However, late in June the plans were changed considerably. The departure date for the first unit was moved up to 1 July, and the duration of the temporary duty (TDY) training periods was cut to ten days. Every Strategic Air Command operational group was to take part in the program except the 509th, which was exempted because of its specialized status concerning the atomic bomb. After the group program got under way, plans were amended to rotate squadrons instead of groups to Fürstenfeldbruck rather than Giebelstadt. All but two of the squadrons (one from the 43d Group and one from the 28th Group) originally scheduled for deployment to Europe took part in the program.

THE ROTATION PROGRAM IN 1947

Strategic Air Command's operations in Europe in 1947, though limited, represented a marked increase over those in 1946. In that year only one flight, consisting of a mere six aircraft, had been made to Europe / see 13 November - 4 December 1946 /. Strategic Air Command capabilities had been especially weak immediately following its activation, and in 1946 priority had been given to Alaskan training of the available forces / see 29 October 1946 and 18 December 1946 /. The assignment to Europe in 1947 of several groups and squadrons as part of Operation SUNFAST while at the same time squadrons were being rotated to the Far East under Operation FINBACK / see May - October 1947 / demonstrated the increasing capability of of the Strategic Air Command to meet its world-wide strategic bombing commitments. Yet it was not until 1948 that the rotation program to Europe got under way on a broad scale / see 18 February - 20 April 1948 and 27 June - 17 July 1948 /.

Except for Operation SUNFAST, the only other flights to Europe in 1947 of any special note were Project TRAINING / see 1 - 26 June 1947 / and Project HARKEN / see 12 July - 4 November 1947 /. For continuation of the squadron rotation programs to Europe and the Far East in 1948, see respectively 22 January - 12 August 1948 and February - April 1948. For rotation of groups to Far East in 1948, see 10 May - 27 August 1948 and 20 August - 20 December 1948.

4 July

Sixteen aircraft from the 7th Bombardment Group and eleven aircraft from the 43d Bombardment Group (Eighth Air Force) performed an aerial review over Seattle, Washington, during a Fourth of July celebration.

9 July

Cruise Control Program Established

Strategic Air Command Regulation 50-16 formally established the Cruise Control Program, which was the first of two phases of the Range Extension Program. The other phase was the Air Refueling Program / see 19 July 1948 /.

RANGE EXTENSION: CRUISE CONTROL PHASE

A vital consideration to the Strategic Air Command in meeting its world-wide strategic bombardment commitment has always been the development of the maximum range capabilities of all its combat bombardment aircraft. In the first ten years of its history, the Strategic Air Command conducted two programs to extend the range of its aircraft. The first of these was the Cruise Control Program, which first got under way after advance study in the spring of 1947. Shortly thereafter preliminary planning was begun on the Air Refueling Program, and in 1948 this program was put into effect /see 19 July 1948/. After the Air Refueling Program was established, the Cruise Control Program was not abandoned, but it received less emphasis. This was especially true after the Air Refueling Program reached maturity in 1952. Nevertheless, both programs were maintained side-by-side in the interest of increasing combat capability.

Nature of the Problem

The Cruise Control Program was initiated when a series of supervisory visits to Strategic Air Command operating groups in the spring of 1947 revealed that bombardment aircraft when operated according to the appropriate Technical Orders (TO) could not attain the speeds shown on the miles-per-gallon curves provided by Air Materiel Command. Fuel flows were less than indicated on the fuel flow curves, which were based on manifold pressure and revolutions-per-minute (RPM). Strategic Air Command flight engineers discovered that one of the reasons was because the regulations applied to carburetor-type engines, and B-29 bombers had been converted to fuel-injection-type engines. Aircraft could attain the speeds given on the curves by increasing the revolutions-per-minute specified, but only at the cost of excessive fuel consumption. In either case, however, the aircraft could not meet the Technical Order ranges. Either Strategic Air Command operating and maintenance procedures or the technical instructions were seriously in error. This was quite serious in that the war plans of the Air Staff were based on tactical plans prepared in accordance with Air Materiel Command technical instructions.

Flight Test Program

Further investigation by Headquarters Strategic Air Command revealed that all echelons were lacking in knowledge of accurate

aircraft operation or the use of instrument calibration. Therefore, a series of studies were conducted on both stripped and combat aircraft. The original Technical Order power schedules, new Strategic Air Command power schedules, and several special power schedules were utilized to determine optimum range performance. Specially instrumented aircraft were used to prepare proper power schedules for B-29s equipped with fuel-injection engines to supplement the existing Technical Order data on carburetor-equipped aircraft.

Indoctrination Program

Using the data that had been gathered, the next phase of the program was the indoctrination of flight personnel. They were instructed in the accurate use of existing technical information, and detailed operating instructions were provided them. To increase the proficiency of flight personnel in their flight planning and in-flight planning procedures, specially instrumented combat B-29 aircraft were assigned to operating groups and a specially instrumented test and demonstration aircraft was assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command. The aircraft assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command was used for flight tests and flight planning demonstrations for each group. It was demonstrated conclusively to flight personnel that a B-29, when in proper condition, would meet or slightly exceed the performance and range characteristics envisioned by the original B-29 Technical Orders.

To train supervisory flight engineers, in mid-1949 the Eighth Air Force Operational Engineering Section established a Staff Flight Engineer's School at Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico. Instruction was given in aircraft weight and balance factors, aircraft instrumentation, aerodynamics, airspeed calculation, and other subjects related to cruise control. By the end of 1949 five classes had been conducted, approximately 125 officers being qualified for supervision of the engineering phases of long-range tactical missions.

Maintenance Standards Raised

The second phase of the program consisted of improving maintenance standards and procedures. To fulfill the requirements of the Strategic Air Command mission, maintenance standards -

CRUISE CONTROL PROGRAM (Continued)

were raised to a level that would permit the initiation of major global operations on 24-hour notice and the conduct of such operations for 100 hours with a minimum of maintenance. New and more stringent maintenance regulations were issued not only to improve the quality of maintenance but also to reduce the number of manhours required for maintenance.

Range Capability Enhanced

Once personnel were indoctrinated and maintenance standards raised to a higher level, the next step was the extension of range capability. This was accomplished on two levels. First, a program was developed to obtain maximum possible range and fuel economy by regular aircrews. Shortly after Strategic Air Command Regulation 50-16 was published on 9 July 1947, Headquarters Strategic Air Command directed that each B-29 bombardment crew make a 4,000 statute-mile flight under specified conditions every three months. Secondly, maximum range was sought through the use of specially trained crews and aircraft operating under optimum performance conditions / for examples of these flights, see 3- 4 October 1946, 1-3 August 1947, 22 March 1948, 11 June 1948, 6 August 1948, 7-9 December 1948, and 31 August - 1 September 1950. /

Lessons learned on these special flights were disseminated to all crews. Both regular and special crews made significant progress in range extension in 1947 and 1948, accomplishing many flights of over 4,000 statute miles. In 1947, to enhance crew proficiency in cruise control techniques, a series of flights were authorized to Hawaii and the Caribbean / see May - October 1947 and 1 June 1947 /. Cruise control techniques were emphasized in all command activities / see, for example, 10 - 11 July 1947 /. With 3,800 nautical mile flights being accomplished regularly, in April of 1949 Headquarters Strategic Air Command raised the standard to 4,020 nautical miles for B-29 and B-50 aircraft / see 20 February 1948 /. Standards were also established for B-29 air refueling tankers and B-29 and B-50 receivers. At the time, standards were not set for B-36s because of insufficient information concerning their operation. Anyway, the Cruise Control Program was less applicable to the B-36 / see 23 June 1948 / because of its tremendous range.

CRUISE CONTROL PROGRAM (Continued)

The peak achievement in the Cruise Control Program occurred in 1948 when a picked crew flew a standard B-29 with a 10,300-pound bomb load slightly more than 5,000 nautical miles, /see 11 June 1948/.

Until 1952, when the Air Refueling Program reached maturity, considerable emphasis was given to the Cruise Control Program but from then until 1956 it declined in importance as greater emphasis was given to the range extension of Strategic Air Command's new major bombardment aircraft, the jet B-47 /see 23 October 1951/, by means of air refueling.

10 - 11 July

Eighth Air Force Group Competition Conducted

Three combat crews from each of the three Eighth Air Force Very Heavy bombardment groups (7th, 43d, and 509th) took part in a bombing and navigation contest at Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas. The winner of the competition was the 509th Bombardment Group, Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico.

Long-range navigation, cruise control, and visual bombing were emphasized at the contest. Each crew had to plan its own flight and choose flight altitudes. Penalties were assessed for deviation from scheduled bombs-away time, for not following required track (Fort Worth Army Air Field, Chicago, Melrose Bombing Range, El Paso, Fort Worth Army Air Field), or for not estimating fuel requirements accurately. The crews and aircraft were inspected by the commanding general of the Eighth Air Force, formation flights were flown, and radar bomb runs were made on the USCR-584 station at Fort Worth.

For first command-wide Bombing and Navigation Contest, see 21 - 26 June 1948.

12 July - 4 November

Project HARKEN: Special Bombing Test

A detachment of the 340th Squadron of the 97th Bombardment Group - (Fifteenth Air Force), consisting of three Albert-modified B-29s,

left Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, on 12 July for Giebelstadt, Germany, via Bermuda and the Azores. The detachment arrived at Giebelstadt, where it was based for the duration of the test, on 14 July. The three B-29s departed Giebelstadt for their home station on 4 November.

The purpose of Project HARKEN was to test the effectiveness of two recently-developed bombs, the Amazon and Samson, which the Army Air Forces hoped would destroy massive and highly resistant steel and reinforced concrete targets. Several other British and American bombs were also tested. The HARKEN detachment had earlier accomplished preliminary training for the project at Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas; Muroc Air Field, California; and Wendover Field, Utah.

The tests were conducted at the Farge Submarine Assembly Plant, about ten miles north of Bremen, Germany. The target area was 318 x 1,400 feet, and the thickness of the concrete was 23 feet in one area of the roof and 15 in another. Prior to the tests, in March 1945, an Eighth Air Force aircraft had dropped a 4,500-pound rocket-assisted (RA/SP) bomb on the target area that barely dented the concrete to a depth of a mere two feet. The HARKEN detachment used only inert-loaded bombs, containing no explosive charges.

The first bombs were dropped about 21 July. Thirteen British 1,650-pound bombs were dropped to determine whether or not these bombs would break when dropped from high altitudes. Three hits were made from 30,000 feet and two from 35,000 feet; the bombs being bent and deformed but unbroken. Four good hits were made with 25,000-pound Samsons (T28E2) on both the 15 and 23 feet sections of the roof, a total of 15 Samsons being dropped from 17,000 feet. Fifteen 25,000-pound Amazons (T28E1), longer and slimmer than the Samsons, were also dropped from the same altitude, two good hits being made. The 23-foot thick section of the roof safely withstood the dropping of these large bombs. Photographic coverage of the test was provided by one F-13 aircraft of the 311th Reconnaissance Wing.

Project HARKEN was one part of a special two-part European project assigned to the 340th Squadron in March of 1947 by the Army Air Forces. The other was Project TRAINING / see 1 - 26 June 1947 /.

16 July

Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska, transferred from the Fifteenth to the Eighth Air Force.

16 July

27th Fighter Group, which had been activated on 25 June 1947 /q. v./, reassigned less personnel and equipment from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the Eighth Air Force and its station assignment changed from Andrews Field, Maryland, to Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska.

The 27th was the first fighter unit to be assigned to the Eighth Air Force.

As of 31 August 25 P-51s were assigned to the 27th Group. By the end of 1947 a full complement of 80 were assigned. In 1948 the unit converted to F-82s, and it had a full complement of 79 F-82s by the end of the year, a handful of P-51s still being on hand at that time. The 27th Group retained its F-82s until 1950 when it converted to F-84Es.

16 July

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Fort George Wright, Washington, and Seven Mile Gunnery Range (formerly an auxiliary of Geiger Field, Washington) from the Air Training Command and assigned them to the Fifteenth Air Force.

They were satellited on Spokane Army Air Field, Washington, until they were transferred out of the command late in 1948 /see - December 1948/.

Fort George Wright had earlier been transferred by the Strategic Air Command to the Air Training Command, on 14 December 1946 /q. v./, and the Seven Mile Gunnery Range to the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command (AAFTTC) on 9 May 1946 /q. v./.

Fighters	Unit	Air Force
36 P-80s	56th Fighter Group (Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan)	Fifteenth Air Force
37 P-51s	82d Fighter Group (Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire)	Fifteenth Air Force

73

All fighter aircraft staged from Selfridge Army Air Field. Michigan. Fifteenth Air Force bombardment aircraft staged from Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, and then proceeded in group formation over Omaha, Des Moines, and Peoria en-route to prescribed assembly stations.

1 August

MacDill Army Air Field Assumed Jurisdiction of Grenier Army Air Field and Assigned Units

Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire, and its off-base facilities relieved from assignment to the Fifteenth Air Force and assigned as a sub-base of MacDill Army Air Field, Florida (Headquarters Strategic Air Command). At the same time the 82d Fighter Group and the 66th Combat Fighter Wing, VLR (Provisional), both located at Grenier Army Air Field, were assigned to the 94th Combat Bomb Wing (VH) (Provisional), MacDill Army Air Field, without change of station.

On 5 May 1947 Grenier Army Air Field, a satellite of Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, had been reassigned to the direct jurisdiction of Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force.

For the emergence of Headquarters Strategic Air Command as an agency of direct command in 1947, see 1 April 1947.

1 August

Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico, transferred from the Fifteenth to the Eighth Air Force.

The base had been placed on inactive status on 28 May 1947. –

1 August

Fort Dix Army Air Base, New Jersey, a satellite of Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan (Fifteenth Air Force), reassigned to the jurisdiction of the 3d Combat Fighter Wing, VLR (Provisional), Andrews Field, Maryland.

> The base was renamed McGuire Air Force Base prior to its transfer to the 311th Air Division, Reconnaissance, on 16 August 1948 / q. v. /.

1 - 2 August

"Pacusan Dreamboat" Endurance Flight; International Closed-Course Distance Record

In a spectacular demonstration of what could be done under optimum operating conditions in the early days of the Cruise Control Program / see 9 July 1947 /, the B-29 "Pacusan Dreamboat" in slightly more than 39 hours twice circled a triangular course--MacDill Army Air Field, Florida-Tuscon-Andrews Field-MacDill Army Air Field. The total distance covered was 9,002 statute miles, 400 gallons of gasoline remaining when the plane landed. The "Pacusan Dreamboat" was piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Olbert F. Lassiter of the 43d Bombardment Group, Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona (Eighth Air Force).

> The plane had been stripped and specially prepared for the flight by the installation of four new engines and four new light-weight propellors. It carried a gasoline load of 12,800 gallons--600 gallons less than twice the amount prescribed for the standard B-29 4,000 statute-mile test.

15 August - 1 December

Wing-Base Plan Established at All Stations

In the second major station reorganization of 1947, all active bombardment and fighter groups were reorganized under the Wing-Base Plan (see Army Air Forces Regulation 20-15, 27 June 1947; Army Air Forces Regulation 20-15A, 10 November 1947; and Air Force Regulations 20-15, 13 December 1948, and 20-15A, 9 June 1949). The Wing-Base Plan of station organization replaced the Provisional Wing Plan at Fifteenth Air Force bases / see 9 January - 4 June 1947 /.

The reorganization involved the inactivation of practically all existing units other than the combat groups, the activation of new ones, and the transfer of personnel from the inactivated to the newly activated units. All Provisional Wings were inactivated at Fifteenth Air Force bases; bombardment and fighter groups were reorganized; Headquarters and Base Service Squadrons of Air Service Groups and attached Air Materiel and Air Installations Squadrons were inactivated; Very Heavy bombardment or fighter wing Headquarters, Maintenance and Supply Groups, Airdrome Groups, and Station Hospitals or Medical Groups were activated; and the bombardment and fighter groups were assigned to the newly activated wings, which like the Provisional Wings were administrative in nature and provided for station command by the tactical commander.

The new wings and their dates of activation were as follows:

Very Heavy Bombardment Wing*	Location and Assignment	Effective Date (1947)
2d	Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona (Eighth Air Force)	5 November (attached to 43d Bombardment Wing on 17 November)
7th	Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas (Eighth Air Force)	17 November
28th	Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota (Fifteenth Air Force)	15 August
43d	Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona (Eighth Air Force)	17 November
92d	Spokane Army Air Field, Washington (Fifteenth Air Force)	17 November
93d	Castle Field, California (Fifteenth Air Force)	15 August

* The 44th, 90th, 303d, 305th, and 306th Very Heavy Bombardment Groups, assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command, were all inactive and unmanned / see 1 July 1947 /. They were, therefore, not reorganized under the Wing-Base Plan.

WING-BASE PLAN ESTABLISHED (Continued)

Very Heavy Bombardment Wing	Location and Assignment	Effective Date 1947
97th	Reorganized at temporary duty station Mile 26, Alaska. Home base: Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas (Fifteenth Air Force). / For Alaskan training of this unit, see 2 December 1947 - 21 March 1948. /	1 December
98th	Spokane Army Air Field, Washington (Fifteenth Air Force)	10 November (attached to 92d Bombardment Wing on 17 November)
301st	Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, (Fifteenth Air Force)	5 November
307th	MacDill Army Air Field, Florida (Headquarters Strategic Air Command)	15 August
509th	Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico (Eighth Air Force)	17 November

WING-BASE PLAN ESTABLISHED (Continued)

Fighter Wing	Location and Assignment	Effective Date (1947)
4th	Andrews Field, Maryland (Headquarters Strategic Air Command)	15 August
27th	Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska (Eighth Air Force)	15 August
33d	Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico (Eighth Air Force)	5 November (attached to 509th Bombardment Wing on 17 November)
56th	Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan (Fifteenth Air Force)	15 August
82d	Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire (MacDill Army Air Field - Headquarters Strategic Air Command)	15 August (attached to 307th Bombardment Wing on same date)

Priority was given in the reorganization to operational and Fifteenth Air Force units. Except for the 27th Fighter Group, which was reorganized on 15 August, no Eighth Air Force units were reorganized until November. Original plans called for all Fifteenth Air Force units except those located at Smoky Hill and Spokane Army Air Fields to be reorganized on 15 August. Special factors involved at these two bases resulted in the units there being temporarily excepted from the reorganization. The reorganization of the 301st Bombardment Wing at Smoky Hill Army Air Field had to be held in abeyance until the 97th Bombardment Group was cleared for departure of that station for Alaska / see 2 December 1947 - 21 March 1948 /. Two wings and combat groups were assigned to Spokane Army Air Field (92d and 98th). To effect the reorganization at that base, all units were placed under the command jurisdiction of the wing commander. The two

WING-BASE PLAN ESTABLISHED (Continued)

wings subordinate units, other than the combat groups, were manned at an operational minimum authorized by Headquarters Strategic Air Command. The target date of 15 August for the reorganization of Fifteenth Air Force bases could not be met in the case of the 2d Very Heavy Bombardment Group, a newly activated unit / see 1 July 1947 /, and the 97th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, which was preparing for deployment to Alaska.

Background

The Wing-Base Plan, which was established Army Air Forces-wide in 1947, had originally been devised by the Strategic Air Command as the Hobson Plan. As early as November 1946 this plan was being discussed in the command. At that time the Fifteenth Air Force had considered establishing the Plan at its stations, but the Provisional Wing Plan had been selected in preference to it. / see 9 January - 4 June 1947 /.

Development of the Plan

On 1 July 1947 Headquarters Army Air Forces announced that the Wing-Base Plan of station organization would be mandatory at all Army Air Forces stations. Sixteen Strategic Air Command bases were directed to effect the new organization on an experimental basis. After a three-months' trial, each station was to submit recommendations concerning possible changes in the organizational structure. After this initial test, the continental bases of all Army Air Forces commands were ordered to proceed with the reorganization plan.

After the program went into effect, because of a variety of interpretations of the regulations, no two wings were operating uniformly. So, late in 1948 a new regulation was issued embodying some of the changes suggested by various Strategic Air Command units (see Air Force Regulations 20-15, 13 December 1948, and 20-15A, 9 June 1949). Among these was a provision for two-wing stations that appeared in the plan as a "wing-reinforced," which was in actuality a wing with an additional combat group.

WING-BASE PLAN ESTABLISHED (Continued)

Advantages of Wing-Base Plan

One of the principal reasons for the establishment of the Wing-Base Plan was to increase the mobility, flexibility, and combat effectiveness of Army Air Forces units by bringing all elements of a base under a single commander. The World War II type of organization that had been in existence was completely incompatible with mobility, an urgent requirement of the post-World War II Army Air Forces / see 1 March 1948 /. For one thing there had been too many commanders with equal authority at Army Air Forces installations. As a result there were frequent conflicts concerning the jurisdiction of personnel and activities. For example, a combat group commander controlled his tactical units and the first and second echelon maintenance personnel and equipment. Third echelon maintenance, on the other hand, was out of his hands, being controlled by the service group commander. Furthermore, the tactical group or wing did not control the base or the equipment on it, the "landlord" being the service group commander. It was inevitable that many disagreements arose over the use of equipment or the mission that should be emphasized at a particular time. Before mobility could be realized, it was imperative that authority be centralized and operational personnel be given the authority prerequisite to their function.

The Wing-Base Plan was an attempt to make wing organization conform to the needs of mobility. First of all, the wing commander was designated as the final authority at every base, both the group commander and the air base group commander being subordinate to the wing commander. The wing commander was freed of most of the housekeeping functions by the air base group commander who supplied all base services, allowing the wing commander to give full attention to his primary tactical duties.

The Wing-Base Plan was designed to eliminate further organizational changes and to establish a standard organizational pattern for all Army Air Forces bases. It was hoped that it would allow units to operate efficiently during periods of peace and yet shift smoothly to wartime operations without the necessity for major organizational changes. The organization was designed to encompass the functions previously performed at combat

WING-BASE PLAN ESTABLISHED (Continued)

stations by the combat group, the air service group, and the permanent party component. The Wing-Base Plan was a radical departure from the combat-service group combination employed during and immediately subsequent to World War II. The four main groups--combat group, maintenance and supply group, airdrome group, and medical group--were mutually dependent and were designed to operate under the direction of a single commander. The airdrome group was to be the permanent party to remain at a station regardless of the move of the combat or the other two service groups.

The organization provided centralized control through a wing headquarters, but yet allowed for decentralized operations through the specific delegation of authority to subordinate elements. It also established clear-cut command channels and eliminated split jurisdiction or responsibility. The combat, administrative, and service elements of a base were organized into self-contained functional groups designed to perform the basic functions of the wing. Basic functions were grouped homogeneously, each group of functions being identified with a particular squadron. Individuals were clothed, housed, paid, promoted, assigned jobs, and administered by their own commanders. The basic functional unit was limited to a maximum of 250, and provided actual command positions for field grade officers.

Under both the Provisional Wing Plan / see 9 January - 4 June 1947 / and the Wing-Base Plan / see above / the wings were administrative in nature only, the tactical unit continuing to be the group. In mid-1948 combat wings were organized to replace the existing administrative wings / see 12 July - 1 August 1948 / . In mid-1949 / see 30 August 1949 / a Specialized Aircraft Maintenance System was established within the Wing-Base organization. Early in 1951 air base group commanders were designated as installations commanders to allow the wing commanders to devote more of their time to the tactical units / see 19 January 1951 /, and air divisions were activated to direct the activities at two-wing bases / see 10 February 1951 /.

For an experiment to reduce the number of personnel assigned to a base organized under the Wing-Base Plan to 2,000, see 10 May - 30 November 1948.

15 August

Fighter Groups Redesignated

95th, 96th, and 97th Fighter Squadrons, Two Engine (Very Long Range), of the 82d Fighter Group, Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire (MacDill Army Air Field - Headquarters Strategic Air Command), redesignated Fighter Squadrons, Single Engine (Very Long Range).

522d, 523d, and 524th Fighter Squadrons, Single Engine (Very Long Range), of the 27th Fighter Group (Eighth Air Force), Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska, redesignated Fighter Squadrons, Two Engine (Very Long Range).

> The 82d Fighter Group had been equipped with single-engine P-51s since its activation on 12 April 1947 /q. v./, though apparently it had originally been planned to equip the 82d Group with twin-engine aircraft. It retained its P-51s until it was transferred to the Continental Air Command on 22 August 1949 /q. v./.
>
> Redesignation of the 27th Wing as a Two Engine unit was apparently a preliminary to its conversion from F-51s to F-82s in 1948 /see 25 June 1947/.

21 August ff.

Support of Air Transport Command Project SNOWMAN

Project SNOWMAN was conducted to test the possibilities of landing and taking off at the Greenland Ice Cap. Although the project was basically an Air Transport Command operation, the Strategic Air Command contributed to its completion and benefitted from the lessons learned. It was found that ice cap landings and takeoffs were entirely feasible. Colored films were shot of the landings and takeoffs.

23 August

Seymour-Johnson Field, North Carolina, a sub-base of Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

The base had been placed on inactive status on 3 May 1946. It had been satellited on Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, on 10 June 1946, and declared surplus on 16 May 1947.

24 August

La Junta Army Air Field, Colorado, and Pueblo Army Air Base, Colorado (Fifteenth Air Force bases), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

25 August

Headquarters Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of the 33d Fighter Group, Single Engine, less personnel and equipment from the Army Air Forces.

On 16 September 1947 / q. v. / the unit was reassigned to the Eighth Air Force at Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico, where its manning and equipping was begun.

30 August - 1 September

Aerial Review at National Air Races

Twelve aircraft from the 43d Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Eighth Air Force) and 18 aircraft from the 509th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Eighth Air Force) performed an aerial review at the National Air Races at Cleveland, Ohio. Also participating in the review were aircraft from the 307th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), the 4th Fighter Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), and the 56th Fighter Group (Fifteenth Air Force).

1 September

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Spokane Army Air Field, Washington, from the Air Materiel Command and assigned it to the Fifteenth Air Force.

Since 5 June 1947 the base had been occupied under a Joint Use Agreement with Air Materiel Command. On 20 June 1947 / q. v. / the 92d Very Heavy Bombardment Group had moved there from Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas.

16 September

33d Fighter Group, Single Engine, which had been assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command on 25 August 1947 / q. v. /, reassigned to the Eighth Air Force less personnel and equipment at Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico.

This was the second fighter group to be assigned to the Eighth Air Force / see also 16 July 1947 /.

By the end of September 1947 53 P-51s were assigned to the unit, and by the end of the year it had a full complement of 74 aircraft. The 33d Group retained its P-51s until June of 1948 when it began equipping with F-84Es. By the end of August a full complement of F-84s were assigned, and the unit retained these aircraft until it was transferred to the Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948 / q. v. /.

18 September

Air Force Achieved Autonomy

W. Stuart Symington was sworn in as the first Secretary of the Air Force; first Air Force Day.

The transfer of all air activities from the Army to the new Department of the Air Force was effective this date, but personnel, material, and bases were not officially transferred until 26 September 1947 / q. v. /.

President Truman had signed the National Security Act creating the Department of the Air Force on 26 July 1947 / q. v. /. On 25 September 1947 / q. v. / he appointed General Carl Spaatz as the first Air Force Chief of Staff. All Army Air Fields and Bases were redesignated Air Force bases on 13 January 1948 / q. v. /.

23 September

1st Air Transport Unit (Eighth Air Force) began operations at Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, following its move from Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico.

The unit had been activated at Roswell Army Air Base on 10 July 1946 /q. v./. On 14 December 1948 /q. v./ it moved to Biggs Air Force Base, Texas.

24 September

Two Bombardment Groups Reassigned

2d Very Heavy Bombardment Group reassigned from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the Eighth Air Force less personnel and equipment and its station designation changed from Andrews Field, Maryland, to Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona.

98th Very Heavy Bombardment Group reassigned from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the Fifteenth Air Force less personnel and equipment and its station designation changed from Andrews Field, Maryland, to Spokane Army Air Field, Washington.

The two units had been activated on 1 July 1947 /q. v./. The 2d Group occupied Davis-Monthan Field jointly with the 43d Very Heavy Bombardment Group until early in 1949 /see --April 1949/. The 98th Group occupied Spokane Army Air Field jointly with the 92d Group until July of 1950 when the 92d deployed to Korea /see 25 June 1950 - 27 July 1953/. The 98th Group deployed to Korea in August and stayed on indefinitely in the Far East, but the 92d returned to Spokane in October of 1950.

25 September

President Truman appointed General Carl Spaatz as the first United States Air Force Chief of Staff.

General Spaatz was succeeded by General Hoyt S. Vandenberg on 30 April 1948 /q. v./.

26 September

Defense Secretary James W. Forrestal ordered the transfer of personnel, bases, and materiel from the Army to the new Department of the Air Force.

For the establishment of the Department of the Air Force, see 26 July 1947 and 18 September 1947.

1 October

91st Reconnaissance Group, Andrews Field, Maryland, reassigned less personnel and equipment from Headquarters Strategic Air Command to the 311th Reconnaissance Wing without change of station.

Manning of the unit did not begin until mid-1948.

1 October

Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan, its sub-base Oscoda Army Air Field, Michigan, the Army Air Forces Staging Area, Separation Point, and Assembly Point located at Selfridge Army Air Field, and the 56th Fighther Group reassigned from the Fifteenth Air Force to Headquarters Strategic Air Command.

This was the third fighter group over which Headquarters Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction in 1947, the other two being the 4th and 82d / see 1 April 1947 and 1 August 1947 /. The 27th and 33d Fighter Groups were assigned to the Eighth Air Force / see 16 July 1947 and 16 September 1947 / .

10 October

Eighth Air Force Group Competition, similar to the one staged on 10 - 11 July 1947 / q. v. /, conducted at Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico. The competition was won by the 43d Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona.

23 October

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Midland Bombing Ranges 13, 14, 15, and 21 from the Air Training Command and assigned them to the Eighth Air Force.

Ranges 13 and 15 were located at Fort Worth, Texas, and 14 and 21 at Roswell, New Mexico.

1 November

301st Very Heavy Bombardment Wing (Fifteenth Air Force) began operations at Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, following its move from Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico.

Clovis Army Air Field had been transferred from the Fifteenth to the Eighth Air Force on 1 August 1947 / q. v. /.

1-4 November

Participation in Operation COMBINE

Operation COMBINE tested the Navy's capability to intercept bombardment aircraft. Beginning on 1 November the 307th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, MacDill Army Air Field, Florida (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), was charged with keeping under constant surveillance the "enemy" Naval task force, located in the area south of Bermuda. On 3 and 4 November the 307th Group, the Eighth Air Force Composite Group (consisting of aircraft from the 7th, 43d, and 509th Groups), and the 64th Squadron of the 43d Very Heavy Bombardment Group simulated the bombing of the naval force. The Eighth Air Force Composite Group was stationed at Langley Field, Virginia, during the maneuver. The 64th Squadron, whose home station was Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona, was temporarily based at the time at MacDill Army Air Field for antisubmarine warfare training / see 14 January 1947 /.

The above exercise is not to be confused with Operation COMBINE III / see 1 September - 10 November 1948 /.

14 - 24 November

Eighth Air Force Maneuvers at Wendover

Task Force Eight, consisting of the 1st Task Group (1st Air Transport Unit), 38th Task Group (38th Engineer Battalion), and the 509th Task Group (509th Very Heavy Bombardment Group) conducted maneuvers at Wendover Field, Utah. The bombing and gunnery range at Wendover Field was utilized during the maneuvers.

Bombing Maneuvers at Wendover in 1947

During 1947 every active bombardment group, except the 307th, conducted bombing practice at the Wendover Range. The 307th was charged with antisubmarine warfare training for the command / see 14 January 1947 /. A shortage of aviation gasoline divided the maneuvers at Wendover into two parts. The three Eighth

Air Force groups, the 7th, 43d, and 509th, trained at Wendover in the spring. By September the gasoline shortage had been remedied and Fifteenth Air Force units began using the range. In that month the 28th, 93d, and 97th Groups each sent a squadron to Wendover Range for training maneuvers. Then in November / see above / the 509th Group, charged with developing bombing tactics for use with the atomic bomb, returned to Wendover Range for further practice.

30 November

Walla Walla Army Air Field, Washington (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

2 December 1947 - 21 March 1948

97th Bombardment Group to Alaska for Arctic Training

Some 300 personnel of the 97th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Fifteenth Air Force), including the 30 crews assigned to the group, departed Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas, on 2 December 1947 for Arctic training. Fifteen B-29s were flown to Eielson Field, located about 26 miles southwest of Fairbanks, Alaska. This field was formerly known as Mile 26. The 97th Group completed 14 of the 15 missions prescribed by Alaskan Air Command training directives, flying a total of 4107 hours or an average of 274 hours per plane.

During the period 25 August - 10 September 1947 personnel of the 97th Group had received extensive Arctic indoctrination. Personnel of the 28th Bombardment Group, which had served in Alaska in the winter of 1946 - 1947 / see 29 October 1946 /, were assigned to duty in the various staff sections of the 97th Group.

On 9 February 1948 Mile 26 was renamed Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. Mile 26 had been used during World War II as a fighter plane alternate landing strip. Eielson Air Force Base was large enough to accommodate B-36s / see 23 June 1948 / and was intended expressly for the Strategic Air Command. It was intended to supplement the very heavy bomber bases being built near Presque Isle, Maine, and at Rapid City, South Dakota. The Maine base was later known as Limestone Air Force Base, Maine, and the Strategic Air Command assumed

jurisdiction of it on 18 February 1953 /q. v./. Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota, had been under the jurisdiction of the command since 21 March 1946 /q. v./.

For the significance of Arctic activities to the Strategic Air Command, see 29 October 1946.

19 December

Strategic Air Command Mission Expanded

The Strategic Air Command mission /see 10 October 1946/ was expanded to include two new responsibilities (Army Air Forces Regulation 20-20A, 19 December 1947). One of these was participation in disasfer relief and other domestic emergencies as requested by the other major air command responsible for conducting such activities. Secondly, the Strategic Air Command was charged with participating in the Reserve Training Program to the maximum possible extent, including the training and administration of individual Reserve personnel and units.

For Strategic Air Command participation in the Reserve Training Program, see 15 June ff. 1946. For participation in domestic emergency relief activities, see -- July 1951 and 9 - 20 April 1952.

No further change was made in the Strategic Air Command mission until 6 September 1951 /q. v./.

7 January

Command-Wide Maximum-Effort Mission

At the direction of Headquarters United States Air Force, the Strategic Air Command's ten bombardment groups and five fighter groups on three weeks' notice performed a maximum-effort mission, in which 107 P-80s, 186 P-51s, and 288 B-29s participated from a potential of 117, 224, and 307 respectively. Practice missions and rendezvous were accomplished where feasible. The following units participated:

Bombardment Groups

Unit	Location	Assignment
2d	Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona	Eighth Air Force
7th	Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas	Eighth Air Force
28th	Rapid City Army Air Field, South Dakota	Fifteenth Air Force
43d	Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona	Eighth Air Force
92d	Spokane Army Air Field, Washington	Fifteenth Air Force
93d	Castle Field, California	Fifteenth Air Force
98th	Spokane Army Air Field, Washington	Fifteenth Air Force
301st	Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Kansas	Fifteenth Air Force
307th	MacDill Army Air Field, Florida	Headquarters Strategic Air Command
509th	Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico	Eighth Air Force

Bombardment groups not participating were the 97th Group (Fifteenth Air Force), which was serving in Alaska /see 2 December 1947 - 21 March 1948/, and five inactive and unmanned units assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command: the 44th, 90th, 303d, 305th, and 306th /see 1 July 1947/.

Fighter Groups

Unit	Location	Assignment
4th	Andrews Field, Maryland	Headquarters Strategic Air Command
27th	Kearney Army Air Field, Nebraska	Eighth Air Force
33d	Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico	Eighth Air Force
56th	Selfridge Army Air Field, Michigan	Headquarters Strategic Air Command
82d	Grenier Army Air Field, New Hampshire	MacDill Army Air Field-Headquarters Strategic Air Command

Four bombardment groups, the 43d (Eighth Air Force) and the 28th, 93d, and 301st (Fifteenth Air Force) were able to make airborne all their assigned aircraft for the mission. Fifteenth Air Force bombardment aircraft participating totaled 137 out of a potential of 150.

13 January

All Army Air Fields and Bases Redesignated Air Force Bases

13 January

Bases Renamed

Roswell Air Force Base, New Mexico, renamed Walker Air Force Base.

Fort Worth Air Force Base, Texas, renamed Griffiss Air Force Base. However, shortly thereafter, on 29 January 1948, the base was again renamed, this time as Carswell Air Force Base.

On the same date Rapid City Air Force Base, South Dakota, was renamed Weaver Air Force Base. On 20 May 1948, however, in an ex post facto action, the action was annulled.

19 January - 19 October

Cross-Training Program in E.....

Strategic Air Command Regulation 50-23, "Cross Training Program for Combat Crew Officer Personnel," 19 January 1947, officially established the Cross-Training Program. This program had been formulated in mid-1947 at the direction of Headquarters United States Air Force, and the Fifteenth Air Force had initiated it on a test basis on 9 October 1947. However, as time went on the Strategic Air Command found that the disadvantages of the program far exceeded the advantages, and on 19 October 1948 it was abandoned.

Objectives

The Cross-Training Program was established to stretch the limited personnel resources available at the time as far as possible, and to man the maximum number of combat units. Serious manning problems had plagued the command since its activation in 1946, and it was felt that the Cross-Training Program would allow the channeling of personnel from other specialties into critical skill specialties. The air crew member would become a more rounded specialist in several fields and thereby combat effectiveness would be less jeopardized by any personnel slashes.

Under the Cross-Training Program crew members were cross-trained in allied specialties as navigators, bombardiers, radar operators, flight engineers, radio operators, and Electronic Counter Measures (ECM) operators. The cross-training of enlisted personnel was accomplished only on a second priority basis to round out individual air crew potentialities. Specific deadline dates in the first half of 1948 for the completion of cross-training in the various crew specialties were specified in Strategic Air Command Regulation 50-23, 19 January 1948. Even more rigid deadline dates were later established for the last half of 1948 (Strategic Air Command Regulation 50-23, Change 1, 20 May 1948).

Demise of Cross-Training and Inauguration of Lead Crew Concept

No special instructors were authorized for the program, which was given special priority. Individual units developed their own Cross-Training Programs, general guidance being provided by Headquarters Strategic Air Command. Shortly after the program got under way it

became apparent that the Cross-Training Program was perhaps too ambitious a project. Faced with tactical commitments of various types and the need to maintain their combat efficiency, field units were unable to meet cross-training deadline dates, particularly because of the lack of instructor personnel. Any acceleration of the program would limit combat crew training to a minimum and perhaps result in the deterioration of basic crew skills.

On 21 September 1948 the program came to an end for all practical purposes when field units were directed to concentrate on qualifying and maintaining crew proficiency in primary specialties, all cross-training deadlines being rescinded. All cross-training was henceforth to be considered a secondary mission. Only a few weeks later, on 19 October 1948, all cross-training was suspended until all Strategic Air Command combat crews attained lead crew proficiency. /see -- June 1949/.

Henceforth throughout the first decade of its existence the Strategic Air Command concentrated on the development of combat crew efficiency by increasing the capability of the individual in a particular skill or skills rather than in all-around capability. Emphasis on the capabilities of the individual crew member in his own specialty or specialties became even more mandatory with the introduction of highly complex aircraft such as the B-47 /see 23 October 1951/ and B-52 /see 29 June 1955/, which were manned with a relatively small crew. The interchangeability of personnel envisioned by the Cross-Training Program gave way to the specialization of personnel for the purpose of achieving lead crew capability.

As an attempt to remedy the serious personnel problems facing the command in its early years, the cross-training experiment was worth a try. However, it detracted from sustained effort at improving bombing proficiency and resulted in decreased efficiency of the individual combat crew. It was therefore abandoned in favor of a program that promised to increase combat crew efficiency.

22 January - 12 August

Bombardment Squadrons Rotated to Europe

In a continuation of the limited program for the rotation of bombardment units to Europe that had been initiated in 1947 /see 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948/, five squadrons served monthly rotational tours of duty in Europe, at Fürstenfeldbruck, Germany, between 22 January and 12 August 1948:

Dates	Unit	Assignment
22 January - 2 March*	717th Squadron of the 28th Bombardment Group (Rapid City Air Force Base, South Dakota)	Fifteenth Air Force
c. 25 February - c. 7 April	9th Squadron of the 7th Bombardment Group (Carswell Air Force Base, Texas)	Eighth Air Force
13 April - 27 May	352d Squadron of the 301st Bombardment Group (Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas)	Fifteenth Air Force
c. 23 May - c. 14 June	32d Squadron of the 301st Bombardment Group (Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas)	Fifteenth Air Force
3 June - 12 August	353d Squadron of the 301st Bombardment Group (Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas)	Fifteenth Air Force

* All deployment dates in this study are based insofar as possible on the date the first increment of the main body of tactical aircraft left the home station of the unit, and the date the last aircraft returned to its home station.

The squadrons normally deployed with [illegible]-29 aircraft. They were each supported by two C-54 aircraft of the 1st Air Transport Unit (Eighth Air Force) and one F-13 aircraft of the 311th Reconnaissance Wing. On the enroute and return flights both the northern and southern routes were utilized. Units staging through MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, flew to or from Europe via Lagens Field, Azores. Those staging through Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts, flew via either Goose Air Base, Labrador, or Keflavik Air Base, Iceland.

As in 1947 the Strategic Air Command squadrons were under the operational control of United States Air Force in Europe (USAFE), and they accomplished the same type of training, including familiarization flights and aerial reviews over Western Europe, and radar bombing and navigational training flights. Because of the diplomatic situation at the time and because of negotiations pending between European countries and the United States for the use of air bases, units were directed not to fly over Belgium, Holland, England, or Ireland except in emergencies. Flights to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, initiated in 1947, were made until 17 May 1948, when flights to that base were discontinued because of diplomatic difficulties in obtaining clearances--a problem that had also been encountered by units training in Europe in 1947. However, permission was obtained to make flights to Khormaksar Field, Aden Protectorate, in April of 1948.

THE ROTATION PROGRAM IN 1948

Europe

The squadron rotation program came to an end in July 1948 when the initiation of the Berlin Blockade by the Russians / see 27 June - 17 July 1948 / created sufficient impetus for the long-sought establishment of a 90-day group rotation program to Europe. At that time, plans for the rotation of a squadron of the 92d Group were cancelled and the squadron serving in Europe, the 353d Squadron of the 301st Group, was joined by the other two squadrons of the group, which had also been rotated to Europe earlier in 1948 / see 18 February - 20 April 1948 /. The entire 301st Group had been deployed to Europe in April as part of a 90-day group rotation program to Europe that had failed to materialize after the deployment of the 301st Group. The first attempt to set up a group rotation program to Europe, for 30-day periods,

had been in mid-1947 / see 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948 /. Though a few groups had been rotated to Europe for short periods of time, by the end of the year only squadrons were rotated. Because of the rotation of groups to Europe at the time of the Berlin Blockade, a squadron rotation program to Goose Bay, Labrador, had to be temporarily discontinued / see c. 1 June - 4 September 1948 /.

The Far East

The alleviation of the shortage of 100/130 octane gasoline in the Far East made possible the resumption of the squadron rotation program to the Far East that had been initiated in 1947 / see May-October 1947 /. Three squadrons were rotated to the Far East in 1948 / see February - April 1948 /. Also in 1948 the first full group was rotated to the Far East / see 10 May - 27 August 1948 /, and before the year ended a second group deployed there / see 20 August - 20 December 1948 /. Small flights of aircraft were also rotated to Shemya Air Force Base in the Aleutians / see 14 June - 17 November 1948 /.

February - April

Bombardment Squadrons Rotated to Far East

In February of 1948 the alleviation of the shortage of 100/130 octane gasoline in the Far East allowed resumption of the program for the monthly rotation of squadrons to the Far East that had been initiated in 1947 / see May - October 1947 /. However, in 1948 squadrons were rotated to Yokota Air Base, Japan, for only three months because of a new group rotation program that went into effect. The following squadrons served tours of duty in the Far East:

Month	Unit	Assignment
February	393d Composite Squadron (509th Group)	Eighth Air Force
March	326th Squadron (92d Group)	Fifteenth Air Force
April	325th Squadron (92d Group)	Fifteenth Air Force

As in the case of the squadrons rotated to Europe /see 22 January - 12 August 1948/, the squadrons assigned to the Far East were each supported by two C-54 aircraft of the 1st Air Transport Unit (Eighth Air Force) and one F-13 aircraft of the 311th Reconnaissance Wing. The route utilized was Castle Field - Hawaii - Kwajalein - Guam - Yokota. The squadrons were under the operational control of the Far East Air Force (FEAF).

In May a group rotation program was inaugurated to the Far East. The first group to be deployed there was the 93d /see 10 May - 27 August 1948/, which was followed by the 98th Group /see 20 August - 20 December 1948/. For a general review of the Strategic Air Command rotation program in 1948, see 22 January - 12 August 1948.

18 February - 20 April

Plans for Group Rotation to Europe Re-Initiated

In a second attempt to establish a program for the rotation of full bombardment groups to Europe, Headquarters United States Air Force on 18 February 1948 unveiled a new plan for rotating groups to Europe for 90-day periods beginning 1 April 1948 and continuing indefinitely. In 1947, plans for a 30-day rotation program to Europe had not materialized, though two full groups had served short tours of duty there /see 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948/. As part of the new 90-day program the Strategic Air Command scheduled the 301st Group (Fifteenth Air Force) to leave the United States on 5 April, the 98th Group (Fifteenth Air Force) in July, and the 307th Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) in October. However, because United States Air Force in Europe (USAFE) did not have the personnel and facilities to accommodate a full B-29 group, the 301st Group, which initiated the program in the middle of April, was able to stay in Germany only a week. The program was then abruptly terminated, at Headquarters United States Air Force direction, when two squadrons of the 301st Group (the 32d and 353d) returned to the United States on 20 April. One squadron (the 352d) remained in Germany as part of the squadron rotation program /see 22 January - 12 August 1948/. It was not until July of 1948, shortly after the beginning of the Berlin Airlift, that the program for the rotation of groups to Europe for 90-day periods was successfully established /see 27 June - 17 July 1948/.

20 February

First Boeing B-50 Superfortress Delivered to the Strategic Air Command

A crew of the 43d Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Eighth Air Force) landed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, with the first B-50 to be assigned to the group. The crew had procured the B-50 at the Boeing Seattle Plant, after having been checked out in B-50s at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

Earlier in the same month three Boeing civilian representatives had arrived at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base to conduct training classes in B-50 maintenance, and attempts had been made to order special tools and equipment. A Mobile Training Unit (MTU) for B-50s started a training program on 1 March 1948.

THE B-50S: A LIMITED CONVERSION PROGRAM B-29S REMAIN MEDIUM MAINSTAY THROUGH 1952

In 1948 two new major aircraft were introduced into the command. One of these was the medium-range B-50 Superfortress, a greatly improved version of the World War II B-29 Superfort. The other was the revolutionary new heavy bomber, the B-36, which was to give the Strategic Air Command its first long-range striking capability / see 23 June 1948 /. Though the conversion to B-50 aircraft got under way in 1948, the obsolete World War II B-29s continued to be the mainstay of the medium bombardment force through 1952. The capabilities of the B-29s were enhanced by an on-top modification project to allow 180 B-29s to carry atomic weapons that was completed in September 1951. Shortly after the conversion to B-50s was begun, the Strategic Air Command learned of the production of the new B-47 medium-range jet bomber, the first of which was assigned late in 1951 / see 23 October 1951 /. As the B-47s went into production, B-50 production was curtailed. As a result, with the introduction of B-47s imminent, only five Strategic Air Command wings completed the conversion to B-50s. Large numbers of B-29s had to be removed from Air Materiel Command storage and assigned to the Strategic Air Command to meet command needs during the tremendous expansion program that ensued after the outbreak of the Korean conflict, in 1951-1952. Because of the slow delivery rate of B-47s, B-29s also had to be temporarily assigned to some wings.

B-29 AND B-50 AIRCRAFT (Continued)

Five Wings Converted to B-50s

The 43d Medium Bombardment Wing (Eighth Air Force) was the first unit to complete its conversion to B-50s, in December of 1948 / for redesignation of Very Heavy bombardment groups as Medium or Heavy bombardment wings, see 12 July - 1 August 1948 /. The 2d Medium Bombardment Wing, another Eighth Air Force unit, received its first aircraft in December of 1948 and completed its equipping in March of 1949. Receiving its first aircraft in June of 1949, the 93d Medium Bombardment Wing (Fifteenth Air Force) completed its conversion in January 1950. The 97th Medium Bombardment Wing (Eighth Air Force) received its first B-50s in February of 1950, completing its conversion in May of 1950. The 509th Medium Bombardment Wing began its conversion in June of 1950 and completed it in November of 1951.

Delayed deliveries in the "ruralist" (these aircraft were designated as B-50 MRs) and safety modifications hampered the B-50 conversion program which was also slowed up because of overseas rotations. Nevertheless, from 1950 through 1952 the B-50 units continued to constitute the bulwark of the Strategic Air Command's medium bombardment Emergency War Plan (EWP) strength.

After the first B-47 Wings began achieving combat-ready status it was decided to advance the conversion to B-47s of the 2d and 43d, both B-50 Wings, because of the limited availability of bases and qualified support personnel. Furthermore, it was felt that the more experienced B-50 Wings could convert and become combat-ready more quickly than B-29 Wings. The 93d Wing converted to B-47s in 1954, and in 1955 the two remaining B-50 Wings, the 97th and 509th, converted to B-47s.

The total number of B-50 aircraft assigned to the command, being only two in June of 1948, rose to 35 by the end of the year. The number assigned then rose to a peak of 239 at the end of 1952, and then fell off to 172 (including 31 RB-50s) by the close of the following year. The number dropped further to 86 (including eight RB-50s) in December of 1954, and then to 12 (including seven RB-50s) in June 1955. By the end of 1955 no B-50s were assigned, the nine RB-50s on hand being assigned to the 97th Medium Bombardment Group which had as a secondary responsibility a "Electronic Reconnaissance Mission."

B-29 AND B-50 AIRCRAFT (Continued)

B-29 Force Built Up

Following the outbreak of the Korean Conflict, in 1951 and 1952, the command undertook an extensive expansion program. To meet its needs, large numbers of B-29s had to be obtained from Air Materiel Command storage under Project PUSHOFF. However, the B-29s were not received rapidly enough to keep up with the increase of five units that occurred in 1951, and at the end of the year two of the new units (the 303d and 308th) were unequipped. The shortage of aircraft was a serious problem during this period in trying to increase combat capability. A B-29 Operational Training Unit (OTU) program trained three of the new wings, two being trained by the 90th at Forbes Air Force Base, Kansas (the 308th and 376th) and one by the 44th at Lake Charles Air Force Base, Louisiana (the 68th). Crews came largely from the Air Training Command Combat Crew Training School (CCTS) at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

The B-29 program reached its peak in 1952, eleven B-29 equipped wings being assigned, and the conversion of B-29 units to B-47 aircraft began in 1953. At the end of 1952 the total number of B-29s assigned to the command was 372. This number fell to 111 by the end of 1953 and then to 39 in June of 1954. All of these aircraft had been transferred out of the command by the end of 1954. Some of the B-29s were converted for use in the air refueling program /see 19 July 1948/. From December of 1950 through June of 1952 the total number of B-29s assigned had ranged between 250 and 350. At the end of 1946 the Strategic Air Command had possessed only 145 B-29 aircraft, but by the same time the following year the figure had climbed to 319. It then rose to an all-time peak of 486 in December of 1948 and then gradually dropped to 325 in December of 1950. The number of RB-29 reconnaissance aircraft increased from 14 in June of 1948 to 52 in June of 1949 and then dropped gradually to 13 in June of 1952. From December of 1952 through December of 1953 seven RB-29s were assigned, but all of them had been transferred out by June of 1954.

B-29 AND B-50 AIRCRAFT (Continued)

Medium Bombardment Wing Equipment Status, B-29 and B-50 Aircraft, 1948-1954

As Of	Number of Equipped Wings (Unequipped in Parenthesis)	B-29 Equipped Wings*	B-50 Equipped Wings*
20 February 1948	11[1]	11[2]	0
31 December 1948	12	11[3]	1 (43d)
31 December 1949	12	9[4]	3 (2d, 43d, 93d)
31 December 1950	12	8[5]	4 (2d, 43d, 93d, 97th)
31 December 1951	16 (2)[6]	11[6]	5 (2d, 43d, 93d, 97th, 509th)
31 December 1952	16 (1)[7] **	11[8]	5 (same as above)
31 December 1953	8	5[9]	3 (93d, 97th, 509th)
31 December 1954	2	0	2[10] (97th, 509th)

* Minimum of 15 aircraft assigned.

** Beginning in 1952 B-47 Wings came into the medium force. For B-47 equipped wings, see 23 October 1951.

1. In addition to the 11 active groups at this time, five inactive and unmanned groups were assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command: the 44th, 90th, 303d, 305th, and 306th. See 1 July 1947.

2. 2d, 7th, 28th, 43d, 92d, 93d, 97th, 98th, 301st, 307th, and 509th.

3. 2d, 22d, 28th, 92d, 93d, 97th, 98th, 301st, 306th, 307th, and 509th. The 7th Very Heavy Bombardment Group was redesignated as a Heavy Bombardment Wing on 1 August 1948 /q. v./. Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of the 22d Wing on 18 May 1948 /q. v./.

B-29 AND B-50 AIRCRAFT (Continued)

4. 22d, 28th, 92d, 97th, 98th, 301st, 306th, 307th, and 509th. The 28th Heavy Bombardment Wing was beginning its conversion to B-36 aircraft, having seven assigned in November. It had been redesignated a Heavy unit on 16 May 1949 /q. v./, but since the bulk of its assigned aircraft (14) were B-29s it is considered as a B-29 equipped wing here.

5. 9th, 22d, 92d, 98th (Far East Air Force), 301st, 306th 307th (Far East Air Force), and 509th. The 9th had been activated as a Strategic Reconnaissance Wing on 1 May 1949 /q. v./, redesignated as a Heavy Bombardment Wing on 1 April 1950 /q. v./, and redesignated as a Medium Bombardment Wing on 2 October 1950 /q. v./. Except for one B-36 aircraft assigned throughout 1950, the unit was equipped with B-29s.

6. 6th, 9th, 22d, 44th, 90th, 98th (Far East Air Force), 106th, 301st, 305th, 307th (Far East Air Force), and 376th. The 92d Medium Bombardment Wing was redesignated as a Heavy unit on 16 June 1951 /q. v./ and by the end of 1951 had 19 B-36s and only 2 B-29s assigned. The 306th Medium Bombardment Wing began its conversion to B-47s in October 1951 /see 23 October 1951/ and only had B-29s assigned for a few months at the beginning of the year. The 44th, 90th, and 305th Medium Bombardment Wings were activated on 2 January 1951 and were all fully equipped with B-29s by the end of the year. The 106th Light Bombardment Wing was assigned to the Strategic Air Command from the Continental Air Command (ConAC) on 1 April 1951 /q. v./, and redesignated a Medium unit on 1 May 1951 /q. v./. At the end of 1951 there were two unequipped wings. The 303d Medium Bombardment Wing, activated on 4 September 1951 /q. v./, had only five B-29s assigned at the end of the year. The 308th Medium Bombardment Wing was activated on 10 October 1951 /q. v./, but had no aircraft assigned at the close of 1951.

7. The unequipped unit was a newly activated one, the 40th, which began to receive B-29s in 1953. The 22d Wing as of 31 December 1952 had only a few B-29s on hand and was awaiting its conversion to B-47s. It is therefore not considered here as either an equipped or unequipped B-29 unit. The same is true with the 340th Wing, also a newly activated unit. It had no aircraft assigned and was not equipped until 1954, when it received YRB-47 reconnaissance aircraft, though its mission remained bombardment.

B-29 AND B-50 AIRCRAFT (Continued)

8. 9th, 44th, 68th, 98th (Far East Air Force), 301st, 303d, 307th (Far East Air Force), 308th, 310th, 320th, and 376th.

9. 9th, 40th, 98th, 307th, and 310th.

10. The 97th Medium Bombardment Group in April 1954 assumed the "Electronic Reconnaissance Mission" of the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, and RB-50s and technically trained crews were transferred to it. Two-thirds of its aircraft, however, were B-50s, until 1955 when this portion of its strength was converted to B-47s. It retained its RB-50 aircraft in 1955. In 1955 the 509th converted from B-50s to B-47s.

1 March

Mobility and Supply Plan (Strategic Air Command Manual 67-50-1) Published for B-29 Units; Beginning of the Strategic Air Command Mobility Program

The Mobility and Supply Plan outlined requirements for the initial air move by tactical and supporting aircraft and established supply procedures for the operation of B-29 units for a minimum of 30 days from a prepared base anywhere in the world. It superseded the Mobility Plan that had originally been prepared and utilized by the Eighth Air Force.

On 15 December 1948 a Mobility and Supply Plan for P-80 equipped fighter units was published. This plan, however, which had been in use for some time prior to its publication, was turned over to the Continental Air Command, which had assumed jurisdiction of all Strategic Air Command P-80 units on 1 December 1948 [q. v.].

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORLD-WIDE MOBILITY, 1946-1956: LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY IN THE ATOMIC AGE

The achievement of true world-wide mobility by the Strategic Air Command was its greatest accomplishment during the first decade of its existence. As a matter of fact, it might be said that as the decade progressed Mobility came to describe the Strategic Air Command better than any other single word. Actually, the achievement of mobility was not really a singular accomplishment, but represented the focal point of a series of accomplishments that were in themselves highly significant.

THE MOBILITY PROGRAM, 1946-1956 (Continued)

These included the origination and development of a comprehensive Mobility Plan with little or no precedent, the establishment of a world-wide logistics and supply system in coordination with Headquarters United States Air Force, the Air Materiel Command (AMC), the administering of a global network of bases, and the establishment of an effective air refueling program / see 19 July 1948 /.

From 1946 to 1956 mobility planning and programming were at all times activities of the highest priority, being closely allied to all war planning. When it had been activated in 1946, the Strategic Air Command had not only possessed an extremely limited combat capability, but it had also been virtually immobile. Little or no mobility planning that would conform to post-World War II requirements had been accomplished by anyone in the Army Air Forces. A gigantic task lay ahead. But by 1956 the deployment of its wings to all parts of the world was a routine accomplishment of the Strategic Air Command. By that time a full B-47 wing could fly from California to England in 12 hours and land equipped to begin offensive combat air operations. In some cases wings could by means of air refueling deploy directly from their home stations to their assigned Emergency War Plan targets.

Throughout the first decade of the Strategic Air Command's existence there were three essential ingredients of the Mobility Plan: Flyaway Kits, Unit Essential Equipment, and Base-Type Equipment. Flyaway Kits, which were the first to evolve and which gave units some self-sufficiency; consisted of aircraft spares necessary for immediate combat operations that were carried by Air Echelons when they moved forward. Unit Essential Equipment consisted of essential organizational equipment that was air transportable and which, like Flyaway Kits, deployed units always carried with them. Base-Type Equipment included heavy non-air-transportable equipment necessary for base support.

In 1949 an important program Project AFGEN was established for the positioning and pre-positioning of war reserve materiels at forward bases and in Zone of the Interior depots. It constituted the Air Force plan for the support of the Emergency War Plan (EWP). AF-GEN consisted of Projects SEAWEED, BIG TOP, and NIGHT LIFE. SEAWEED covered the pre-positioning of Base-Type Equipment and supplies at forward operating bases and depots. Both BIG TOP and NIGHT LIFE concerned the positioning of other war reserve

materiels in the Zone of the Interior and its preparation for overseas shipment. In 1952 an aerial resupply program was established for the replenishment of Flyaway Kit spares of deployed wings.

Mobility planning reached maturity in 1951 with the publication of the Mobility Planners Guide. Prior to that time there had been numerous Mobility Plans and Supply Plans in effect and these had not only been subject to considerable amendment but their very diversity had made them somewhat inconvenient to use. All existing supply and mobility concepts and practices were consolidated in the Mobility Planners Guide, which also served as an aid to units in the development of their own mobility plans. The Guide, as amended from time to time, remained the one basic mobility planning document for all Strategic Air Command units from 1951 through 1955.

One method used to test and improve the Mobility Plan was the program for the rotation of Strategic Air Command units to overseas areas. Rotations gave units an excellent opportunity to deploy under simulated combat conditions, and to keep their mobility plans up-to-date. The rotation program got under way originally on a small scale in 1947 / see 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948 /. In 1948, after the initiation of the Berlin Blockade by the Russians, a 90-day group rotation program was established / see 27 June - 17 July 1948 and 22 January - 12 August 1948 /. There was a progressive development of the rotation program from 1948 through 1952, especially in 1951 and 1952 when the overseas base network was greatly expanded. From 1953 through 1955 the rotation program reached a climax as units rotated regularly to overseas bases accompanied by their air refueling squadrons.

Mobility: A Vital Requirement

Charged as it was with global strategic bombardment commitments, the Strategic Air Command immediately after its activation took steps to develop a Mobility Plan and put it into effect. It was a vital requirement because the Strategic Air Command was required to deploy its bombardment units anywhere in the world on short notice and to maintain them for at least the initial period of combat, during which they had to be self-sufficient and be able to carry on

sustained operations until support units could be moved into place. Until some time after 1948 when the Strategic Air Command began to develop some long-range capability with B-36 aircraft / see 23 June 1948 / it was particularly imperative that medium-range units be prepared to operate from forward bases, where they would be in a better position to attack the homeland of any aggressor. This was especially true because the bulk of the Strategic Air Command forces were of the medium-range type.

In other words, it might be said that the Mobility Plan came about only because of the lack of a long-range intercontinental bombing force. The Mobility Plan was intended to overcome the deterring factors of distance and time that separated the Strategic Air Command from its potential targets. It would allow the Air Echelons of combat units to deploy to forward bases and be prepared to begin combat operations within a matter of hours after the beginning of any hostilities.

Had not the Strategic Air Command possessed the capability to deploy and support its combat units throughout the world many of its other achievements could not have been effectively exploited or would have been of only limited value. The air refueling program, for example, which greatly facilitated the movement of units to forward areas, was a tremendous contribution to the Mobility Program / see 19 July 1948 /. At the same time, however, it further increased the need for a program to procure, maintain, and supply forward bases. If this had been impossible, the efficacy of the air refueling program would have been practically negated. The tactical advantages of the B-47 medium-range bomber, with its great speed, could never have been utilized if it were limited to operation from the United States. Even the long-range B-36s and B-52s needed some overseas base and logistics support, especially during prolonged operations.

Strategic Air Command was never able during the first decade of its existence to execute completely its master Mobility Plan, the nearest opportunity to do so being at the outbreak of the Korean conflict, when four bombardment wings were deployed to the Far East / see 25 June 1950 - 27 July 1953 /. This was the first real test of the Strategic Air Command Mobility Plan. Generally speaking, the deployment was carried out with great

success, but the immediateness of the movement produced unexpected problems, especially concerning the unpreparedness of forward bases. Some of the lessons learned during the Korean deployment were incorporated in the Mobility Planners Guide, published in June of 1951.

Because of the inadequacy of overseas base facilities, especially until about 1952, peacetime rotations required modifications in the execution of the Mobility Plan. Nevertheless, by 1956 Strategic Air Command units were highly mobile. Numerous supply problems remained and some refinements in the Mobility Plan were still being made. Yet continuous progress would need to be made in improving the world-wide logistics system and in mobility planning to adjust to ever-changing operational concepts. In the light of its important mission, the Strategic Air Command could never be too mobile.

A Priori and Allied Requirements

The achievement of world-wide mobility was especially outstanding because so many a priori and allied accomplishments in so many varied fields were basic prerequisites. The whole problem of establishing and maintaining a Mobility Plan was intricate, embracing scores of interrelated factors. As a matter of fact, all command capabilities were directed toward the goal of mobility, an all-embracing subject. It included all activities and factors necessary to make and keep the aircraft, personnel, and equipment of Strategic Air Command wings ready at all times not only to deploy to forward bases but also to be prepared to begin combat operations promptly and effectively. Aircraft maintenance standards had to be kept at the highest level, and personnel innoculated and their records kept up-to-date.

A network of Zone of the Interior and overseas bases had to be procured and readied for operations. This proved to be one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the Mobility Program. It was a continuing and critical problem, one about which General LeMay was greatly concerned and toward which he devoted much of his personal effort. Serious problems were also encountered in setting up POL (Petroleum-Oil-Lubricants) facilities in overseas areas. Strategic Support Squadrons had to be activated and equipped to provide the Strategic Air Command a limited air

transport capability to supplement that of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS), which provided the Strategic Air Command with the majority of its airlift support / see 14 January 1949 /. Another command that made a major contribution to Strategic Air Command mobility was the Air Materiel Command, which provided all the supplies and logistical assistance needed by the Strategic Air Command for its world-wide operations. Overseas major air commands also made a significant contribution.

Tactical units had to be reorganized to render them more mobile / see 15 August - 1 December 1947 and 12 July - 1 August 1948 /. Mobility had not been a prime consideration in planning the structure of tactical units that had prevailed throughout World War II and in the early post-war years. The result was a relatively immobile organization that was incompatible with the needs of the Strategic Air Command and the United States Air Force. Another problem was that the World War II organization had never been standardized, which meant that more often than not groups and wings were organized differently, thereby making planning difficult. Mobility required a centralized authority under one commander and the separation of operations activities from basic housekeeping functions. As a result, the Wing-Base Plan of unit organization was adopted Air Force-wide.

The Mobility Plan had to be constantly developed and modified to meet new conditions, such as conversion to different types of aircraft / see 1 May 1946, 20 February 1948, 23 June 1948, 23 October 1951, and 29 June 1955 / and changes in Emergency War Plan deployments. All these factors altered logistics planning and plans had to be amended constantly. Therefore, all logistics planning was closely tied in with war planning. In many respects the development of the Mobility Plan was as important as the development of the Emergency War Plan. In a way, the Emergency War Plan would be almost meaningless without the Mobility Plan. There was a mutual inter-action between the two, the series of war plans forming the basis for the procurement and positioning of materiel reserves.

Peacetime programs and wartime plans were also naturally closely interdependent. Because of this, logistics planning for the support of the wartime forces was not confined to war plans alone, but was concerned with the peacetime program as well. The peacetime forces had to be adequately equipped to perform their

wartime tasks, and the logistics system had to be ready at all times for wartime expansion. It was inconceivable that Strategic Air Command Emergency War Plan units could operate under peacetime authorizations of personnel and equipment and expect to fulfill their obligations. Therefore, the Strategic Air Command went on a "readiness" footing, which provided for wartime allocations of aircraft, increased supplies, and an augmented personnel quota. At first only Emergency War Plan units were allowed to be so manned and equipped, but later on the plan was expanded to include other units.

The Problem of Forward Bases

The inadequacy of the forward base network was a serious impediment to the Mobility Program, especially from 1946 through 1950, when Strategic Air Command's operations were limited to a handful of overseas bases. The procurement and retention of forward bases was enmeshed in a labryinth of diplomatic complexities. Even after bases were acquired their reliability was frequently uncertain because of political unrest in the area, such as was the case with North African bases / see 14 January 1951 /, or for other reasons. After 1948 the Strategic Air Command began to develop a long-range capability with its B-36 aircraft / see 23 June 1948 /, which promised to be even further enhanced by the introduction of the jet B-52 in 1955 / see 29 June 1955 /. Such long-range aircraft could operate almost exclusively from the Zone of the Interior, requiring only a minimum of overseas staging support. However, during the first decade of its existence the majority of the Strategic Air Command's forces were of the medium-range type, represented first by B-29s and later by B-50s and B-47s. Medium-range aircraft could only strike effectively from forward bases since most of the Strategic Air Command's possible targets lay beyond the radius of medium-range bombers and fighters operating from their Zone of the Interior bases.

The lack of a long-range intercontinental bombing force created a very serious problem, making the Strategic Air Command hopelessly dependent on its overseas bases. The absence or loss of overseas bases would cut its striking power almost exactly as much as if the majority of its forces were destroyed on the ground. Near the end of the Strategic Air Command's first decade its dependence on overseas bases was rendered

acutely perilous in two different ways. Politically the bases became less and less reliable because of a general weakening of the Western Alliance and because of political unrest throughout the world. Strategic Air Command was always affected by the caprices of international diplomacy.

But the political and diplomatic problems associated with overseas bases were not the only ones. As time went on the overseas bases became more and more strategically vulnerable, a fact that resulted in a complete reorientation of Strategic Air Command operational concepts. It was an appalling fact that the Soviet Union could either use its new ballistic missile to intimidate American allies who controlled Strategic Air Command overseas bases--or, worst of all, to wipe out the overseas base network if it chose. The presence of these new and startling factors put into motion in 1954 and 1955 new operational concepts that promised to alter radically the basic postulates of Strategic Air Command operation in the second decade of its existence. On the horizon appeared to be a withdrawal of the Strategic Air Command forces into the Zone of the Interior, the gradual phase-out of a medium-range force, an accelerated development of its long-range bomber force, and a wide dispersal of these forces throughout the United States.

Nevertheless, in line with its operational capabilities, during most of its first decade the Strategic Air Command relied heavily on its overseas bases. A network of overseas bases had to be acquired and developed before the tremendous task of supplying these bases and making them ready to support combat operations could be initiated. Zone of the Interior bases also had to be developed to support the Mobility Plan. Though deployment in the event of war would be mainly from the Zone of the Interior, the forward bases were the key to effective deployment. The state of readiness of these bases was a factor absolutely essential to the workability of the Mobility Program. Forward bases had to have useable facilities, essential equipment, and be manned with a base complement to insure useability of facilities and equipment when required. In 1951 Air Divisions were activated in the United Kingdom and North Africa to administer the overseas base complexes in these areas and to provide base housekeeping services for Strategic Air Command units rotated to these areas /see 14 January 1951 and 20 March 1951/. A third Air Division, in the Far East, was activated in 1954 /see 18 June 1954/.

THE MOBILITY PROGRAM, 1946-1956 (Continued)

The Strategic Air Command required four types of bases, according to the Mobility Planners Guide (June 1951): Enroute, Operating, Staging, and Emergency. Enroute bases were needed along deployment routes for refueling and crew rest and in some cases possibly for final pre-strike maintenance and crew briefing. Operating bases were those outside of the United States that were to be used for deployment in a war emergency. From these bases continued strikes could be launched against an enemy. Staging Bases would be used for post-strike crew interrogation and rest, refueling, and emergency maintenance to permit one-time return flight to the Operating Base or home station. Emergency Bases were those along the strike route at which aircraft unable to complete planned flights could stop for emergency refueling and service. Despite the criteria that were established for the four types of bases, however, in the event of war the goal would be to convert Enroute, Staging, and Emergency Bases into Operating Bases.

During the first decade of its existence Strategic Air Command efforts at procuring bases were in two major areas; North Africa and the United Kingdom. However, it appeared that during its second decade bases in Spain would also be available for use by the Strategic Air Command. The possibilities of base acquisition in the Far East were extremely limited because of Communist control of the mainland. As a result, Strategic Air Command had to use World War II or post World War II acquired bases, the two most important such base areas being in Okinawa and Japan. The Third Air Division was activated in the Far East on 18 June 1954 / q. v. / to support Strategic Air Command rotation in that area.

When it had been activated in 1946, the Strategic Air Command found itself with few accessible forward bases from which it could operate, and even the use of these was hampered by diplomatic considerations / see, for example, 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948 and 22 January - 12 August 1948 / . Because of the relaxed world situation immediately following World War II, military appropriations were niggardly, and the Air Force was forced to operate on an austerity basis. Also, foreign powers did not welcome the use of their bases by the United States. It was not until mid-1948, at the time of the Berlin Blockade, that the political climate of the Free World became favorable

THE MOBILITY PROGRAM, 1946-1956 (Continued)

to the development of the overseas base network /see 27 June - 17 July 1948/. Prior to that time the Strategic Air Command could only use a few bases in the Occupied Zone of Germany, the United Kingdom, Alaska, and the Far East. These bases, moreover, were in no way equipped to support the Mobility Plan.

Of course, in these early years Strategic Air Command combat capability was very limited, and most of its energies were devoted to building up its forces and training them to an acceptable degree of combat proficiency. Nevertheless, if a war emergency had broken out at this time the Strategic Air Command weakness in combat capability would have been even further accentuated by the lack of forward bases.

At the time of the Berlin Blockade the Strategic Air Command arranged for the use of a few British bases. However, these and all active or potential bases in Europe required extensive renovation and in 1949 and 1950 were in a dubious state of readiness had an emergency occurred. Continuous efforts were made by the Strategic Air Command in 1949 to arrive at further agreements with the British to use additional bases in the event war broke out. By mid-1949 agreement had been reached to use eight bases.

It was not until 1950 that Congress approved an overseas base building program in support of the Air Force expansion program, and in 1951 an accelerated construction and renovation program got under way in North Africa and the United Kingdom. The Fifth and Seventh Air Divisions were activated in those areas respectively to support units on rotation and to administer the base construction programs /see 14 January 1951 and 20 March 1951/. In 1951 funds were allotted for the extension of runways, the construction of additional troop housing, and the improvement of maintenance facilities at United Kingdom bases. Progress in the construction of bases in North Africa was slow because of political unrest, diplomatic difficulties, and construction problems encountered there /see 14 January 1951/.

By the end of 1952 many bases still had major deficiencies, and rights for peacetime utilization had not been obtained for all the required bases. In 1952 and 1953 the Strategic Air Command determined the priority for each Emergency War Plan base to

be used as a guide in funding the development of these bases. The major factors considered in developing priorities included: intercontinental attack capability of existing and programmed aircraft, planned wartime operations, vulnerability of bases to enemy attack, and the political reliability of countries in which the bases were located.

In 1953 and 1954 priorities of bases were revised in line with new operational concepts. Zone of the Interior and overseas bases in the northeast were given top priority / for relocation of Headquarters Eighth Air Force in the northeastern United States, see 1 April - 30 June 1955 /. Development of a successful jet tanker, the KC-135 / see 19 July 1948 /, gave impetus to those revised concepts and pointed up the need for additional northern bases for tanker operations. Unfortunately, eleven of twelve Canadian/Greenland bases that had been given high priority in Strategic Air Command's Fiscal Year 1957 Military Construction Program (MCP) had to be deferred until Fiscal Year 1958. These eleven bases were programmed for minimum facilities to support air refueling operations. Sondestrom, the twelfth base, was scheduled for facilities for one tanker squadron in the Fiscal Year 1957 Military Construction Program and a second squadron in Fiscal Year 1958. Kindley Air Force Base, Bermuda, was programmed for facilities as the permanent station for one tanker squadron and for additional wartime tanker operations.

Late in 1953 an agreement was signed by the United States and Spain granting the United States the rights to build and operate a series of bases in Spain / see 26 September 1953 /. These new bases promised to further enhance Strategic Air Command mobility. Planning for use of the bases was initiated by the Strategic Air Command in 1954, but construction of the bases and POL (Petroleum-Oil-Lubricants) facilities was not begun until 1955 by the United States Navy Bureau of Yards and Docks because of diplomatic and technical difficulties associated with the land acquisition. As a result, the bases were not expected to be ready for Strategic Air Command use until Fiscal Year 1958, instead of Fiscal Year 1957 as originally planned.

Mobility in the Atomic Age

The first mobility planners in the Strategic Air Command were faced with unprecedented problems. The atomic bomb had

completely changed all major concepts of warfare. In particular, the need for mobility was enhanced. Preparedness concepts upon which the nation had relied prior to World Wars I and II were rendered obsolete. The prospect of an atomic war so devastating that a power delivering the first blow stood to win the war forced military planners to turn to a philosophy of maximum preparedness and rapid mobility. The new philosophy was a considerable departure from that which had prevailed prior to World Wars I and II, when United States military forces had been on a peacetime or "nucleus" footing and when the philosophy had been that the United States would have to withstand the shock of initial losses while building up its latent war strength to the point necessary to win the war.

The separation of the Air Force from the Army /see 18 September 1947/ was in some ways a recognition of the differing concepts upon which the tactical deployment of ground and air forces were based. When in early 1946 the Strategic Air Command had been given its singular strategic bombardment mission /see p. 3/, no formal mobility plan existed in the Strategic Air Command or any other command upon which to organize aerial forces for future wars. It became the primary task of its planners to devise means to deliver telling atomic blows against any enemy as rapidly as possible. To do so, a highly mobile striking force would be needed.

Because almost all previous military planning had been based upon slow land and water transport, early Strategic Air Command planners could call on few precedents. The only precedent was the aerial mobility that had been conducted on a small scale in the Pacific Theater during World War II, where long distances had created a serious time and logistics problem. The experiences of the 58th Bombardment Wing in the Pacific Theater during World War II were particularly valuable to early Strategic Air Command planners. The 58th Wing, which had participated in the Pacific B-29 offensive, had found it necessary to operate against Japan from bases in China, which were unprepared to handle the units, and had developed some embryonic mobility concepts.

THE MOBILITY PROGRAM, 1946-1956 (Continued)

Mobility Planning, 1946-1950

The development of a Mobility Plan was begun in 1946 following a survey of the equipment and aircraft upon which the command would have to rely in the immediate future. Problems in mobility encountered in Operations CROSSROADS /see 1 July 1946/ had particularly emphasized the need for a thorough study of the problem. Major General Roger M. Ramey, who had commanded Task Force 1.5 in the CROSSROADS operation and who had assumed command of the Eighth Air Force on 10 January 1947 /q. v./ was given the task of mobility planning. Late in 1946 he was directed to develop mobility to the maximum extent in the Eighth Air Force. An Eighth Air Force Mobility Plan was drawn up and after testing by Eighth Air Force units was presented to General Kenney early in the spring of 1947. The plan was approved by the Air Staff, but only for the Eighth Air Force at first because of supply stringencies prevailing at the time.

Development of a Mobility Plan was carried on throughout 1947. Until the Mobility Planners Guide was published in 1951 several Mobility Plans and Supply Plans were in effect. The Strategic Air Command Supply Plan had been formulated in 1946 and published on 2 January 1947 (see also Strategic Air Command Technical Pamphlet 67-1, December 1947, "Strategic Air Command Supply Plan"). It was based on the premise that Strategic Air Command units would be capable within 72 hours of notification of flying 10,000 miles and remaining at the advanced stations for 30 days during which 100 hours of flying time per aircraft would be accomplished.

Prior to the publication of the Mobility Planners Guide in 1951, two major mobility plans for medium bombardment units were in effect, the first of which was published for B-29 units on 1 March 1948 /see beginning of this entry/. Supporting guides to this plan included Strategic Air Command Manual 67-50-2 (16 August 1948) which established criteria for the self-support of units at forward bases. It considered the requirements of the bases to be utilized once aircraft had departed the Zone of the Interior, describing the preparations necessary at advanced operating bases prior to the arrival of tactical wings that were

scheduled for immediate operations. A second supplementary manual to the 1 March 1948 Mobility Plan was the "Unit Equipment Readiness Plan for Bombardment Wings, Medium" (Strategic Air Command Manual 67-50-6), published on 1 March 1949. This manual, which was a revision of the Eighth Air Force "Brown Book," was designed to assist bombardment commanders in preparing to execute a complete wing mobility move to an overseas base. It was applicable only to those units designated to operate under the Strategic Air Command Readiness Reserve Plan. The second major Mobility Plan, for medium bombardment units, was published in September 1949 (Strategic Air Command Manual 67-50-1). This plan, as amended* was in effect until June of 1951 when the Mobility Planners Guide was issued.

All essential precepts and other major elements of the Strategic Air Command Mobility Program were established as early as 1947 and 1948 and were promulgated in the various mobility documents in effect prior to 1951, when the Mobility Planners Guide was published. These included the concept of phased deployment and the three main phases of the logistics and supply system, Flyaway Kits, Unit Essential Equipment, and Base-Type Equipment. As the first mobility plan developed in 1946 four main factors absolutely essential to its successful operation became clear. First, all Strategic Air Command aircraft and personnel had to be kept in a constant state of readiness so they could move overseas and begin combat operations without delay. Second, all combat aircraft had to be provided with a reserve of spare parts and engine changes sufficient to sustain them in combat until normal lines of supply could be opened. Third, forward operating bases to which an orderly movement of combat elements could be made had to be secured and supplied. Finally, the minimum of personnel, equipment, and other supplies had to be determined which must be in place at forward operating bases to support the combat units during the initial phases of a war. All these concepts were incorporated in the Mobility Planners Guide.

* Change No. 1, 28 December 1949; Change No. 2, 25 January 1950, and Change No. 3, 24 March 1950.

The Mobility Planners Guide

The first draft of the Mobility Planners Guide was drawn up in August 1950, and it was finally published in June 1951 as Strategic Air Command Manual 400-1. Prior to that time a large variety of publications covering various aspects of mobility planning had governed the Mobility Program. All previous directives were consolidated in the Mobility Planners Guide*, which was with three exceptions primarily a consolidation of previous directives and concepts in a more expanded form. Other than providing for a modification of phased deployment through the use of staging teams, it promulgated no new mobility concepts, but two existing concepts were revised and the Plan was based on these two revised concepts.

First, greater emphasis was placed on the pre-positioning of supplies at forward bases, a project that had been established as Project SEAWEED / see below /. The Guide specified that all logistical support other than the initial 30-day supply of aircraft spares included in Flyaway Kits should be provided by the forward bases. Secondly, the planned amount of time required for the complete deployment of a wing was increased from 30 to 90 days. Until shortly after the Korean War the Strategic Air Command Mobility Plan had been based on a 30-day deployment concept for austere operations. In roughly 30 days supply lines were expected to have been opened and a large part of the Base-Type Equipment deployed units would be in place at forward operating bases. Lessons learned during the Korean conflict influenced the change to a 90-day concept. It was decided that deployment of a wing at full war strength with complete organizational equipment as required for sustained operations would require from 60-90 days even under the most favorable conditions. To solve the problem of supplying units after 30 days, when their Flyaway Kits would be exhausted, Headquarters United States Air Force agreed that spares would

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* The Mobility Planners Guide superseded Strategic Air Command Manual 67-50-1, SAC Mobility Plan, Bombardment Wing, Medium, September 1949, as amended; Proposed Requirements for an Operating Base, Bombardment (Medium), 1 February 1950; Staging Base Requirements, Medium Bombardment, B-29 and B-50, Proposed, 17 May 1950; and Mobility Plan, Escort Fighter Squadron Jet, Augmented, Proposed, 10 May 1950.

be stockpiled and provision made to resupply units by air no later than 28 days after D-Day. This resupply would continue until regular supply lines were in operation somewhere in the neighborhood of D / 90.

The Mobility Planners Guide as amended* remained the basic mobility planning directive from 1951 through mid-1956. It included mobility planning factors for heavy bombardment and reconnaissance units, as well as for medium bombardment and fighter units. The various sections of the Guide pertaining to specific types of units were printed in different colors, each unit receiving only the applicable section and the general section printed on white paper. This system allowed for convenient and efficient amendment of the Guide.

The Guide was intended as an instructional guide only for units in their planning and in the preparation of their own mobility plans. The Guide was not intended as an authorizing document, a fact misunderstood by many units. When it was new there existed widespread differences of opinion among units as to the effective application of the numerous planning sections. The Seventh Air Division, therefore, requested in 1952 that a test be run based on the Guide to determine whether or not one of its forward operating bases could support a tactical combat wing over a 30-day period of operations. The Seventh Air Division felt that its supply shortages would prevent effective support of the Emergency War Plan. A simulated war-time test of the Mobility Planners Guide was, therefore, conducted by the 97th Wing when it rotated to England in 1952 /_see 2 March 1952 - 15 June 1952_/. Some difficulties were encountered, but generally it was found that the Mobility Planners Guide was basically sound.

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* Change No. 1, 18 July 1951; Change No. 2, 25 April 1952; Change No. 3, 5 August 1952; Change No. 4, 21 October 1952; Change No. 5, 5 December 1952; Change No. 6, 23 January 1953; Change No. 7, 10 February 1953; Change No. 8, 28 February 1953; Change No. 9, 30 April 1953; and Change No. 10, 30 June 1953.

THE MOBILITY PROGRAM; 1946-1956 (Continued)

Concept of Phased Deployment

The Mobility Planners Guide presented a typical plan of phased deployment to serve as a guide for detailed wing mobility plans. An understanding of deployment concepts is essential to an understanding of how the Strategic Air Command Mobility Plan operated, and the part played in it by Flyaway Kits, Unit Essential Equipment, and Base-Type Equipment. From 1947 through 1950 phased deployment was envisioned in the event of a war emergency, but the Mobility Planners Guide presented a plan for the utilization of staging teams to supplement or in some cases to replace the phased deployment of medium bombardment and reconnaissance wings. The deployment of heavy bombardment or reconnaissance units was to be accomplished with staging teams only.

The advantage of phased deployment was that it would permit the initiation of combat operations from a forward base by the first elements to arrive and the continuation of operations as succeeding elements arrived, until the full war-time strength of the wing arrived to carry on sustained operations for an indefinite period. Under the concept of phased deployment, it was recognized that a wing must be capable of performing certain functions at its forward base by a given time, if it was to meet its operational commitments on schedule. It was likewise recognized that all wing functions need not be resumed on a full scale simultaneously and immediately, but rather that an orderly phased resumption of wing functions was more desirable. Thus, the personnel and materiel required to perform a specific function moved in accordance with the priority given the resumption of the particular function. Those personnel who could be effectively utilized at the forward base prior to the arrival of complete organizational equipment were included in the Air Echelon, the remainder of the personnel being deferred to the last phase, the Surface Echelon.

The phased deployment concept as developed earlier and as enunciated in the Mobility Planners Guide called for wing deployment to forward bases to be accomplished in four phases: (1) The First Phase (Air Echelon), which would move in tactical aircraft and the first increment of transport aircraft during the period E / 1 through E / 3, would consist of minimum personnel, most Unit Essential Equipment / see below /, and

priority items of Flyaway Kits /see below/, including spare engines, required to carry out combat operations for ten hours of combat or 30 days. It would consist of 1,503 personnel, including the first increment of support personnel from the Maintenance and Supply and Air Base Groups, and 418,930 pounds of cargo. Included would be the command and operations sections, combat crews, flight-line maintenance personnel, and any other specialists needed to launch the first strike.

(2) The Second and Third Phases (Air Echelon) would move forward over succeeding days, as rapidly as support aircraft of the First Phase could effect turnarounds. In these phases were included the personnel, supplies, and equipment necessary for functions that could be postponed for a few days. The Second Phase, which would normally move in the period E / 5 to E / 7, would consist of the first turnabout of support transport aircraft, 534 personnel, and 170,147 pounds of cargo. The Third Phase, moving during the period E / 9 to E / 11, would consist of the second turnabout of support aircraft, 479 personnel, and 146,430 pounds of cargo. It was desirable that all three phases of the Air Echelon be in place at a forward base by E / 14. If the airlift was inadequate, the arrival of the third phase might be delayed another 10 to 14 days without halting combat operations, but some retardation and reduction in operations would likely occur. In any event, the most austere deployment that was acceptable was that the Second and Third Phases be in place by E / 28 in order to begin the essential functions of receiving replenishment items for the Flyaway Kits and to begin the engine build-up operations on the replenishment engines received. Likewise the augmentation for personnel administration, security, and field maintenance activities had to be provided at the earliest date that airlift support could bring in the Third Phase.

(3) The Fourth Phase (Surface Echelon) would include all remaining wing personnel and equipment not in the Air Echelon (first three phases) that made up the full war strength of the wing. It would move only when directed, after all elements of Air Echelon had departed, by either air or surface transportation. War reserve materiel positioned in the United States (Column A of Mobility Planners Guide) under Projects BIG TOP and NIGHT LIFE /see below/ would be shipped

by the Air Materiel Command to be in place by E / 90, to supplement Base-Type Equipment (Column B of Mobility Planners Guide) / see below/ already pre-positioned at forward bases under Project SEAWEED. Some 512 Air Base Group personnel would move to forward bases in the Surface Echelon to support Column A requirements, and 482 Air Base Group personnel to support Column B requirements. Upon arrival of the Surface Echelon, sustained operation at the scheduled rate should be possible if forward base preparation and the resupply operations were adequate. Under phased deployment the Wing Commander, who deployed with the First Phase, would assume command of the forward operating base and merge such base complement personnel as were present with the Air Echelon of his wing, resulting in a unit that would be organized and operated in such a manner as did his complete wing at the home station. The Air Base Group, of course, would be incompletely manned until the Surface Echelon arrived.

Pre- and Post-Strike Staging Teams: Modification of Phased Deployment

The Mobility Planners Guide (June 1951) required wings to organize two specialized task force teams: Enroute Maintenance Teams and Control and Maintenance Task Forces. Enroute Maintenance Teams, which were to be organized by all medium bombardment and reconnaissance wings, were designed to provide specialized maintenance support to combat aircraft enroute from their home station to a forward operating base, or staging between the home station or forward operating base and the target. The specialized support provided by Enroute Maintenance Teams was to augment the maintenance service that was normally available to transient aircraft. Control and Maintenance Task Forces were special task forces designed to provide specialized support of post-strike staging, including control, post-strike interrogation, medical service, and emergency maintenance on staging aircraft, assisted by forward base complement personnel. All medium and heavy bombardment and reconnaissance wings were required to establish Control and Maintenance Task Forces.

In Change No. 3 to the Mobility Planners Guide, dated 5 August 1952, the concept of staging teams was greatly expanded and clarified. Enroute Maintenance Teams were redesignated Control and Enroute Maintenance Teams (C&EMTs) and their function changed from enroute support to pre-strike support of deploying wings. Also, a third type of staging team, Advance Echelons (ADVONs) were established to provide support for turn-around staging. No change was made in the role of Control and Maintenance Task Forces (C&MTFs). The functions of Enroute Maintenance Teams had been solely enroute support so as to minimize straggling during deployment. The newly designated Control and Enroute Maintenance Teams were, on the other hand, to provide specialized support of pre-strike staging. That is, they serviced units that required staging after departing from the base from which they operated.

This refinement in concept occurred because it was found that an equally flexible and effective enroute support during deployment, at less cost in supporting airlift, could be provided through properly balanced loading of the First Phase of the Air Echelon. In other words, it was discovered that special teams as such were not required for enroute support. Each increment of deploying combat aircraft could carry the personnel and items of Unit Essential Equipment and Flyaway Kits required for enroute support, flyaway engines preferably being complete power packs. In any instance where combat aircraft capacity was inadequate to move all the personnel and materiel items needed for enroute support, sufficient supporting transports might be required to make the same enroute stops as the combat aircraft. However, only after providing the built-in enroute support capability described above could a wing commander use other resources at his disposal for enroute support. Such other resources included assigned administrative aircraft, station supply stocks, and personnel not assigned to the Air Echelon. These could be used to support enroute stops in the Zone of the Interior, but no additional airlift, other than that provided to the wing to deploy the Air Echelon, was to be provided for enroute support.

The third type staging team that wings were directed to organize in mid-1952 were Advance Echelons (ADVONs). These were to

provide specialized support of turn-around staging, in which aircraft were post-strike and pre-strike serviced as a combined operation. Advance Echelons would service aircraft that usually make several strike sorties and therefore pre- and post-strike several times before returning to the base from which they operate. Heavy bombardment and fighter units would normally require this type of staging.

The plans and arrangements for deploying staging teams formed only a part of the wing mobility plan of medium bombardment or reconnaissance and fighter wings, these units relying basically on phased deployment. On the other hand, plans for the dispatch of staging teams comprised the entire wing mobility plan for heavy bombardment and reconnaissance wings. All wings, however, were required to set up the teams, make assignments of personnel and materiel, prepare loading plans, and make all other necessary arrangements to insure that the teams were ready to be dispatched on short notice. All wings were to set up staging teams because all types of combat aircraft might require staging during strike sorties, and normally the forward bases that would be used for staging provided only transient service. Certainly they would be incapable of supporting staging operations. Strategic Air Command wings, therefore, had to be capable of providing control and specialized support to augment the services normally furnished to transient aircraft and that which aircrews provided for themselves.

The deployment of teams or component elements were to be directed in operations orders. The teams could be employed as entities, or component elements of them could be dispatched to augment teams from other wings. Only one control element was to be dispatched with each type team. The number and type of other elements in a team were to be based upon the peak load of aircraft to be staged at any one time. Staging teams might move to forward bases in combat aircraft, or support aircraft or in both, the means of transportation depending on the situation and being specified in operations orders.

The personnel of the teams, which were austerely manned and equipped, could be drawn from the full personnel resources of a wing, including Tables of Organization (T/O) and Tables of Distribution (T/D) personnel, but normally only T/O personnel

were assigned to the teams. Materiel for the teams normally was drawn from the Unit Essential Equipment and Flyaway Kits, including engines. Those medium bombardment and reconnaissance or fighter teams deployed from the home station concurrently with but to a different forward base than the rest of the Air Echelon, could draw their initial requirement of supplies from station stocks. This exception was made because it would be impracticable to divide Flyaway Kits at the last minute.

Staging teams were austerely manned and equipped because the priority on support airlift had to be reserved for the movement of medium bombardment and reconnaissance or fighter wings to forward bases from which they must operate. Another reason was that the bases from which wings operate (home stations for heavy bombardment and reconnaissance and forward bases for medium bombardment and reconnaissance or fighters) must retain the capability to perform major inspections and maintenance and other essential wing functions. Teams were also austerely manned and equipped because the interval between strike sorties would provide opportunity for staging team personnel to rest between the maximum effort spurts required of them during stagings.

From 1952 on more and more emphasis was placed in Emergency War Plans on the use of staging teams, which introduced a new flexibility into the plans and allowed a much greater latitude in the deployment of medium bombardment and reconnaissance units. By the use of staging teams these units were made more mobile. In 1953 Control and Enroute Maintenance Teams, Control and Maintenance Task Forces, and Advance Echelons were redesignated respectively Pre-Strike, Post-Strike, and Turn-Around Staging Teams. By 1955, with the increasing vulnerability of the overseas base network, it appeared that the use of staging teams, dispatched from the home station in the Zone of the Interior to forward bases, would ultimately supersede to a large extent the Emergency War Plan operation of medium-range units from specific operating bases under the phased deployment concept. However, the extent of operation from the Zone of the Interior was considered to be flexible and the capability to operate from overseas bases was maintained where appropriate. The capability to "stage" or "operate" included Project SEAWEED / see below / station sets

THE MOBILITY PROGRAM, 1946-1956 (Continued)

Storage capacity increased considerably in French Morocco during 1954 but fulfillment of the Strategic Air Command mission was dependent on resupply schedules. The planned construction of a sealine at Casablanca by the French was not begun. Support of the Strategic Air Command mission at Wheelus, Tripoli, was contingent upon an almost impossible resupply schedule. However, stocks were adequate in Saudi Arabia, and the construction of facilities in Turkey were almost complete to furnish a 60-day supply. In the Northeast Air Command (NEAC) area considerable storage was available, but resupply depended upon a five-month shipping season. Storage at Thule Air Base, Greenland, was adequate to support aviation gasoline requirements but for only 60 days of jet fuel requirements. Harmon Air Force Base, Newfoundland, had storage for approximately 60 days of aviation gasoline and 30 days of jet fuel. Storage in Alaska was adequate for a 45-day supply, but support in the Pacific area as a whole was marginal and contingent on resupply schedules. In the Atlantic area, support of the Strategic Air Command mission by Military Air Transport Service (MATS) bases was problematical, being contingent upon tight resupply schedules. In 1955 completion of additional hydrants, pipelines, and tankage in overseas areas and the Zone of the Interior further increased Strategic Air Command's capability to fulfill its mission. The greatest benefit accrued from the completion of hydrant systems at overseas bases such as Goose Air Base, Labrador; Nouasseur Air Base, North Africa; Strangulate (a code name); Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; and Wheelus, Tripoli. Completion of these facilities allowed a faster turn-around of aircraft. Imminent completion in 1956 of hydrant systems at Harmon Air Force Base, Newfoundland; Lages, Azores; Keflavik, Iceland; and United Kingdom bases was expected to further enhance operational capabilities.

In 1955 aviation fuel storage in the Zone of the Interior increased by 1,013,455 barrels reaching a total of 4,032,015 barrels. United States bases also gained 50 hydrants for a new total of 537. At major overseas bases of interest to the Strategic Air Command, bulk storage increased by 1,740,193 barrels. Two cross-country pipelines were placed in operation overseas contributing to resupply support: a 30-mile line connecting the ocean port at Yumartalik to Strangulate (a code name), and a 700-mile line from Haines on the southeast Alaskan coast to Eielson Air Force Base in the interior.

Several Zone of the Interior bases during 1955 were connected with commercial cross-country pipelines, which resulted in a large savings in fuel transportation. For example, by this method $330,000 was saved in one year on JP-4 delivery at Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas. Other savings accrued because of the decreased manhours and equipment required to receive fuel and less in-transit losses through evaporation. At the end of 1955 pipeline connections for Lockbourne Air Force Base, Ohio, and Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, were under construction, and negotiations were underway for similar facilities at Abilene, March, Davis-Monthan, Mountain Home, Lincoln, Forbes, Lake Charles, and Biggs Air Force Bases.

By the end of 1955 the French Moroccan pipeline complex connecting operational bases with the port and depot was still not operational. However, it was expected to become operational early in 1956. Another problem was the manning of overseas bases with native refueling personnel under contract. Keflavik Air Base, Iceland, was considered most critical in this respect because of the Communist element there. Other bases affected were Lages, Azores; Kindley, Bermuda; and Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Action was being taken by the Military Air Transport Service and the United States Air Force to man a portion of the storage facilities and all hydrants with United States military personnel.

1 March

Headquarters 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing reassigned from the Eighth Air Force to Headquarters Strategic Air Command less personnel and equipment, and its station assignment changed from Carswell Air Force Base, Texas, to Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland.

The 58th Wing, one of the two active wings assigned to the Strategic Air Command at the time of its activation /see pp. 4, 9/, was inactive at the time of its transfer from the Eighth Air Force to Headquarters Strategic Air Command. On 16 April 1948 /q. v./ Headquarters 58th Wing was redesignated Headquarters 58th Air Division, Bombardment, and it was inactivated on 16 October 1948 /q. v./.

1 March

Midland Bombing Ranges 14 and 21, Roswell, New Mexico, transferred from the command jurisdiction of Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico, to that of Carswell Air Force Base, Texas. Walker and Carswell were both Eighth Air Force bases.

> Midland Ranges 13, 14, 15, and 21 had been acquired by the Strategic Air Command on 23 October 1947 / q. v. /.

17 March

97th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing temporarily attached to the 301st Bombardment Wing, Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas. Both wings were assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force.

> The 97th Group returned to Smoky Hill Air Force Base from Alaskan training on 21 March 1948 / see 2 December 1947 - 21 March 1948 /. On 16 May 1948 / q. v. / the 97th Wing was relieved from its attachment to the 301st Wing and moved to Biggs Air Force Base, Texas, being reassigned from the Fifteenth Air Force to the Eighth Air Force.

22 March

Long Range Cruise Control Flight

Two B-29s of the 307th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) departed Barber's Point, Oahu, Hawaii, for MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, on a cruise control flight, but due to high winds neither aircraft was able to complete the planned flight to MacDill Air Force Base. One landed at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, flying a total of 4,121 nautical air miles, consuming 6,485 gallons of fuel, and averaging .635 miles per gallon. The other aircraft was forced to land at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. This aircraft flew a total of 3,888 miles, consumed 6,385 gallons of fuel, and averaged .609 miles per gallon.

> For the Cruise Control Program, see 9 July 1947.

1 April - 30 June

82d Fighter Group to Alaska for Arctic Training

82d Fighter Group, Grenier Air Force Base, New Hampshire (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), consisting of 49 P-51H aircraft, deployed to Ladd Air Force Base, Alaska, for Arctic training.

The 96th Squadron started the movement on 1 April, and two days later was followed by the 95th and 97th Squadrons. The fastest time made by any squadron was 11 days because of bad weather that was encountered enroute. The 96th Squadron arrived at Ladd Air Force Base on 12 April, bad weather delaying the squadron for 10 days enroute. One plane crashed along the way. The 95th Squadron did not arrive at Ladd Air Force Base until 14 April, two aircraft crashing enroute. The 97th Squadron was even further delayed, not arriving until 17 April, losing one aircraft enroute. Departure dates from Ladd Air Force Base were staggered over the period 27-30 June for the 49 aircraft. Two had to stop enroute for engine changes, but 47 completed the return trip without difficulty.

For significance of Arctic activities during this period, see 29 October 1946.

12 April - 15 May

First Participation in Air Defense Exercises

Strategic Air Command units participated in cooperation with the Air Defense Command (ADC) in a test of the radar defenses of the northwestern United States. Small numbers of planes from the 509th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico (Eighth Air Force), participated on 12 April, 15 April, and 15 May in simulated attacks on the Boeing Aircraft Plant at Seattle, Washington, and the Hanford Works of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). Similar missions were flown on 29 April and 3 May by the 98th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Spokane Air Force Base, Washington (Fifteenth Air Force).

Early warning radar proved to be quite ineffective during the tests, which indicated that the air defenses of even this vital area were inadequate. Ground-Controlled Interception (GCI)

was effective until the control frequency was jammed by the "attacking" bombers. The Air Defense Command recommended using alternate control frequencies in similar future situations.

PARTICIPATION IN AIR DEFENSE EXERCISES, 1948 - 1956

During the period 1948-1956, Strategic Air Command units participated on a more or less routine basis in exercises with the Air Defense Command (ADC), the Continental Air Command (ConAC), and the Continental Air Defense Command (ConAD) / for specific exercises in which the Strategic Air Command participated, see Index under Air Defense Exercises; for evolution of air defense commands, see 1 December 1948, 1 January 1951, and 1 September 1954 /. The exercises, which were intended as a test of basic defense procedures, had a twofold purpose. Strategic Air Command aircraft penetrated defended areas to test radar defense nets and interception capability and to accustom Strategic Air Command crews to fighter interception. In these exercises Strategic Air Command fighter aircraft often assisted the defense forces, while Strategic Air Command bombers assumed the role of attackers. To facilitate communications in such exercises, a direct line was established between Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force and Western Air Defense Force. Communications with the Eastern and Central Air Defense Forces were passed through the Strategic Air Command Operations Control System (SOCS) to Headquarters Air Defense Command.

15 April

First explosion of atomic bomb on X-Day in Operation SANDSTONE, atomic energy test at Eniwetok Atoll.

On X-Day, 1 May, the second bomb was exploded, and on Z-Day, 15 May, the third bomb was exploded.

The SANDSTONE explosions were the sixth, seventh, and eighth atomic explosions by the United States. For earlier explosions and for Strategic Air Command participation in other nuclear-energy exercises, see 1 July 1946.

PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION SANDSTONE

Second Major Atomic Energy Test

As the Air Force agency most likely to make use of the atomic bomb and the one charged with the use of strategic weapons, the Strategic Air Command was charged with the administration of air activities at the SANDSTONE site, as it had also done in Operations CROSSROADS / see 1 July 1946 /. General Roger M. Ramey, commanding general of the Eighth Air Force / see 10 January 1947 /, commanded Task Group 7.4 (Provisional)(Strategic Air Command), the Air Force element of Joint Task Force Seven. More than 80 percent of the personnel assigned to Task Group 7.4 came from the Strategic Air Command, principally from the Eighth Air Force, other major United States Air Force commands providing specialized personnel. The Strategic Air Command's 311th Reconnaissance Wing was responsible for all photography. / for other activities of this unit, see 22 April 1946 /.

Strategic Air Command planning for participation in SANDSTONE was begun even before General Ramey was notified in October 1947 that he was to be appointed commander of Task Group 7.4. Air Task Group 7.4 was activated on 9 January 1948 at Fort Worth Army Air Field, Texas, by the Eighth Air Force. Air and sea movement of personnel and supplies from the United States began the first week of February 1948 and continued until the test began. By the end of February, 67 officers and 815 enlisted men were on duty in the test area. From a scientific point of view the important Air Force operations during the actual tests were the flight of the drones through the atomic cloud, photography of the cloud, and the tracking of the cloud for several days following the explosion. All other air activities were of a support nature.

Task Group 7.4 was inactivated on 7 June 1948.

16 April

Headquarters 311th Reconnaissance Wing, Andrews Field, Maryland (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), redesignated Headquarters 311th Air Division, Reconnaissance, retaining control of the 55th and 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Groups.

For reconnaissance activities, see 22 April 1946.

16 April

Headquarters 58th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing, Andrews Field, Maryland (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), redesignated Headquarters 58th Air Division, Bombardment.

> Headquarters 58th Air Division was on inactive status, with no units assigned / see 1 March 1948 /. It was inactivated on 16 October 1948 / q. v. /.

22 April

Air Force Separation Point at Fort George Wright, Spokane, Washington, inactivated.

> Separation activities in the locality were transferred to Spokane Air Force Base, Washington.

26 - 30 April

Fighter Gunnery Meet Conducted at Avon Park Range (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

All five Strategic Air Command fighter groups participated in the meet, two of them (the 4th and the 56th) flying P-80 jets, and the other three (the 27th, 33d, and 82d) flying propellor-driven P-51s. The 56th Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) won the P-80 competition over the 4th Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) in all four jet events--aerial gunnery, ground gunnery, dive bombing, and skip bombing. The 82d Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) dominated the P-51 competition, taking three first places. The 27th Group (Eighth Air Force) entry won in dive bombing, and the 33d Group (Eighth Air Force) entry in skip bombing. Five aircraft from each group participated in the meet.

30 April

General Hoyt S. Vandenberg succeeded General Carl Spaatz as Air Force Chief of Staff.

General Spaatz had been appointed as the first Chief of Staff on 25 September 1947 /q. v./. General Vandenberg was reappointed on 28 April 1952 for the term ending 30 June 1953. However, he retired on 1 May 1953 /q. v./, being replaced by General Nathan Twining.

1 May

Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado (Fifteenth Air Force) transferred to the Corps of Engineers.

10 May - 27 August

First Group Rotated to the Far East; First 90-Day Group Deployment

93d Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Castle Air Force Base, California (Fifteenth Air Force), accompanied by one F-13 of the 311th Air Division, Reconnaissance, rotated on 90-day temporary duty to Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa, initiating the group rotation program to the Far East. Under this program, one rotating Strategic Air Command group was to be constantly on hand in the Far East under the operational control of the Far East Air Force (FEAF) to supplement the one bombardment group permanently assigned to the Far East Air Force (FEAF).

The 93d Group replaced the 22d Group, which was assigned to the Strategic Air Command (Fifteenth Air Force) from the Far East Air Force on 18 May 1948 /q. v./ and which arrived at Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas, on 2 June 1948. The second and last full group to serve in the Far East in 1948 was the 98th Group /see 20 August - 20 December 1948/.

10 May - 30 November

Personnel Readjustment Plan 2000 Experiment Conducted at Castle Air Force Base

At Headquarters Strategic Air Command direction, the 93d Very Heavy Bombardment Wing, Castle Air Force Base, California (Fifteenth Air Force), conducted an economy experiment to determine whether or not a Wing Base with one combat group could function

efficiently and economically with a reduced strength of 2,000, including officers, airmen, and civilian personnel. As of 31 January 1948 there were 2,534 military personnel and 264 civilians assigned to the base. The reorganization began in February and by 1 May the number of personnel was reduced to 2,000.

Final reorganization was effected on 10 May and continued through November 1948. However, the 93d Bombardment Group was serving at Okinawa during the period 10 May - 27 August 1947 /q. v./ and so no valid test could be made until September. By November personnel strength was well above the 2,000 ceiling.

The experiment was terminated on 1 December 1948 because of the negative results it had on the effectiveness of the unit. It had saved $71,877 in payroll costs, but the reductions in efficiency and ability to carry out the unit's mission greatly outweighed the savings achieved in terms of dollars and cents. On 1 December the 93d Wing was reinstated to the standard Wing-Base organization /see 15 August - 1 December 1947/.

16 May

97th Bombardment Wing Reassigned and Relocated

97th Very Heavy Bombardment Wing, Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas, which had just returned from Alaskan training in March /see 1 December 1947 - 21 March 1948/, relieved from attachment to the 301st Very Heavy Bombardment Wing /see 17 March 1948/ and reassigned from the Fifteenth to the Eighth Air Force. At the same time the home station of the unit was changed from Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas, to Biggs Air Force Base, Texas.

By 21 May the unit completed the move to its new location, where it was on a tenant status until 30 November 1948 /q. v./, when the Strategic Air Command acquired the base. The 97th Group was replaced at Smoky Hill Air Force Base by the 22d Bombardment Group /see 18 May 1948/.

18 May

22d Bombardment Group Assigned

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction from the Far East Air Forces (FEAF) of the 22d Very Heavy Bombardment Group, which had

been stationed at Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa. The unit was assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force, its permanent station was designated as Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas, and it was attached to the 301st Very Heavy Bombardment Wing, Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas.

The unit returned to the Zone of the Interior on 2 June. It replaced the 97th Wing at Smoky Hill Air Force Base / see 16 May 1948 /.

25 May

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Guadalupe Bombing and Gunnery Range, New Mexico, from the Tactical Air Command (TAC) and assigned it to the Eighth Air Force.

Tactical Air Command, however, continued to use the range on a joint-use basis.

The base was subsequently assigned by the Eighth Air Force to the 509th Medium Bombardment Wing. In 1950 that organization transferred it to the 97th Medium Bombardment Wing / see 1 April 1950 /.

c. 1 June - 4 September

Squadrons Rotated to Goose Bay, Labrador, for Arctic Training

Between June and September six bombardment squadrons served week-long tours of duty at Goose Air Base, Labrador. The 98th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Spokane Air Force Base, Washington (Fifteenth Air Force), began sending its squadrons to Labrador early in June. The 345th, 343d, and 344th Squadrons, respectively, completed their tours prior to the June alert occasioned by the Berlin Blockade / see 27 June - 17 July 1948 /. Because Goose Air Base was needed as a staging base for the deployment of units to Europe, the squadron rotation program was halted between 28 June and 14 August. After the tension in Europe subsided, the 509th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico (Eighth Air Force), began sending its squadrons to Labrador. The first squadron, the 393d, arrived at Goose Air Base on 14 August. It was followed by the 830th Squadron, which arrived in Labrador on 25 August. The third squadron, the 715th, began its rotation on 28 August and returned to the United States on 4 September.

1 June

1st Air Transport Unit, Carswell Air Force Base, Texas (Eighth Air Force), redesignated the 1st Strategic Support Unit.

On 14 January 1949 /q. v./ it was again redesignated, as the 1st Strategic Support Squadron.

On 14 December 1948 /q. v./ the unit moved to Biggs Air Force Base, Texas.

2 June

Eighth and Fifteenth Air Force Maximum-Effort Mission

In a maximum-effort strike, all available bombardment and fighter aircraft in the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces participated in a simulated bombing of Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan. No advance notice was given to any unit prior to the alert. The four Fifteenth Air Force bombardment groups participating successfully joined up on schedule over Marshall Radio, Kansas, and proceeded to Kansas City for rendezvous with bombardment aircraft of the five Eighth Air Force groups. Fighter aircraft of the 27th Fighter Group, Kearney Air Force Base, Nebraska (Eighth Air Force), joined the bombers at Kansas City and furnished escort to Bloomington, Illinois, at which point the 33d Fighter Group, Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico (Eighth Air Force), took over the escort duties to the target.

Though haze and smoke over the target area required that bomb runs be accomplished by radar, with visual assistance when possible by the bombardier, excellent photos of the aiming point were obtained and the mission was considered to be successful. The main problems were encountered in fighter escort. Because of the length of the bomber stream, fighter escort was considered to be inadequate. Rendezvous with the fighters was successful, though some difficulty was experienced in communicating with them. However, the fighter "attacks" were deemed unaggressive and ineffectual.

The Eighth Air Force furnished a total of 213 aircraft for the mission, 191 of these completing the mission. Of the effective aircraft 112 were fighters from the 27th and 33d Groups and 79 were bombers from the

2d (Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona), 7th (Carswell Air Force Base, Texas), 43d (Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona), 97th (Biggs Air Force Base, Texas), and 509th (Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico) Bombardment Groups. The Fifteenth Air Force, which had no fighter units assigned / see 1 May 1946 /, provided 44 bombers from the 28th (Rapid City Air Force Base, South Dakota), 92d (Spokane Air Force Base, Washington), 98th (Spokane Air Force Base, Washington), and 301st (Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas) Groups. Non-participating Fifteenth Air Force units were the 22d Bomb Group, which was just returning from the Far East / see 18 May 1948 /, and the 93d Bombardment Group, which was serving in the Far East / see 10 May - 27 August 1948 /.

11 June

Record Cruise Control Flight

A crew of picked Headquarters Strategic Air Command and 509th Bombardment Group personnel under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Olbert F. Lassiter achieved the 1948 peak in cruise control when they flew a standard B-29 carrying a 10,300 pound load 5,767 statute miles. This record exceeded the standard (3,450 miles) by nearly half.

For the Cruise Control Program, see 9 July 1947.

14 June - 17 November

Small Eighth Air Force Units Rotated to Aleutians

The 509th Bombardment Group, the unit specializing in the delivery of the atomic bomb, was cleared for a series of four-plane flights to Shemya Air Force Base in the Aleutians on 4 June. The first four-plane flight of B-29s left the United States on 14 June. These flights, involving the 7th and 97th Bombardment Groups as well as the 509th, continued through the summer and autumn and would have continued until March 1949 had not the Alaskan Air Command asked on 17 November that rotation to Shemya be suspended.

16 June

Tonopah Bombing and Gunnery Range, Nevada (Fifteenth Air Force), transferred to the Air Training Command.

Tonopah Air Force Base was transferred to the Corps of Engineers on 21 August 1948 / q. v. /.

21 - 26 June

First Annual Combat Crew Competition: The Strategic Air Command "World Series"

The First Annual Combat Crew Competition was conducted at Castle Air Force Base, California, utilizing the Wendover, Utah, bombing range. Each crew dropped three bombs visually and three by the use of radar, all from 25,000 feet. Three picked aircrews from all active* bombardment groups, except the 93d Group (Fifteenth Air Force) which was serving overseas / see 10 May - 27 August 1948 / and the 22nd Group (Fifteenth Air Force) which had just returned from the Far East / see 18 May 1948 /, took part in the competition. All bombardment groups were B-29 equipped, though the 43d Group was beginning its conversion to B-50s at the time / see 20 February 1948 / and the 7th Group was getting ready to begin converting to B-36s / see 23 June 1948 /.

The first five places were won by the five Eighth Air Force groups, and the last five places by the four Fifteenth Air Force groups participating and the 307th Bombardment Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command). Units placed as follows:

Group	Home Base	Numbered Air Force
43d	Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona	Eighth Air Force
509th	Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico	Eighth Air Force
2d	Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona	Eighth Air Force
97th	Biggs Air Force Base, Texas	Eighth Air Force
7th	Carswell Air Force Base, Texas	Eighth Air Force
92nd	Spokane Air Force Base, Washington	Fifteenth Air Force
301st	Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas	Fifteenth Air Force
28th	Rapid City Air Force Base, South Dakota	Fifteenth Air Force
307th	MacDill Air Force Base, Florida	Headquarters Strategic Air Command
98th	Spokane Air Force Base, Washington	Fifteenth Air Force

* Inactive and unmanned bombardment groups at the time, all assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command, included the 44th, 90th, 303d, 305th and 306th Groups. See 1 July 1947.

The best individual crew award went to a crew commanded by First Lieutenant M. J. Jo· es of the 509th Group. Second and third places for individual crews went to crews from the 43d and 2d Groups, respectively.

For later Bombing and Navigation Competitions, see 3 - 8 October 1949, 13 - 18 August 1951, 13 - 18 October 1952, 26 - 31 October 1953, 23 - 28 August 1954, and 24 - 29 August 1955.

Background

Throughout 1946 and 1947 problems of manning, organization, and supply had been so pressing that bombardment units had been unable to conduct adequate bombing training. As a result by the spring of 1948 the bombing accuracy of Strategic Air Command units had fallen considerably below the standard required by the strategic bombing mission. In order, therefore, to determine the potential combat effectiveness of units and to promote bombing accuracy, Headquarters Strategic Air Command decided to conduct a command-wide bombing competition, which was announced on 27 May. Units were also directed to take immediate action to reduce their circular errors, and to stress radar bombing the interest of an all-weather capability.

The Fifteenth Air Force went into the competition under a severe handicap, as was reflected in the scores. Its bombing training during the first half of 1948 had been comparatively slight. Fifteenth Air Force units had dropped only 729 high explosive bombs of an authorized total of 4,632 during this period. The Fifteenth Air Force was also in arrears with respect to radar bombing. Of 2,287 bomb runs scored by command aircraft during the early part of the year, only 310 had been made by Fifteenth Air Force units. The 307th Bombardment Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) had made 410 such runs and the Eighth Air Force the remaining 1,567. To correct its deficiencies, the Fifteenth Air Force set up a weekly squadron training program at Wendover Range, Utah, for the period 2 May - 4 September for squadrons of the 28th, 92d, 97th, and 301st Groups, but this program was barely under way when the Combat Crew Competition was held in June /for bombing maneuvers at Wendover in 1947 by both Eighth and Fifteenth Air Force units, see 14 - 24 November 1947/.

VISUAL AND RADAR BOMBING, 1948-1956

Viewed against bombing proficiency standards expected from Strategic Air Command units, the June 1948 competition exposed a large number of weaknesses. Therefore, even before the final results were tabulated, Headquarters Strategic Air Command directed that the authorized unit allowance of bombs be fully expended whenever possible with special emphasis on radar bombing, in order that the highest possible proficiency could be attained. From then on throughout the first decade of the Strategic Air Command particular stress was placed on the development of bombing accuracy. In the days of the atomic bomb, "shot-gun" methods of the past were unthinkable. True precision "single-shot" bombing was an urgent requirement. Through a concerted program excellent results were achieved between 1948 and 1956.

Trend From Actual Drops to Radar Scoring and High Altitude Bombing

By late 1948 emphasis had switched from actual bomb drops to intensified radar bombing, and stress was being placed on bombing from greater altitudes. In December of that year Headquarters Strategic Air Command tightened the rules for radar bomb scoring considerably. Only bombing runs made from at least 25,000 feet and scored by a Radar Bomb Scoring (RBS) unit were to be considered in evaluating unit bombing proficiency. Though low-altitude bombing was not ruled out, the need was clearly recognized for a high-altitude precision bombing capability. By the time of the Second Annual Combat Crew Competition in 1949 / see 3 - 8 October 1949 / the radar bombing proficiency of Strategic Air Command crews had improved considerably. Circular errors steadily decreased in 1949 even though bombing altitudes increased substantially. The number of drops from over 25,000 feet showed a large increase during the year. In January of 1949 349 Radar Bomb Scoring runs at 25,000 feet or above were made, and during the last three months of the year bombing crews averaged 970 runs per month at 25,000 feet. Yet the Circular Error Probable was reduced substantially during the year. *

* Circular Error Probable (CEP) is the distance from the target within which 50 percent of the bombs fall. Thus, there is no penalty for an occasional "wild" bomb. On the other hand,

VISUAL AND RADAR BOMBING, 1948-1956 (Continued)

Despite the improvements made in 1949, however, the average Circular Error Probable remained unsatisfactory, and evaluations were made during late 1949 to determine the factors involved. It was found that poor target identification, poor techniques, and improper briefing were contributing factors.

Comprehensive Proficiency Program Inaugurated

Beginning in 1948 and 1949 numerous steps were taken by Headquarters Strategic Air Command to improve bombardment proficiency. A comprehensive evaluation program, special Radar Bomb Scoring (RBS) exercises, and annual bombing and navigation competitions were the three principal methods used to raise bombing and allied navigation standards. However, a variety of other methods also proved to be fruitful. Achievement and incentive awards were offered to outstanding crews, a competitive spirit was engendered in every possible way, and attempts were made to improve crew morale by such devices as the Spot Promotion Program / see 20 December 1949 /, and the designation of Lead Crews / see 1 June 1949 /. New and improved bombing equipment enhanced bombardment accuracy, as did also improved maintenance standards and the better arrangement of bombing equipment. Radar scope prediction methods and better target identification through improved target analysis and classification also played an important role in raising proficiency. Careful analysis was made of bombing errors and evaluation missions. Standard Operating Procedures were improved, and training was made more and more realistic. Within the Zone of the Interior target sites were frequently moved, a variety of types of targets were utilized, and aiming points were frequently changed. An increasing number of evaluation missions were scheduled for all crews. Units were provided with better planning and briefing materials.

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* (Continued) Circular Error Average (CEA) is the average distance from the target of the number of bombs dropped. Under this system of scoring, which was less practical and therefore used less frequently than Circular Error Probable, a sizeable penalty accrues to the average because of one stray drop. In 1954 the reliability factor system replaced the Circular Error Average system for the rating of crews. Under this system, if crews kept more than 85 percent of their runs within a distance from the target specified by Headquarters Strategic Air Command they escaped probationary status.

VISUAL AND RADAR BOMBING, 1948-1956 (Continued)

Crew Evaluation

A formal crew evaluation program was established in mid-1949, when the Lead Crew School was organized / see-- June 1949 /. The concept of Lead Crews developed late in 1948 after the Cross-Training Program ended / see 19 January - 19 October 1948 /. It evolved because of the recognized need for the most highly competent crews to be assigned to lead all bombing missions. The Lead Crew School, which shortly after its establishment was renamed the Combat Crew Standardization School, was established so that the finest Strategic Air Command crews could be evaluated and taught a standardized method of bombing and navigation and their existing skills augmented. After attending the school Lead Crews returned home and assisted other crews in reaching the same standards. The Combat Crew Standardization School was superseded in 1951 by the 3908th Strategic Evaluation Squadron / see 16 May 1951 /, the mission remaining crew evaluation and training. though greater emphasis was on crew evaluation. In 1954 the 3908th Squadron was redesignated a Group and its detachments at various locations redesignated squadrons.

Radar Bomb Scoring Sites

Radar Bomb Scoring (RBS) sites were particularly suited to evaluating the accuracy of bombardment crews. From a handful of Radar Bomb Scoring sites in 1946, the number increased to 28 by 1956. At the end of 1949 there were five permanent sites and one mobile detachment, which were manned by personnel from the one existing Radar Bomb Scoring Squadron. By the end of 1951 two additional permanent sites had been established. In 1951 a Radar Bomb Scoring Group was activated, consisting of three squadrons, one in the central United States, one in the western United States, and one in the eastern United States. Each of these squadrons was broken down into detachments, which manned the various Radar Bomb Scoring sites. By the end of 1955 the number of sites had increased to 25 permanent sites plus one mobile detachment, and by the end of April 1956 the 28 Radar Bomb Scoring sites programmed for 30 June 1956 had all been activated. Twenty-five of the sites were permanent ones, including five overseas sites, and three were mobile detachments. The first overseas Radar Bomb Scoring site, in L don, was set

up in mid-1949. A second site was established at Marrakech, French Morocco, in 1952, and a third at Montreal, Canada, in 1953. Two sites were set up in 1954, one at Paris and the other at San Juan, Puerto Rico. The five overseas Radar Bomb Scoring sites were manned by detachments of the squadron assigned to the eastern United States.

Radar Bomb Scoring Runs

The object of Radar Bomb Scoring sites was to provide a greater variety of training for all bombardment crews, and early results warranted a considerable increase in this type of training. All bombardment wings were directed to make maximum use of the Radar Bomb Scoring facilities. The use made of these facilities after 1946 demonstrate the growing acceptance and value of such units. In 1946 there were 888 runs scored. By 1949 this figure had jumped to 28,049, and to 43,722 in 1950. In 1955 more than 120,000 runs were scored, and the figure was expected to total more than 150,000 for the year 1956.

Command-Wide Evaluation Missions

In 1949 the first command-wide evaluation missions were conducted. These became a permanent part of the Strategic Air Command bombardment training program, and after 1949 at least one and sometimes two or three command-wide evaluation missions were conducted yearly. They were used to test specific capabilities of bombardment units, and their equipment, and they proved to be excellent yardsticks of bombardment capability against unfamiliar targets. The missions showed unit capabilities in mission planning, target study and prediction, and bombing accuracy. All the command-wide evaluation missions were conducted under increasingly rigidly controlled conditions. Radar scope photographs of the target areas and approaches could not be used as briefing material for the evaluation missions, as had previously been done. The evaluation missions demonstrated the capabilities of specific types of aircraft against certain types of targets under particular weather conditions, using either radar or visual bombing techniques. All command-wide evaluation missions between 1949 and 1956 used radar bomb methods except the Omaha mission in 1953, when visual bombing was used and

when radar scope photographs and up-to-date target materials were allowed to be used as briefing materials. All command-wide evaluation missions were Radar Bomb Scored.

The first evaluation mission was staged early in 1949 at Dayton, Ohio, to which location the mobile Radar Bomb Scoring detachment had been sent in the winter of 1948 - 1949. Both Eighth and Fifteenth Air Force units made maximum-effort missions. In May of 1949 similar missions were flown, using the mobile detachment home site at Birmingham, Alabama, by the 2d, 7th, 43d, and 97th Bombardment Wings. In 1950 evaluation missions were conducted at the Radar Bomb Scoring sites at Oklahoma City, St. Louis, and Omaha; in 1951 at Minneapolis, Indianapolis, and Binghamton, New York; in 1952 at St. Louis and Bedford, Indiana; in 1953 at Springfield and Omaha (visual); in 1954 at San Antonio; and in 1955 at Vincennes, Indiana.

The San Antonio Evaluation Mission (1954)

The San Antonio Evaluation Mission, conducted during the period 26 April - 16 June 1954, demonstrated that Strategic Air Command crews could accurately bomb Designated Ground Zero (DGZ's) in a large industrial complex. The results of select crews validated the selection system used for the mission. It was found from evaluation results and other activity that altitude alone had no apparent effect on B-47 bombing accuracy. However, the effect of ground speed approximated 20 feet of error for each 10 knot increase. However, it was felt that B-47s could bomb effectively at any speed or altitude within the normal aircraft performance range. The major source of bombing error in the San Antonio mission was the common problem of aiming point identification. An acceptable Indirect Bomb Damage Assessment (IBDA)* capability was demonstrated by most wings.

* Indirect Bomb Damage Assessment (IBDA) is that accomplished by the bombardment aircraft themselves, whereas Bomb Damage Assessment (BDA) is normally accomplished by reconnaissance aircraft.

VISUAL AND RADAR BOMBING, 1948-1956 (Continued)

The Vincennes Mission (1955)

The Vincennes Mission (Operation POST HOLE) was conducted during the period 18 July - 16 December 1955. Major purposes of the mission were to determine the current Strategic Air Command capability on a "no show" airfield target (one with no radar significance) using 15 year old photography, to determine the night photoflash capability of the RB-47 wings, to appraise the capability of wing staffs and crews in planning and executing this type of mission, to appraise the capability of Photo Interpreters (PIs) in scoring bomb impact points from radar scope photography and in determining yield and height of burst from simulated AN/ASH-4 photography, and to provide a difficult navigation/target location problem that put a premium on Ground Position Indicator (GPI) backup procedures because of the confusion of radar signals in the target area.

The Vincennes mission demonstrated that bombardment crews have the capability to successfully bomb "no show" airfields near small complexes, although accuracy regressed from results previously achieved against large complexes. Ground Position Indicator (GPI) methods proved to be the most effective in locating and identifying a small target complex. It was further found that reconnaissance crews had a marginally acceptable photoflash capability. Precision and accuracy were lacking. Most wing staffs were found to be highly professional in mission planning. The pre-target abort rate and gross bombing error rate were equal adverse factors in force effectiveness. The abort rate and bomb-nav system (radar) reliability improved over all previous evaluation missions.

As in the San Antonio mission of 1954, aiming point or target complex misidentification remained the major source of bombing error. However, the bombing results of select crews validated the selection system. The bomb impact plotting Indirect Bomb Damage Assessment (IBDA) capability of Zone of the Interior Reconnaissance Technical Squadrons and most wings proved satisfactory for the mission conditions. Wing Photo Interpreters (PI's) were able to compute heights of burst and yield with acceptable accuracy. However, it was felt that the validity of the 100 Series Target Complex Chart (TCC) radar intensity overprint and unit predictions needed to be improved.

VISUAL AND RADAR BOMBING, 1948-1956 (Continued)

Project PURPLE

Besides the command-wide evaluation missions, specific evaluation missions or tests were conducted from time to time, either to test equipment or procedures. Project PURPLE, for example, tested B-36 bombing equipment. The 7th Bombardment Wing conducted a series of special evaluation missions, under the code name Project PURPLE, during the period 27 October - 23 December 1949. The B-36s of the unit participated in a series of simulated bombings of Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, and vicinity Radar Bomb Scoring sites, in order to test the effectiveness of the APQ-24 radar bombing system of the B-36s and the method used by the Strategic Air Command to score a simulated bomb release. At the same time, however, the exercise served to point up the value of the B-36 as a stable bombing platform. Results were exceptionally good. The aircraft bombed from an altitude of 40,000 feet, flew 27 missions involving 143 releases, of which 91 were actual drops at Eglin Air Force Base and 52 were Radar Bomb Scoring runs on the Tampa and Birmingham sites.

Operations FANCY I and II (1953-1955)

Operations FANCY I and II were tests of bombing procedures. Both tests concerned Ground Position Indicator (GPI) or reference point (Sharkey) bombing methods. Operation FANCY I, which was conducted between 1 November 1953 and 15 January 1954, proved that reference point bombing was more accurate than had been believed and that it assisted target identification. Chief sources of error were wind shifts and jet streams, inability to accurately set information into the equipment, and inaccuracies in geodetic control data. The purposes of Operation FANCY II, conducted during the period 22 November 1954 - 10 February 1955, were to determine the current capability in the use of reference point bombing, to determine whether capability to deliver weapons by this method has changed since the first FANCY exercise, and to determine the effect of reference point to target distance and reference point to target time on bombing accuracy.

FANCY II revealed reference point bombing capability to be marginal. Though it was felt that some further improvement was possible, with existing equipment the reference point method of bombing was not considered to be a prime one. Overall Ground Position Indicator bombing capability did not change

significantly from FANCY I to FANCY II. Reference point to target distance was found to be the greatest factor affecting accuracy. It was found that decreased reference point to target time improved accuracy at longer ranges. High speed aircraft had the advantage, and high mach/tailwind conditions, within reason, were found to be desirable. Wind synchronization and gradient change were found to be the largest component errors at the 100-150 mile range. FANCY II also demonstrated that units and crews were placing insufficient emphasis on Ground Position Indicator procedures in the normal training program.

Visual Bombing Capability

As with radar bombing, the Circular Error Probable for Radar Bomb Scored visual bombing improved substantially between 1948 and 1954 for B-50 and B-36 aircraft, being reduced more than one-half. However, the B-47's encountered difficulties in bomb-bay turbulence and erroneous static instrument inputs to the bombing system. This resulted in a predictable, predominately over-impact error (bomb falls beyond target) which varied with the weight of the bomb. As a result, by the third quarter of 1953 the Strategic Air Command Circular Error Average was about the same as it had been during the first quarter of 1949. During 1954, however, scores made in B-47 aircraft showed improvement. A major portion of the over-impact error was eliminated by moving the system input static parts to a position less affected by slipstream turbulence caused by the opening of the bomb-bay doors. In addition, compensation for earth curvature helped reduce visual K-system errors. Observers were also learning by experience to procedurally compensate for the over-impact error. Anyway, because of their high speeds, B-47 aircraft were not expected to obtain the accuracy of conventional aircraft.

Scores obtained in 1955 during routine training on Radar Bomb Scored visual bombing missions continued to fluctuate. Some regression in accuracy occurred with B-36 aircraft, but the heavy units continued to demonstrate a high degree of accuracy. Also, scores made in RB-36 aircraft using Norden equipment were higher than those of the B-50 units before they were phased out. Consequently, the command-wide Circular Error Probable for Radar Bomb Scored visual bombing was high compared with scores for earlier years. B-47 units improved their accuracy somewhat on scored visual releases.

VISUAL AND RADAR BOMBING, 1948-1956 (Continued)

Radar Bombing Capability

As a result of the comprehensive program for the development of bombing accuracy, proficiency standards showed a tremendous improvement from 1946 to 1956, especially in radar bombing. Abort rates and gross error rates showed a progressive decline. By the end of 1954 the Strategic Air Command Circular Error Probable for routine radar bombing was reduced to about one-fourth of what it had been during the 1946-1948 period. By the end of 1954 all APQ-13 and APQ-23 equipment had been phased out, leaving only the more accurate APQ-24 (RB-36s) and K-Systems (B-36s and B-47s) in use. Heavy reconnaissance units, which were given a primary mission of bombardment on 1 June 1954 /q. v./, experienced little difficulty in developing bombardment accuracy, although by the end of 1954 they had not attained the accuracy with the APQ-24 equipment that had been attained by the B-50 wings /see 20 February 1948/ with the same equipment.

Scores obtained in 1955 during routine training with the different types of equipment remained relatively stable. Though some improvements in scores were made with APQ-24 (RB-36 aircraft) equipment, RB-36 units still had not attained the accuracy with this equipment that the former B-50 units possessed. New equipment was introduced in 1955, the MA-6 in B-52s /see 29 June 1955/ and the MA-7A in B-47 aircraft /see 23 October 1951/. By the end of the year only a small amount of training had been accomplished with this new equipment, but bombing accuracy and equipment reliability appeared to be good.

23 June

First Convair B-36 Peacemaker Assigned to the Strategic Air Command; Beginning of a Long Range Bombardment Capability

The first B-36A was assigned to the Strategic Air Command on 23 June, and it was delivered to the 7th Very Heavy Bombardment Group, Carswell Air Force Base, Texas (Eighth Air Force), on 26 June.

Three more B-36As were delivered to the unit a few days later, on 30 June. In July six more aircraft were assigned. By the end of the year a total of 38 B-36s (including 18 B-36Bs) were assigned to the 7th Heavy Bombardment Wing and the 11th Heavy Bombardment Group, /for redesignation of units from Very Heavy Bombardment Groups to Medium or Heavy Bombardment Wings, see 12 July - 1 August 1948/.

It had been decided in the summer of 1947 that the 7th Group would be the first to convert. The training of personnel was begun, and personnel from the Group were sent to a factory transition training school at the Consolidated-Vultee Plant at Fort Worth, Texas. A Mobile Training Unit (MTU) was set up in April of 1948. In May test flights were conducted with a manufacturer's crew, and a group of personnel were graduated from the Convair school in B-36 maintenance.

Significance of the B-36

The introduction of an aircraft with the vast potential capabilities of the B-36 into the Strategic Air Command bombardment force was an epochal event, though it was some years before its full capabilities could be realized. This aircraft, the world's first true intercontinental bomber, provided the Strategic Air Command with its first intercontinental long-range capability, which immeasurably enhanced its ability to fulfill its worldwide strategic bombing commitments.

The B-36 Long-Range Bombardment Force, 1948-1956

The Convair B-36 was not only the world's first intercontinental bomber, but it was the only true intercontinental bomber assigned to the Strategic Air Command during its first decade. The new all-jet Boeing B-52 that was introduced late in the decade, in

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956
(Continued)

mid-1955 /see 29 June 1955/, though classified as a long-range bomber, was not a true intercontinental bomber as was the B-36. The eight-jet B-52 would need to rely on air refueling to accomplish long-range missions similar to those that could be accomplished by the B-36. Of course, the great advantages of the B-52 were in its speed and altitude capabilities, which surpassed those of the B-36. For example, the average bombing speed and altitude of the B-36 was 300 knots (True Air Speed) at 40,000 feet, where as for the B-52 with a comparable bomb load it was 460 knots (True Air Speed) at 47,000 feet. Another consideration in favor of the B-52 was that jet engines presented far fewer maintenance problems than did conventional engines.

Eager to develop the potentialities of the revolutionary new B-36, the Strategic Air Command, contrary to common practice, accepted the aircraft before it was operationally ready and for all practical purposes acted as a service-testing agency, a function that would normally be performed by the Air Materiel Command. As a result, it was not until more than two years after the first B-36 was introduced into the command that the aircraft was considered to be operationally ready, or that the Strategic Air Command developed any real long-range capability with the aircraft. It was not until 1950 when the ten-engine (four jet) B-36D and RB-36Es models were introduced that the B-36 was considered to be operationally ready. This occurred because of the numerous problems associated with integrating such a revolutionary aircraft as the B-36 into the command and developing it into a truly operational tactical aircraft. However, the calculated risk of temporarily losing the combat capability of one of its small force of combat-ready groups was taken by the Strategic Air Command in the interest of an infinitely greater future strength. The risk produced a bountiful yield in the form of a greatly enhanced combat capability.

From 1946 to 1948 the Strategic Air Command possessed no long-range capability in any way comparable to that provided by the B-36, and as a matter of fact in those early years its over-all combat potential was very weak. Its limited aircraft resources consisted solely of obsolete World War II B-29s, and it was therefore dependent on overseas bases for the greater

part of its Emergency War Plan capability. As a result, great emphasis had to be placed on the development of a Mobility Plan /see 1 March 1948/ and the establishment of an air refueling program /see 19 July 1948/. It was not until 1950 or 1951 that the overseas base network was sufficiently developed to provide more than a limited Emergency War Plan strength. During this period of time the intercontinental capabilities of the B-36 stood as a threat to any would-be aggressors who likely did not know how limited the actual capabilities of the aircraft were at the time.

It was not surprising that an aircraft as revolutionary as the B-36 created some controversy. In mid-1949 the B-36 and especially its procurement was the subject of a Congressional investigation /see 25 May - 25 August 1949/, at the close of which the United States Air Force was completely vindicated in its choice of the B-36.

The First of Two Major Conversion Programs

The introduction of the B-36 was also significant because it was the first of two major bombardment aircraft conversion programs accomplished by the Strategic Air Command during the first decade of its existence /for fighter aircraft conversions, see 1 May 1946 and 20 January 1953/. The other major conversion program was that to medium-range B-47s /see 23 October 1951/. Conversion to the new all-jet long-range B-52 was barely under way as the first decade of the Strategic Air Command came to a close. /see 29 June 1955/ The only other conversion program undertaken between 1946 and 1956 was that to the medium-range B-50 /see 20 February 1948/. However, this was a limited conversion program, only five wings being converted. Also, since the B-50 was merely an improved version of the B-29, the B-50 program presented few serious problems, whereas the revolutionary new B-36 presented a considerable number of problems to the command, as did also the B-47, the first all-jet bomber to be assigned to the bombardment force. Many similar problems were encountered with the B-36 and B-47 conversion programs. In both cases, integration of the new aircraft was very slow, having some adverse effect on command combat capability. Specific malfunctioning problems and reductions in the aircraft inventory due to modifications were common problems in both programs. However, conversion problems were likely even more serious with the B-36, which was in its time probably even more revolutionary than the B-47.

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956
(Continued)

Procurement

Design competion for the B-36 had begun on 11 April 1941, even prior to America's entry into World War II. On 16 October of that year, Lieutenant General Henry H. Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces, authorized the Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Company (Convair) to manufacture two experimental models on the basis of their proposal. Shortly thereafter, on 15 November, a formal contract was awarded the company for construction of the B-36 and work was initiated on the experimental models. In July of 1943 Convair was given a contract for 100 B-36s, although the experimental models were far from complete. Originally planned for use as a long-range bomber in the Pacific Theater, the B-36 lost its priority when Allied forces captured large numbers of Pacific islands, thereby eliminating the urgent need that had existed for a long-range bomber. B-29s were therefore given production priority. However, at the end of the war engineering manpower was shifted to the B-36 program, and the first experimental models came off the production lines in 1946 and the first production models in 1948.

Late in February 1949 General LeMay recommended to Headquarters United States Air Force that plans for the procurement of the B-54, the last possible refinement of the B-29, be cancelled and two additional B-36 groups created. At first Headquarters United States Air Force rejected this proposal on the ground that it would throw the planned 48-group Air Force out of balance. However, in March Headquarters United States Air Force agreed to procure 36 additional B-36s and cancel the contract for the B-54s. Henceforth, complete priority was given to B-36 production. Follow-on contracts brought the total number of procured aircraft to 383, including Bs and RBs and two YB-60s /see below/. Practically all these aircraft were assigned to the Strategic Air Command, a handful going to Air Training Command, Air Materiel Command, and Special Weapons Command.

The Experimental Models

The first flight of a B-36 occurred on 8 August 1946, when the XB-36 made its first test flight over the Texas countryside, lasting 37 minutes. The first formal press showing of the XB-36

was held at Fort Worth, Texas, on 7 June 1947, and at the same time its younger sister ship, the newest experimental model, the YB-36, was unveiled. The showing was attended by some 200 aviation writers and broadcasters, Texas newspaper reporters, and Consolidated-Vultee officials, who saw a flight demonstration of the XB-36. On 4 December 1947 the YB-36, which was to serve as the production model for the 100 B-36s on order by the Department of the Air Force, made its first flight. On 30 August 1947 the first production model of the B-36, the B-36A, was flown from Fort Worth to Wright Field, Ohio, where it was turned over to the Air Materiel Command.

B-36 Model Characteristics and Atomic Capabilities

Because of the various problems encountered with the new and revolutionary B-36s, it was not until 1950 when B-36D and RB-36 E models were introduced into the command that the Strategic Air Command received a truly operational aircraft. The later perfected models possessed an awesome capability. These sky mammoths were capable of flying nonstop to any point in the world and dropping an atomic bomb. Grossing over 370,000 pounds (except for "J" models which had a gross weight of 410,000) when fully loaded, they could carry a 10,000 pound bomb load on a 10,000 mile round-trip mission. With a span of 230 feet and a length of 162 feet, the B-36s had a capability speed of 300 knots and an altitude capability of 45,000 feet in non-Feather-weighted / see below / models and somewhat higher in Featherweighted models. The B-36s were manned by a crew of 15, except in fully Featherweighted aircraft, where the crew was cut to 13. The first 22 production models of the B-36 were B-36As, powered with six pusher-type Pratt and Whitney R 4360-25 engines, each possessing 3,000 horsepower.* B-36Bs began with the 23d aircraft off the production line and delivery of these to the Strategic Air Command began in November of 1948. The principal difference between these and the "A" models was that horsepower was increased to 3,500 in an improved Pratt and Whitney engine, the R 4360-41. Neither the "A" or "B" models possessed any

* The first B-36A off the production line was delivered to the Air Materiel Command on 30 August 1947. As a result, the Strategic Air Command subsequently received a total of only 21 B-36As.

atomic-weapon carrying capability. B-36C models were never produced. It had been planned that this model would have tractor propellers rather than pushers, which would increase the speed capability over 100 miles per hour. However, inadequate cooling at altitude and the interference to air foil by six breaks in the leading edge of the wing led to cancellation of production plans for the "C" model.

In 1950 and 1951 "A" and "B" models were converted respectively to RB-36Es / see 1 April 1950 / and B-36Ds. The "A" to RB-36E conversion was completed in 1950, but the "B" to B-36D modification program extended into 1951 because of the larger number of aircraft involved. The first B-36Ds were officially delivered to the Strategic Air Command in November 1950. The first test flight of a ten engine B-36D had been conducted by Convair on 21 March 1949, and on 24 August 1950 the 11th Bombardment Group had been assigned one aircraft for training purposes. The B-36Ds and RB-36Es were the first B-36s considered operationally capable. This was true for a variety of reasons. In the "D" and "E" models many modifications were made which had caused serious problems with the "A" and "B" models and which greatly improved the combat capability of the aircraft. An especially outstanding feature of the "D" and "E" models, which greatly increased the capabilities of the B-36, was that they were provided with four additional jet engines (General Electric J-47) in two pods of two each on either wing on the outer side of the six piston engines. The addition of the four jet engines, which each provided 5,200 pounds of static thrust, almost doubled the power of the aircraft and greatly added to its speed and combat capability. The jets were cut in only on takeoff, to gain altitude, or when speed was needed. Their use shortened takeoff run to 3,500 feet, a saving of over 1,500 feet. Like the "B" model, both B-36Ds and RB-36Es were equipped with 3,500 horsepower Pratt and Whitney R-4360-41 engines. All B-36D models coming off the production line were equipped with Phase I or II (Mark IV and VI for both phases) atomic-carrying capability. The last "D" and "E" models were delivered to the Strategic Air Command in early 1951.

In the B-36Fs, the first of which were delivered to the Strategic Air Command in May of 1951, new Pratt and Whitney R 4630-53

engines increased horsepower from 3,500 to 3,800. The same engines were also used in the "H" and "J" models. The "F" models possessed Phase III atomic-weapon carrying capability when they came off the production line. The last "F" model was received by the Strategic Air Command in December of 1951. The principal change in the "H" model, the first of which was delivered to the Strategic Air Command in December of 1951, was that two seats were provided at the engineer's position, and twin tail radomes were added to house the AN/APG 41A tail radar. "H" models were equipped on the production line with Phase VIII atomic-weapon carrying capability. Strategic Air Command received the last "H" model in September of 1953.

In the "J" models the gross weight was increased from 370,000 to 410,000 by the installation of internal integral outer panel fuel tanks, holding 2,800 gallons each. Furthermore, all "J" models were Fully Featherweighted (Configuration III) / see below / and had Phase X atomic capability. The first "J" model was assigned to the command in November of 1953 and the last on 14 August 1954 / q. v. /. This was the last B-36 of any type to be assigned, and no further production of B-36s was programmed. The peak number of operational B-36s in the command was 209, and the total number received into the command was 232 / for RB-36 assignments, see 1 April 1950 /. Between 1948 and 30 June 1956, 22 B-36s of various models* and five RB-36Hs** crashed. There was no particular trend by model of aircraft, season of the year, unit, or operating conditions. However, landing gear modifications were made on the basis of landing gear failures, which accounted for two of the crashes. Only one aircraft was lost by fire in flight, but nacelle modifications were made and a fire barrier was placed on wing trailing edges in the interest of fire prevention.

* Sixteen B-36Ds (one in 1949 before the aircraft was officially assigned to the Strategic Air Command; two each in 1950, and 1951; five in 1952; one in 1953; three in 1954; two in 1955; and none in the first half of 1956); three B-36Fs, in 1952; two B-36Hs, in 1953; one B-36J, in 1955. Two Featherweighted aircraft / see below / were lost in crashes, one Configuration II and one Configuration III.

** Three in 1953, one in 1954, and one in the first half of 1956.

The process of modifying all B-36 models to improved atomic-weapon carrying and other similar configurations was a continuing one. Beyond what capabilities aircraft had as they came off the production line, they were constantly modified to new atomic and more advanced configurations, either by Air Materiel Command teams working at home bases or on the production line at the Air Materiel Command depot (Convair). Beginning in March 1952 under Project ON TOP (code name only) B-36Ds were provided, along with the rest of the B-36 fleet, with a Phase III (Mark V, VI, and XVIII) atomic capability. RB-36Es coming off the production line were not provided with any atomic-weapon carrying capability. However, beginning in August 1953 under ON TOP they were provided with their first bombardment and atomic capability, Phase VII (Mark V, VI, and XVIII), to which phase the entire B-36 fleet was also converted. Only 12 B-36s were converted to the Phase IV (Mark VIII) configuration. The entire B-36 fleet was converted to Phase VIII (Mark V, VI, and XVIII). By 30 June 1956 all B-36s had been converted through Phase X and Phase XII, and all RB-36s scheduled for late phase out that had received the Phase X (A) modification were in the process of being converted to Phase XII (A). Phase X and X (A) provided B/RB-36s with a potent Mark XVII and XXIV capability, and Phase XII and XII(A) provided them with an even more powerful Mark XV, XXI, and XXVI capability.

The Experimental YB-60

An improved version of the B-36 which offered capabilities somewhat similar to those of the B-52 but which never went beyond the experimental stages and was never accepted into the Strategic Air Command inventory was the Consolidated-Vultee YB-60. This aircraft was an eight-engine jet (Pratt and Whitney J-57) swept-back wing version of the B-36. In the fall of 1951 two B-36s were taken from the production lines at the Convair Plant in Fort Worth for mockups and modifications. A contract was awarded to Consolidated-Vultee for the production of two aircraft on 15 March 1951. Eight months later the first of the two planes was ready for engines. The YB-60 made its first test flight at Carswell Air Force Base, Texas, on 18 April 1952, staying aloft for one hour and six minutes.

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956 (Continued)

However, the United States Air Force chose the B-52 in preference to the YB-60 because of its greater speed and altitude capability. Also, the B-52 was an entirely new aircraft, designed according to particular specifications.

Assignment of Aircraft

The assignment of B-36s was very slow during the period 1948-1950, but in 1951 the aircraft began to come into the command in large numbers. The number of B-36s assigned reached its peak in 1954 and 1955, and in the first half of 1956 B-36Ds began to be phased out as the B-52 conversion program accelerated / see 29 June 1955 /.

B-36 Aircraft Assigned, By Model, 1948-1956[1]

As Of	B-36A	B	D	F	H	J	Total[2]
31 December 1948	20	18					38
31 December 1949	21[3]	59					80
31 December 1950	*	39*	13*				52*
31 December 1951			67	34	6		107
31 December 1952			74	29	51		154
31 December 1953			74	29	74	7	184
31 December 1954[1]			70	31	74	33	208
31 December 1955[1]			69	31	73	32	205
30 June 1956[1]			44[4]	31	73	32	180[4]

* In 1950 B-36As were converted to RB-36Es. Conversion of B-36Bs to B-36Ds took place in 1950 and 1951. The decrease in total aircraft at the end of 1950 as compared to 1949 is due to the loss of the 21 B-36As to the RB force and to seven B-36Bs in the depot being modified to B-36Ds. Until 1951 aircraft in depots were dropped from the Strategic Air Command inventory.

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956
(Continued)

1 Does not include RB-36s which became part of the bombardment force on 1 June 1954 when the primary mission of the four Heavy Strategic Reconnaissance Wings was changed from reconnaissance to bombardment. On 1 October 1955 the four wings were officially redesignated as Heavy Bombardment Wings. See 1 April 1950.

2 Including aircraft in modification depots beginning in 1951. Prior to that time aircraft in the Air Materiel Command depot (Convair Plant) had been dropped from the Strategic Air Command inventory. From 1951 on the number of aircraft in depots at any one time averaged about 15-25, the figures being higher after 1953 and 1954 when the SAM-SAC (IRAN) and Featherweight Programs / see below / were initiated. See Wing Equipment and Combat-Ready Status Chart below.

3 There was a total of 22 B-36A models produced. One of them was assigned to the Air Materiel Command on 30 August 1947, sometime before any models were assigned to the Strategic Air Command.

4 During the first half of 1956 the 42d Wing, which was beginning its conversion to B-52s, phased out 9 B-36Ds, the 95th 15, and the 92d Wing one.

Development of the Long-Range Bombardment Force, 1948-1956

Because of the numerous problems encountered with the new and revolutionary B-36, progress in the unit conversion program was very slow during the period 1948-1951. At the end of 1948 two Heavy units were in existence, the 7th Heavy Bombardment Wing, which had been redesignated from a Very Heavy bombardment unit on 1 August 1948 / see 12 July - 1 August 1948 /, and the 11th Heavy Bombardment Group, which had been activated on 1 December 1948 / q. v. / and attached to the 7th Wing. Both units were located at Carswell Air Force Base, Texas (Eighth Air Force). In 1949 another wing was added to the heavy force when the 28th Medium Bombardment Wing, Rapid City Air Force Base, South Dakota (Fifteenth Air Force) was redesignated a

Heavy unit /see 16 May 1949/. The three wings each had some aircraft assigned at the end of 1949 but most of them were assigned to the 7th Wing. The 28th Heavy Bombardment Wing was redesignated a Strategic Reconnaissance Wing on 1 April 1950 and reassigned to the Eighth Air Force /q. v./ and then on 16 July 1950 preparatory to receiving RB-36s it was redesignated a Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (Heavy). This left only two Heavy bombardment wings at the end of 1950, the 7th and the 11th. The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Fairfield-Suisun Air Force Base, California, had been reassigned from the Second to the Fifteenth Air Force and redesignated the 9th Heavy Bombardment Wing on 1 April 1950 /q. v./ but it was again redesignated, as the 9th Medium Bombardment Wing, on 2 October 1950 /q. v./. Only one B-36 had been assigned to the unit during the year.

Both the 7th and 11th Wings attained combat readiness in 1951. The 92d Medium Bombardment Wing, Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington (Fifteenth Air Force), was redesignated a Heavy Bombardment Wing on 16 June 1951 /q. v./. It had no aircraft assigned at the end of the year, but it began receiving B-36s in January 1952. From 1951 on the long-range force expanded rapidly as larger numbers of aircraft came into the command, increasing from two combat-ready wings at the end of 1951 to four at the end of 1952. Each unit was authorized 35 aircraft. The development of the long-range bombardment force culminated in the assignment of a primary mission of bombardment to the four RB-36-equipped wings on 1 June 1954 and their formal acceptance into the long-range bombardment force on 1 October 1955, when they were officially designated as Heavy Bombardment Wings.

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956
(Continued)

Long-Range Bombardment Wing, Equipment and Combat-Ready Status, B and RB-36 Aircraft, 1952-1956

(All Wings Combat-Ready Except Those Designated NCR)

As of:	Unit	Air Force and Location	No. Acft Assigned	Avg. No. in Depots at any one time during previous y
31 December 1952	6th[1]	Eighth Air Force Walker	26 F 3 H	
	7th	Eighth Air Force Carswell	24 D 1 F 24 H	
	11th	Eighth Air Force Carswell	18 D 2 F 24 H	
	92d	Fifteenth Air Force Fairchild	32D	
	95th[2]	Eighth Air Force Biggs	O(NCR)	
			154	
31 December 1953	6th	Eighth Air Force Walker	29 Fs 9 Hs	6
	7th	Eighth Air Force Carswell	28 Hs 2 Js	0
	11th	Eighth Air Force Carswell	25 Hs 5 Js	0 0
	42d[3]	Eighth Air Force Limestone	19 Ds (NCR) 12 Hs	2
	92d	Fifteenth Air Force Fairchild	33 Ds	3
	95th	Eighth Air Force Biggs	22 Ds(NCR)	3
			184	

As of:	Unit	Air Force and Location	No. Acft. Assigned	Avg. No. in Depots at any one time during previous year
31 December 1954[4]	6th	Eighth Air Force Walker	31 Fs 7 Js	4
	7th	Eighth Air Force Carswell	29 H 6 J	8
	11th	Eighth Air Force Carswell	29 H 6 J	5
	42d	Eighth Air Force Limestone	11 D 16 H 8 J	7
	92d	Fifteenth Air Force Fairchild	29 D 6 J	4
	95th	Eighth Air Force Biggs	30 D (NCR)[5]	5
			208	
31 December 1955[6]	5th	Fifteenth Air Force, Travis	35 RB-36H	5
	6th	Fifteenth Air Force, Walker	31 B-36F 6 B-36J	8
	7th	Second Air Force Carswell	29 B-36H 6 B-36J	4
	11th	Second Air Force Carswell	29 B-36H 6 B-36J	4
	28th	Fifteenth Air Force, Ellsworth	33 RB-36H	3
	42d	Eighth Air Force Loring (formerly Limestone)	10 B-36D 15 B-36H 8 B-36J	1

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956
(Continued)

As of:	Unit	Air Force and Location	No. Acft. Assigned	Avg. No. in Depots at any one time during previous year
	72d	Second Air Force Ramey	13 RB-36D 21 RB-36E	4
	92d	Fifteenth Air Force Fairchild	29 B-36D 6 B-36J	4
	95th	Fifteenth Air Force Biggs	30 B-36D	3
	99th	Fifteenth Air Force Fairchild	23 RB-36F 7 GRB-36D (FICON) / see 7 May 1954 /	4
			205 B-36s 132 RB-36s	
30 June 1956[6]	5th	Fifteenth Air Force Travis	35 RB-36H	4
	6th	Fifteenth Air Force Walker	31 B-36F 6 B-36H	8
	7th	Second Air Force Carswell	29 B-36H 4 B-36J	2
	11th	Second Air Force Carswell	29 B-36H 4 B-36J	2
	28th	Fifteenth Air Force Ellsworth	33 RB-36H	5
	42d[7]	Eighth Air Force Loring	10 B-36H (NCR) 1 B-36J	4

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956
(Continued)

As of:	Unit	Air Force and Location	No. Acft. Assigned	Avg. No. in Depots at any one time during previous year
	72d	Second Air Force Ramey	12 RB-36D[8] 21 RB-36E 1 RB-36F	0
	92d	Fifteenth Air Force Fairchild	29 B-36D 6 B-36J	4
	95th	Fifteenth Air Force Biggs	14 B-36D 5 B-36H 11 B-36J	1
	99th	Fifteenth Air Force Fairchild	22 RB-36F 7 GRB-36D (FICON) / see 7 May 1954 /	4
			179 B-36s 131 RB-36s	

1 The 6th Medium Bombardment Wing was redesignated a Heavy Bombardment Wing on 16 June 1952 / q. v. /.

2 The 95th Medium Bombardment Wing was redesignated a Heavy Bombardment Wing on 8 November 1952 / q. v. /.

3 The 42d Heavy Bombardment Wing was activated on 25 February 1953 / q. v. /.

4. Does not include the RB-36 equipped 5th, 28th, 72d, and 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Wings (Heavy) which were given a primary mission of bombardment on 1 June 1954, but were not redesignated as Heavy Bombardment Wings until 1 October 1955. See 1 April 1950.

5 Though not considered combat ready because it was equipped with old model Ds, the 95th Wing was considered capable of performing its Emergency War Plan (EWP) mission.

6 Does not include the 93d Heavy Bombardment Wing which was redesignated from a Medium Bombardment Wing on 1 February 1955 preparatory to its conversion to B-52s / see 29 June 1955 /.

7 The 42d Heavy Bombardment Wing was beginning its conversion to B-52s / see 29 June 1955 /. The unit phased out nine B-36Ds during the period January-June 1956.

8 The 72d phased out one RB-36D prior to 30 June 1956.

Integration of Long-Range Reconnaissance Units Into the Bombardment Force

From July of 1950, when the first long-range reconnaissance planes (RB-36s) were assigned to the command, until mid-1954 they were used almost exclusively for reconnaissance purposes / for the long-range reconnaissance program and RB-36 equipment status, see 1 April 1950 /. They did not possess any bombardment capability until August of 1953 when conversion of the entire RB-36 fleet to an atomic-carrier configuration (Phase VII) was begun under Project ON TOP. This program was completed on 25 January 1954, by which time all long-range reconnaissance units had been given a secondary mission of bombardment. Then, on 1 June 1954, the primary mission of the four long-range RB-36-equipped reconnaissance wings was changed from reconnaissance to bombardment, the units having begun training under dual-capability requirements on 1 May 1954. / For special FICON RB-36 project, see 7 May 1954. / The final step in the integration of reconnaissance units into the bombardment force occurred more than a year later, on 1 October 1955, when the four wings were officially redesignated as Heavy Bombardment Wings. With the development of air refueling / see 19 July 1948 / medium-range B-47s reconnaissance aircraft acquired a long-range capability, freeing the long-range reconnaissance force for bombardment duty.

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956 (Continued)

Conversion Problems

The size and complexity alone of the revolutionary new B-36 brought about numerous complications in the conversion program, and many of the specific malfunctioning problems encountered with the B-36 were similar to those presented by any new aircraft. However, a great many problems arose because in its eagerness to develop the potentialities of the aircraft the Strategic Air Command accepted it before it was operationally ready. Thus, it assumed responsibility for service-testing functions that would normally be accomplished by the Air Materiel Command and in so doing took a calculated risk in removing the 7th Wing, the first to convert, from the combat-ready bombardment force.

From 1948 through 1951 problems in B-36 conversion were especially critical. A serious supply problem existed from 1948 through 1950 and maintenance was severely handicapped by a lack of supplies and spares, which was partly caused by insufficient funds. For a time cannibalization had to be resorted to in order to maintain the maximum number of planes on an in-commission status. From 1949 through 1951 a shortage of engines acted as a deterrent to a thorough training problem. Because of the time required to train maintenance personnel in the complexities of the aircraft, for some time a serious shortage of maintenance specialists existed. During 1949 especially, maintenance difficulties were a particular problem with the new and complicated B-36. Specific malfunctioning or operational problems caused considerable difficulty and became so serious that on 1 May 1950 an Operational Engineering Program for B-36s was put into effect, the object of which was to obtain a completely tactical B-36 at the earliest possible date. This program proved to be highly successful, beginning to show results immediately. By 1951 the B-36 was considered to be operationally capable. Of course, even after operationally capable aircraft became available, they were continually taken out of operation for depot modifications, either for Technical Order changes or to improve their atomic-weapon carrying capability.

Fuel leaks were one of the major problems encountered with the B-36. By mid-1950, however, this problem was almost

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956
(Continued)

completely resolved for warm climates, but well into 1951 it remained a problem in cold climates. Other problem areas included oil leaks, the ignition system, the power plant, and landing gear structural items. Oil leaks were prevalent in the propeller oil system and the power plant, and oil spewing from the power plant at altitude also presented difficulties. Power plant exhaust system leaks resulted in engine fires. Burned pistons were also prevalent, lead fouling on spark plugs and magneto difficulties created the principal ignition system problems. Power collapse at altitude was encountered, especially with the --41 model of the R 4360 Pratt and Whitney engine utilized on B, D, and E model aircraft. The B-36 was the first aircraft equipped with AC electric power, and considerable difficulty was experienced with the alternators and the constant speed drives. Most malfunctioning and operational problems were solved by the end of 1951, thanks partly to the Operational Engineering Program, except for some very serious gunnery equipment deficiencies which produced a very serious defensive armament problem. To solve this problem, Project "Fire-Away" was established in May 1952, and as a result in 1953 a significant increase in fire-out rates was effected / see p. 55 /.

Training Program

The intricacies of the B-36 made it essential to have the highest caliber of airmen and officers assigned as air and ground crews. To train these men, numerous schools had to be established. Extensive factory training was also utilized, as were also Mobile Training Units (MTUs) and various on-the-job training programs. Not until 1951 were there adequate numbers of trained personnel available to man B and RB-36 units. The introduction of jet pods and new radar equipment in later models made necessary new training programs and resulted in additional supply and maintenance problems, each overcome in turn. The training of skilled technicians and the procurement of suitable maintenance equipment such as docks, empennage stands, refueling hydrants, and hangars played an important part in providing a more satisfactory in-commission rate in 1950 and 1951, and resulted in a substantial increase in flying per aircraft.

Flying hours per aircraft and the in-commission rate showed a steady and rapid improvement. During 1949 an average of approximately 20 hours per plane per month was flown. In 1950, this increased to approximately 39 hours, and in 1951 to approximately 60 hours. During 1949 the in-commission rate was approximately 17 percent. In 1950 it increased to approximately 35 percent, and in 1951 jumped to a high of 77 percent. Such increases were accomplished through improved techniques, better equipment, a greater supply of spares, and the utilization of a core of highly trained personnel, many trained through utilization of facilities within the command.

All crew training was accomplished by the Strategic Air Command rather than the Air Training Command. Until 1952 units conducted their own flying training programs, the first crews, of the 7th Wing, being checked out at the Consolidated-Vultee plant. When units became operationally ready, they assisted in the training of other wings undergoing conversion. In October of 1952 the 4017th Training Squadron (Provisional) was activated at Carswell Air Force Base, Texas, the 7th and 11th Wings providing aircraft and crews for the squadron. Crews from heavy units in the command were trained by the squadron until it was inactivated on 1 January 1954. /On 8 June 1955 the unit was reactivated as the 4017th Combat Crew Training School (SAC) for B-52 conversion. See 29 June 1955./ After that time, the bulk of the command's crews being trained, units again conducted their own limited flying training programs. As of 31 October 1953, a total of 177 B-36 crews were assigned to heavy bombardment units, 108 of these being combat ready. By the end of 1954 crews totaled 202 out of an authorization of 216, and 151 crews were combat-ready. Crew strength and combat-readiness status remained at about the same level throughout 1955.

Featherweight Program

The Featherweight Program was one of the three most important B/RB-36 modification projects. The other two were the SAM-SAC (IRAN) Modification and Modernization Program and Project ON TOP for atomic-weapon carrying modifications. Other

types of aircraft than the B-36 also underwent ON TOP modifications. The Featherweight Program was an important step in increasing B-36 and RB-36 capabilities. Early in 1953 the project was tested when six aircraft of the 7th Bombardment Wing and three from the 11th Wing were Featherweighted for service tests. The program, which was carried out both at the Convair Plant (Fort Worth) and the San Antonio Air Materiel Area (SAAMA) depot, was set up in December 1953 and aircraft began to be modified in January of 1954. It was completed for B-36s in December of 1954, and the last RB-36 underwent the Featherweight modification in March of 1955. Because both Featherweight configurations were permanent ones, all modification had to be accomplished at the depot. Featherweighted aircraft were lightened by the removal of all but minimum essential equipment in the interest of additional fuel-carrying capability. Previously fuel tanks could not be filled because of weight limitations. Featherweighting was considered primarily as a range extension capability for all B/RB-36s with a secondary high altitude (50,000 feet) capability in all but B-36Ds and RB-36Es because of engine limitations. Its greatest advantage was that long-range bombardment aircraft could avoid pre- and post-strike staging to the maximum degree.

Featherweighted B/RB-36s were of two configurations: the Fully Featherweighted, Configuration III, and the Tactically Stripped Featherweighted, Configuration II. The only difference between the two was that Fully Featherweighted aircraft had all guns stripped except the tail gun, and therefore had a higher altitude and additional range capability than did the Tactically Stripped Featherweighted. In the Fully Featherweighted aircraft drag was reduced by the elimination of all but minimum essential external protrusions. Because no defensive armament was removed in Tactically Stripped Featherweighted aircraft, this gave part of the force that might be required to fly daylight missions some armament capability. In Fully Featherweighted B-36s two gunners were eliminated and the crew was reduced from 15 to 13. In RB-36s crew size was reduced from 22 (Reconnaissance) or 20 (Bombardment) to 18 and 16, respectively, in both the Tactically Stripped and Fully Featherweighted configurations. All aircraft in the 7th, 11th, and 95th Wings were Fully Featherweighted. In the 5th, 6th, 28th, 42d, 72d, 92d, and 99th Wings, 11 aircraft from each wing were Fully Featherweighted and the balance of the aircraft Tactically Stripped.

THE B-36 LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT FORCE, 1948-1956 (Continued)

SAM-SAC (IRAN)* Modification and Modernization Programs

The SAM-SAC or IRAN Modification and Modernization Program was instituted on 25 April 1953 to maintain B- and RB-36 aircraft in the best possible mechanical and operational condition. It was a progressive recycling of the fleet for modernization and reconditioning, calling for inspection and repair and the incorporation of outstanding Technical Order changes. It included Phase II Electronic Countermeasures (ECM) modification for both Bs and RBs and Phase X (A) ON TOP for RB-36s, but these projects were also accomplished in a separate fly-in program. The primary purpose of the SAM-SAC program, which was carried out at the Convair Plant through coordination with San Antonio Air Materiel Area (SAAMA), was to increase combat capability and, secondarily, to reduce unit maintenance workloads. The program was accomplished on a two-cycle basis. Aircraft were put into the program after being in service 24 months, but priority was given at the start of the program to the aircraft in service the longest. Practically all B-36s and RB-36s had gone through at least Cycle I by 30 June 1956. Only those aircraft staying in the active inventory the longest before phasing out were processed through Cycle II. The program was still in progress as of 30 June 1956, including some Cycle I. The last aircraft under the SAM-SAC project was scheduled to be completed in May 1957.

25 June 1948 - 30 September 1949

Berlin Airlift

Although the Strategic Air Command did not participate directly in the Berlin Airlift, it did play an important role in international diplomacy at the time by serving as a deterrent force to further aggressive Russian actions / see 27 June - 17 July 1948 /. The Berlin Airlift was initiated by the United States, with the assistance of the Western European nations, because of the ground blockade imposed by Russia

* Inspect and Repair as Necessary.

on the city of Berlin. In an airlift unparalleled in the annals of air development, the people of Berlin were provided with all the necessities of life by the United States Air Force and Allied air forces.

During the period 25 June 1948 to 12 May 1949 the airlift was in full force. However, after 12 May 1949, when the emergency had passed, the airlift was continued on a gradual basis to build up stock piles and forestall any future Russian maneuvers of a similar nature. On 30 September 1949 the airlift officially ended. A total of 2,343,301.5 tons of supplies had been carried on 277,264 flights. Of the total tonnage, United States planes had carried 1,783,826 tons. The Berlin Airlift's biggest day had been on 16 April 1949, when 12,940 tons had been delivered by 1,398 flights.

27 June - 17 July

Emergency Alert in Support of the Berlin Airlift; Three Bombardment Groups Deployed to Europe

The Strategic Air Command did not participate directly in the Berlin Airlift, but it played an important role in international diplomacy at the time by serving as a deterrent force to further aggressive Russian actions. Apparently feeling that the Berlin Blockade might presage further Russian aggression, Headquarters United States Air Force on 27 June gave the Strategic Air Command verbal instructions to build up its forces in Europe, which at the time consisted of only one squadron of the 301st Bombardment Group which was stationed in Germany as part of the squadron rotation program /see 22 January - 12 August 1948/. In a three-week period, during which the Strategic Air Command's capabilities in an emergency were tested the command's strength in Europe was increased ninefold. By 17 July three bombardment groups were operational in Europe, and three groups were constantly in attendance there throughout the remainder of 1948. Reconnaissance forces were also built up because of the Berlin Blockade. Five RB-29s of the 16th Reconnaissance Squadron (Special) of the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Group departed McGuire Air Force on 30 August 1948, arriving in England on 31 August. They were later joined by another RB-29 The reconnaissance aircraft were based at Lakenheath, Marham, Scampton, and Waddington.

Units Alerted

Upon receiving instructions from Headquarters United States Air Force on 27 June to build up its forces in Europe, the

BERLIN BLOCKADE ALERT (Continued)

Strategic Air Command immediately placed the 301st and 307th Very Heavy Bombardment Groups on three-hour alert, the 28th Very Heavy Bombardment Groups ontwelve-hour alert, and all other units on 24-hour alert. The squadron rotation program to Goose Bay, Labrador /see c. 1 June - 4 September 1948/, the normal staging point for Europe, was temporarily discontinued during the period 28 June - 14 August to facilitate the movement of groups to Europe. On 17 July, when the deployment of the three groups to Europe was completed, the alert was relaxed for all other units.

301st Group to Germany

In the first step in the deployment of its forces the Strategic Air Command on 27 June directed the 301st Group, Smoky Hill Air Force Base, Kansas, (Fifteenth Air Force) to send its two squadrons remaining in the United States (the 32d and 352d) to join the third squadron of the group (the 353d) that was already stationed at Fürstenfeldbruck, Germany, as part of the squadron rotation program to Europe /see 22 January - 12 August 1948/. The first increment of the two-squadron flight arrived in Germany on 29 June, within 45 hours after being alerted. By 2 July all but two B-29s of the two squadrons were in place in Germany. The two squadrons stayed there only little more than a month, completing their return to their home base with the third squadron by 12 August 1948 /for record flight of one of the aircraft on the return trip to the United States, see 6 August 1948/. During the entire time the unit was stationed in Germany it was on emergency alert and as a result accomplished little or no operational training. The 301st Group was replaced in Europe by the 2d Group, which was assigned to the United Kingdom rather than Germany /see 6 August - 19 November 1948/. In October, however, the 301st returned to Europe, replacing the 28th Group /see 17 October 1948 - 20 January 1949/.

28th and 307th Groups to England: First United States Bombers to be Stationed in United Kingdom Since World War II, and First 90-Day Group Deployment to Europe*

The other two groups scheduled for assignment to England could not be deployed as rapidly as the 301st Group because some time

* For first 90-day deployment of a group, to the Far East, see 10 May - 27 August 1948.

BERLIN BLOCKADE ALERT (Continued)

was required to ready bases in England and make the necessary arrangements with the British authorities. So it was not until mid-July that the two groups arrived in England. Deploying under the code name Project LOOKER, the first increment of the 28th Bombardment Group, Rapid City Air Force Base, South Dakota (Fifteenth Air Force), departed its home station on 16 July, 12 aircraft arriving in England via Goose Bay, Labrador, and Prestwick, Scotland, on 17 July. The Group's 30 aircraft were based at the Royal Air Force Station at Marham, England. Flying time was limited by United States Air Force in Europe (USAFE) to seven hours per aircraft per week and was restricted to the confines of the British Isles. The 28th Group, the first in the Strategic Air Command to be rotated to Europe for a full 90-day period, began its return trip to the United States on 18 October, and completed the movement to its home station on 20 October. It was replaced by the 301st Group / see 17 October 1948 - 20 January 1949 /.

The 307th Bombardment Group, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida (Headquarters Strategic Air Command), which had to discontinue its antisubmarine training program for Strategic Air Command units because of its overseas assignment / see 14 January 1947 /, received its movement orders on 15 July, and the first aircraft arrived in England shortly after those of the 28th Group, on 17 July. Two squadrons were based at the Royal Air Force Station at Scampton, England, and one at Waddington Royal Air Force Station. Though its flying activities were severely restricted like the two other groups serving in Europe at the same time, the 307th Group did participate in Operation DAGGER, in which British fighter aircraft attempted to intercept a simulated bombing attack on London by American B-29s during the celebration of Battle of Britain Day. The Group began the return flight to MacDill Air Force Base on 2 November, being replaced by the 22d Group / see 15 November - 17 February 1949 /.

Significance

The international implications of the Berlin Blockade had far-reaching significance for the Strategic Air Command. Awakening as it did the people of the United States and the Free World to the serious threat imposed by Russian aggression, the Berlin

BERLIN BLOCKADE ALERT (Continued)

Blockade more than any other single factor was responsible for the subsequent buildup of the armed forces of the Western Powers, in which the Strategic Air Command was to play a vital part. Forces were put into motion that were to be instrumental in helping the Strategic Air Command become what it had been created to be: a powerful military force capable of sustained worldwide operations. No longer was the Free World to be apathetic in the face of Soviet aggression.

Prior to the Berlin Blockade, Strategic Air Command training in Europe, limited though it had been /see 13 November - 4 December 1946 and 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948/ had been hampered by restrictions imposed by the Western Powers /see, for example, 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948 and 22 January - 12 August 1948/. Subsequent to the Berlin Blockade the Allied Powers were much more cooperative, and they were more receptive to the stationing of Strategic Air Command forces in Europe. The Berlin Blockade marked the beginning of the Strategic Air Command European buildup. Throughout 1949 and 1950 negotiations were successfully carried out with Britain and France for the use of bases /see 1 March 1948/. A program for the renovation of United Kingdom and North African bases was established, and in 1951 the Fifth and Seventh Air Divisions were activated in North Africa and the United Kingdom /see, respectively, 14 January 1951 and 20 March 1951/. These new major-command-level headquarters supervised the base construction program in their respective areas and provided housekeeping, maintenance, and other facilities for Strategic Air Command units on rotation.

The stimulus of the Berlin Blockade also resulted in the establishment of a group 90-day rotation program, which had been unsuccessfully tried for 30 and 90 days on two earlier occasions, in 1947 and 1948 /see 3 July 1947 - 28 January 1948 and 18 February - 20 April 1948/ and abandoned either because of the inadequacy of United States Air Force resources or diplomatic complications.

The Rotation Program to Europe, 1948-1950

Following the Berlin Alert three full groups were constantly on hand in Europe in 1948, because of the emergency. However, in 1949 and 1950 there was a gradual reduction of Strategic Air

BERLIN BLOCKADE ALERT (Continued)

Command strength in Europe as the international tension subsided. Yet there was no time in 1949 or 1950 when at least one full group was not stationed in Europe. The reduction in forces following the Berlin Alert was a gradual one. The three-group rotation program gave way to a two-group program, which was in effect from February until August of 1949. In February of 1949 the 92d Group /see 4 February - 20 May 1949/ and the 307th Group /see 11 February - 3 May 1949/ were rotated to the United Kingdom. In May they were replaced by the 98th Group /see 15 May - 19 August 1949/ and the 509th Group /see -- May - -- August 1949/. From August of 1949 through June of 1950 only one group was assigned to the United Kingdom at a time. The following groups served in this order: 43d, 22d, 2d, and 301st /see, respectively, 16 August - 21 November 1949; 14 November 1949 - 20 February 1950; 18 February - 14 May 1950 and 19 May - 1 December 1950/. After July of 1950 three groups were stationed in the United Kingdom, the 301st being joined in July by the 93d and 97th Groups /see 12 July 1950 - 4 February 1951 and 12 July - 15 February 1951/. The 301st, 93d, and 97th Groups all served six month tours.

29 June

55th Reconnaissance Group (VLR) (Mapping), MacDill Air Force Base, Florida (311th Air Division, Reconnaissance) redesignated the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Group.

The other active reconnaissance group, the 91st, was redesignated a Strategic Reconnaissance Group on 10 November 1948 /q. v./.

For reorganization and relocation of 311th Air Division, Reconnaissance, units, see 19 July 1948; and for reconnaissance activities 1946-1949, see 22 April 1946.

1 July

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Topeka Air Force Base, Kansas, from the Military Air Transport Service (MATS), placed it on active status, and assigned it to the 311th Air Division, Reconnaissance.

For assignment of 311th Air Division, Reconnaissance, units to Topeka Air Force Base, see 19 July 1948.

1 July

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Camp Hood Airstrip, Killeen, Texas, and assigned it to the Eighth Air Force.

Prior to this time the base had been occupied under a joint use agreement with the Air Materiel Command.

1 July

Strategic Air Command assumed jurisdiction of Campbell Air Force Base, Camp Campbell, Kentucky, and assigned it to the Eighth Air Force.

In the last half of 1949 Campbell Air Force Base was made a sub-base of Carswell Air Force Base, Texas.

12 July - 1 August

All Bombardment and Fighter Units Reorganized; Very Heavy Bombardment Wings and Groups Replaced by Medium or Heavy Bombardment Wings and Groups; Airdrome Groups Replaced by Air Base Groups

In two phases, on 12 July and 1 August, Very Heavy Bombardment Wings and Groups / see 15 August - 1 December 1947 / were replaced by Medium or Heavy Bombardment Wings and Groups. The tactical unit, however, continued to be the group until 19 January 1951 / q. v. /, when combat wings were established. Until that time wing commanders continued to be responsible for base management and administration. As part of the July - August 1948 reorganization only one Heavy Bombardment Wing was established, the remainder being Medium Wings. All airdrome Groups were replaced by Air Base Groups under the Wing-Base Plan, and the fighter wings were all reorganized. Reconnaissance Wings were not established until 19 July 1948 / q. v. / and 10 November 1948 / q. v. /.

In the reorganization, Very Heavy Bombardment Wings were inactivated, and in their place were activated Medium or Heavy Bombardment Wings. The three support groups of the wings

were inactivated and reactivated, Air Base Groups replacing Airdrome Groups. The combat groups, Very Heavy Bombardment Groups, were reorganized and redesignated as Medium or Heavy Bombardment Groups and assigned to the newly activated wings. The following wings and groups were established:*

12 July

New Medium Wings and Groups	Assignment	Location
2d	Eighth Air Force (Attached to 43d Bombardment Wing same date)	Davis-Monthan
28th	Fifteenth Air Force	Rapid City
92d	Fifteenth Air Force	Spokane
93d	Fifteenth Air Force	Castle
97th	Eighth Air Force	Biggs
98th	Fifteenth Air Force (Attached to 92d Bombardment Wing same date)	Spokane
301st	Fifteenth Air Force	Smoky Hill
307th	Headquarters Strategic Air Command	MacDill

The Air Force Staging Areas, Separation Points, and Assembly Stations at MacDill and Smoky Hill Air Force Bases were assigned to the 307th and 301st Air Base Groups, respectively. The Air Force Separation Point and Assembly Station at Rapid City Air Force Base were assigned to the 28th Air Base Group, and the Air Force Separation Points at Spokane and Castle Air Force Bases to the 92d and 93d Air Base groups, respectively.

* The 44th, 90th, 303d, and 305th Very Heavy Bombardment Groups, which were inactive and unmanned at this time and assigned to Headquarters Strategic Air Command, were not reorganized. They were reassigned to the Department of the Air Force on 6 September 1948, see 1 July 1947.

1 August

New Heavy Wings and Groups	Assignment	Location
7th	Eighth Air Force	Carswell

/ for conversion of this unit to B-36s, see 23 June 1948 /

New Medium Wings and Groups	Assignment	Location
22d	Fifteenth Air Force (Attached to 301st Medium Bombardment Wing same date)	Smoky Hill
43d	Eighth Air Force	Davis-Monthan
509th	Eighth Air Force	Walker

NOTE: The 306th Very Heavy Bombardment Group (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) was attached to the 307th Medium Bombardment Wing (Headquarters Strategic Air Command) on 1 August 1948 / q. v. /, but it was not redesignated a Medium Bombardment Wing untilll August 1948 / q. v. /.

New Fighter Wings and Groups	Assignment	Location
4th	Headquarters Strategic Air Command	Andrews
27th	Eighth Air Force	Kearney
33d	Eighth Air Force (Attached to 509th Medium Bombardment Wing same date)	Walker

New Fighter Wings and Groups	Assignment	Location
56th	Headquarters Strategic Air Command	Selfridge
82d	Headquarters Strategic Air Command (Attached to 307th Medium Bombardment Wing, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, same date)	Grenier

The Air Force Staging Areas, Separation Points, and Assembly Stations at Davis-Monthan, Walker, Carswell, Selfridge Air Force Bases were assigned respectively to the 43d, 509th, 7th, and 56th Air Base Groups. The Air Force Separation Point and Assembly Station at Andrews Air Force Base was assigned to the 4th Air Base Group.