

THE STORY OF



DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB
1940 - 1976



History



PREFACE

This history, in its final form, is the result of almost three years of off-and-on effort on the part of this historian. It has had to be sandwiched in between the myriad taskings associated with three different assignments. It began at Davis-Monthan AFB in 1979 while assigned there as the historian for the 390th Strategic Missile Wing. My research notes and supporting documents came with me when I was subsequently transferred to the Headquarters SAC Office of the Historian and then later to the 4000th Satellite Operations Group at Offutt AFB, Nebraska.

The need for a complete base history became painfully obvious as soon as I began my initial research. There was very little data available at Davis-Monthan AFB concerning the history of the installation; other than a few short Information Office history handouts of the type often given to newcomers and visitors. The majority of substantive material on base activities over the years had been lost as host units switched repeatedly throughout the station's existence. Those units were subsequently inactivated or transferred to other bases. Accordingly, the majority of material presented herein had to be obtained at the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB, Alabama. Without the invaluable assistance of the many dedicated professionals at the Simpson Center, this history could never have been compiled.

The transfer of Davis-Monthan AFB from the Strategic Air Command to the Tactical Air Command on 30 September 1976 ends the period of coverage for this history.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gary P. Myers". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "G" and "M".

GARY P. MYERS, MSgt, USAF
Historian
16 December 1982

INTRODUCTION

DEC 2 1940

TO: MAYOR TUCSON ARIZ

UNDER LATEST APPROVED WAR DEPT PLANS UNITS OF ARMY AIR
CORPS ARE TO BE STATIONED TUCSON AIRPORT-STOP-YOUR
COOPERATION WITH WAR DEPT SURVEY BOARDS OF OFFICERS
GREATLY APPRECIATED- STOP-THIS TELEGRAM MAY BE TAKEN AS
OFFICIAL WAR DEPT NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO OCCUPY
AIRPORT AND ADJACENT PREMISES MUTUALLY AGREED UPON-END--

ADAMS WASHINGTON

On the 2nd of December, 1940, Tucson officials received the above Western Union telegram from the War Department notifying them that a decision had been made to establish a military airfield at the city's municipal airport. This marked the culmination of an intense eleven-year effort on the part of many of the Old Pueblo's most prominent citizens to get an air base established at Tucson.

Throughout the subsequent years, the fledgling installation grew in spurts; prompted first by the outbreak of World War II and then by the buildup of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) in the era of the Cold War. The missions supported by the base have gone full circle over the years. Its first mission was strategic bombardment and reconnaissance. That ended with the attack on Pearl Harbor, after which the field was tasked with the training of combat crews for the big B-17, B-24, and B-29 bombers used during the war. With the creation of the Strategic Air Command in 1946, Davis-Monthan Field took on an new strategic role involving B-29s, B-50s, and later the all-jet B-47 bombers. The importance of the base was bolstered during the 1960s with the addition of the nation's first Titan II intercontinental ballistic missile wing and a high-technology reconnaissance unit. The strategic bombardment mission, however, was lost during that period. Within the same decade, the Tactical Air Command first appeared at the base as a tenant unit charged with the training of combat crews for the F-4C jet fighter-bomber.

The prominence of the Tactical Air Command at Davis-Monthan AFB became much more pronounced in the early 1970s with the arrival of the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing and its inventory of A-7Ds and later A-10s. With the final wind down of the Southeast Asian conflict, the base lost its reconnaissance mission and only the Titan II wing remained to represent the Strategic Air Command. After 30 years of SAC stewardship, the base was turned over to the Tactical Air Command on 30 September 1976.

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CHAPTER I

AN ARIZONA BACKGROUND

*Then, being thus by thee so highly favored,
Since it is nothing less to write the story
Of deeds that worthy are of the pen's record,
Of being put by the same pen in writing,
Nothing remains but that those men heroic,
For whose sake I this task have undertaken,
Should still encourage by their acts of valor
The flight ambitious of a pen so humble,
For in this case I think we shall see equaled
Deeds by the words in which they are recorded.
Listen to me, great King, for I was witness
Of all that here, my lord, I have to tell thee.*

(Captain Gaspar de Villagra, 1610)

In 1599, Captain Gaspar de Villagra accompanied Don Juan de Ornate during his conquest of the southwestern area of North America. Villagra recorded those exploits in an epic poem entitled "*History of New Mexico*" and preserved for future generations a portrait of the earliest days in America's history. The story of the Southwest, however, began well before the first conquistadores ever stepped foot on the continent.¹

PREHISTORY

Although no definite date has been established for man's first incursions into the area now known as Arizona, conservative estimates place the event at between ten thousand and fifteen thousand years before the birth of Christ. The first people were nomads of Asiatic extraction who had been attracted to this part of the world by the abundance of big game animals. Their existence in the area was verified by evidence discovered one hundred miles west of Tucson in a cave on the Papago Indian Reservation. As the glaciers of the last Ice Age retreated, so did the availability of a ready supply of food. The earliest inhabitants, therefore, had to adapt to a constantly changing environment. In doing so, specific tribal entities eventually established themselves in three distinct areas of Arizona.²

The Anasazi tribe settled in the Four Corners area where the Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona borders meet. The Mogollon people inhabited the mountain belt of eastern Arizona, western New Mexico, and downward into Mexico. The Indian group known as the Hohokam was centered in an egg-shaped area which stretched from above Phoenix southward to a point just below Tucson.³

The Hohokam, possibly more than any other southwestern group, proved that man could adjust to an overly harsh environment. They became master farmers by constructing an intricate system of irrigation canals which carried river water deep into the interior of the arid desert. That canal system existed as far back as 300 B.C., but reached its peak sometime between 1000 and 1400 A.D. The ruins of a Hohokam village were recently discovered under the foundation of the old presidio walls in Tucson. That effectively placed their existence in the local area at between 700 and 900 A.D. Sometime around 1400, the Hohokam as a separate and distinct people began to decline. The tribe eventually disappeared for some yet untold reason. When the Spanish explorers arrived in the 16th century, there were no more Hohokams; only the distantly related Papago and Pima Indians.⁴

THE SPANISH YEARS 1539-1821

The history of the Spaniards in southern Arizona, and the subsequent establishment of military installations in that area, had its beginnings in an old Spanish legend. As the story went, seven bishops had fled Spain centuries earlier during the Moorish invasion. Reportedly, each had gone on to establish a wealthy Christian city in a foreign land. Recurring Indian tales of seven rich cities to the north eventually led the viceroy of New Spain (later known as Mexico) to send Fray Marcos de Niza northward in 1539 to search out the accuracy of the native accounts. His trip into the heretofore unexplored desert marked the first recorded instance of a European presence in the area known today as Arizona.⁵

Fray Marcos' northern journey eventually led his group to what was purported to be the smallest of the seven cities. From the vantage point of a nearby hillside, he gazed down upon an Indian community which was larger than Mexico City. His positive but extremely exaggerated report of the discovery spurred the viceroy of New Spain (Antonio de Mendoza) and his compatriot, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, to jointly finance a complete expedition in search of the Seven Cities of Gold. While monies from the royal Spanish coffers were readily available for such adventures, any profits would have likewise been the property of the Crown. As a privately financed venture, however, only a tax on the profit would be due. With a dream of countless riches, Coronado led his force northward toward the city described by Marcos.⁶



Spanish soldiers of the sixteenth century (Ullastres, 1884)

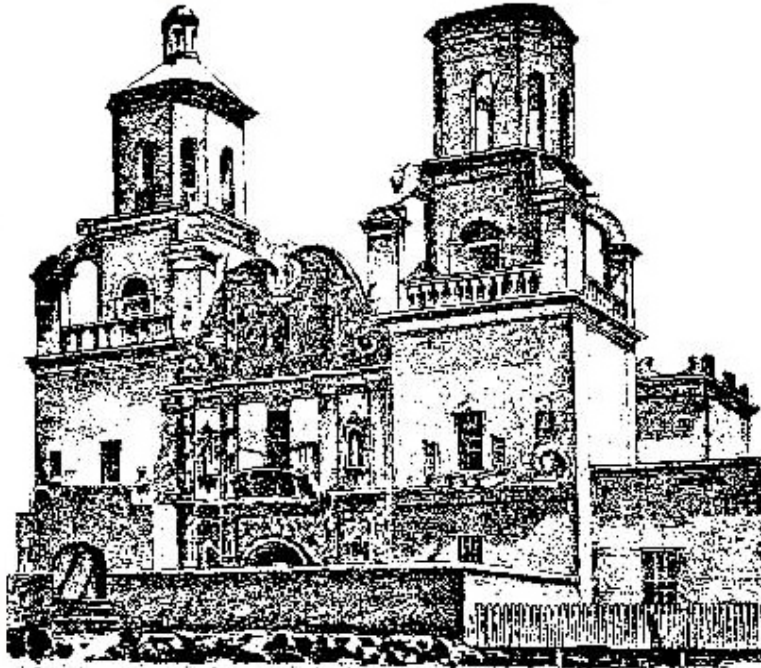
Their arrival at the Indian settlement of Hawikuk (the city viewed by Fray Marcos) was met by significant resistance from the inhabitants. In response, the Spanish attacked and captured the town which was one of six--not seven--Zuni pueblos in the area. To their disgust, the adventurers discovered that none of those communities contained the vast hordes of gold and silver they envisioned.⁷

THE MISSIONARY EFFORT

That and later expeditions, brought back word of a large native population that could be easily controlled and converted to the cause of Christianity. By 1629, the first Franciscan missionaries had begun work in the

Hopi pueblos. Their efforts continued successfully until the outbreak of the New Mexico pueblo revolt of 1680. In that uprising, all of the Hopi missionaries were killed; effectively putting an end to the initial Franciscan presence.⁸

A new era in the Christianization of the native population began 11 years later in 1691 when Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, a Jesuit priest, first visited an Indian village in southern Arizona. Father Kino's conversion methods differed considerably from the previous Franciscan policy of converting the Indians and then making them labor for the Church as payment for the privilege. Father Kino's philosophy was based on his love for the native people. During many trips throughout the area, he rode or walked an estimated 75,000 miles in search of new converts. In the process, he established the missions of Guevavi, San Cayetano de Tumacacori, and San Xavier del Bac. Today, spectacular mission buildings exist at Tumacacori and San Xavier del Bac as monuments to his efforts. Those buildings, however, were not the direct work of Father Kino. Rather, they were constructed later on the sites of the temporary structures where he prayed and performed baptisms. After many years of uncompromising devotion to Arizona's Indian population, Father Kino died in Sonora, Mexico in 1711.⁹



Lithograph of the facade of San Xavier del Bac (Hamilton, 1884)

THE FOUNDING OF TUCSON

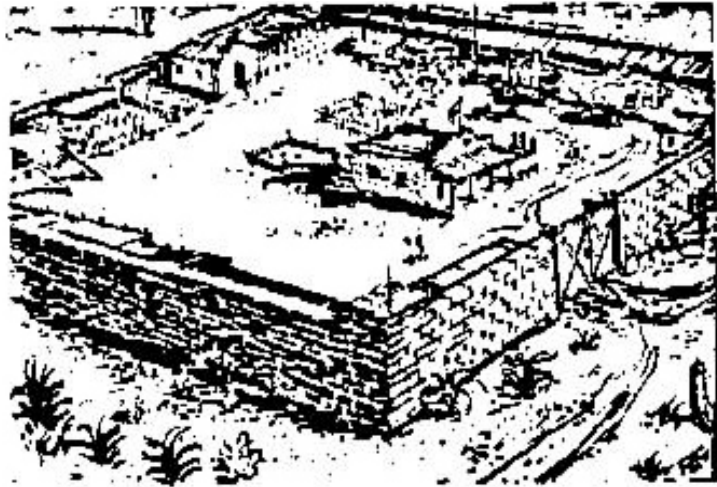
The first Spanish military contingent found its way into Arizona after a devastating Indian uprising in 1751. Under the orders of the viceroy of New Spain, a troop of 50 soldiers, commanded by Captain Tomas de Beldarrain, constructed a fortress at the Indian village of Tubac to prevent any recurrence of native hostilities. San Ignacio de Tubac, and the town which grew up around it, reached a total population of 411 people by 1757. That marked the establishment of the first permanent Spanish settlement in Arizona.¹⁰

Several years later, in 1766, the king of Spain commissioned Marques de Rubi to make an inspection of the Spanish holdings westward from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of California. He was directed to look for ways to economize while also reducing the frequency of Indian attacks. As a result of that inspection, Marques de Rubi suggested in 1769 that the Tubac installation be relocated to the Papago Indian village of "Shuckr-son" or Tucson as it is known today.¹¹

The name of the centuries-old community had its beginnings in the Papago village located at the foot of the volcanic Sentinel Peak, or "A" mountain as it is sometimes called. With a darker-than-usual hue along its bottom slopes, the Papagos soon came to call the area "Shuck-rson (Black Base)" and pronounced it

somewhat like “Chuk Son.” Throughout the years, at least forty different spellings of the settlement’s name were used. At first, the best the Spanish could do was transliterate it into “Tuqui Son” and eventually into Toixon and Tucson.¹²

On 20 August 1775 (the date officially recognized as the birthdate of Tucson), Lt Col Hugo O’Conor* laid out the boundaries for the presidio of San Augustin de Toixon.” The next year, a contingent of Spanish troops moved to the settlement from Tubac and work began on the fort and walled city. Construction of the new Presidio took approximately seven years to complete. The fort was designed roughly in the form of a square with walls built of adobe block. Three feet thick and 10 to 12 feet high, each side was approximately 750 feet in length.¹³



Drawing of the walled presidio at Tucson (Catalina View, 1978)

The singular entry gate on the west wall was located near today’s intersection of Alameda Street and Main Avenue. The interior of the presidio housed a granary, civilian homes, stables, a cemetery, a well, a saloon, and military barracks. The stables were located on the north wall, the civilian dwellings on the east and west walls, and the soldiers’ quarters were situated along the south wall. The only commercial establishment within the confines of the fortification was a saloon which only served an extremely effective cactus-based liquor called mescal. Three other stores were handy, but they were located outside the security of the walls.¹⁴

By 1778, there were 77 soldiers assigned to the presidio under the command of Captain Pedro Allande y Saabedra. That force, however, was poorly equipped for the sort of desert warfare required against the bands of unfriendly Indians. Each had as his basic issue: a musket, a short sword, a lance, and two pistols. Only the firearms had any potential for being effective weapons, but poor training in the use and maintenance of the guns made them practically useless. For example, the governing military regulations of the day did little to encourage marksmanship since each soldier was issued only three pounds of gunpowder each year. Anything over that amount came out of the pockets of the individual soldier. Needless to say, such a system did little to encourage target practice.¹⁵

INDIAN CONTROL

The Spanish strategy for controlling the unfriendly Indians changed significantly in 1786 when it became more than a purely military operation. The new policy called for a concerted effort against any hostiles riot friendly to the Spanish. Then, once they sued for peace, they were settled into villages adjacent to the presidios. While under control, the Indians were plied with strong liquor, cheap presents, and inferior firearms; thus making them dependent on the Spanish while enfeebling their will to resist.¹⁶

*O’Conor was an Irish exile working for the Spanish monarchy.

The idea of corrupting the Indians rather than Christianizing them was not looked upon with great favor by the Franciscan missionaries. Nevertheless, the revised strategy did work to a certain degree. The resulting period of general peace served as the impetus needed to bring needed civilian settlers into the Tucson area. By 1804 there were 37 Spanish civilians living in and around the Old Pueblo. Their holdings consisted of approximately 4,000 head of cattle, 2,600 sheep, and 1,200 horses. Fifteen years later, the number of settlers had grown to 62 with 5,600 head of cattle and extensive flocks of sheep.¹⁷



Apache warrior (Harper's, 1875)

THE MEXICAN YEARS 1821-1854

When Mexico achieved its independence from Spain in 1821, the immediate effect was minimal on the inhabitants of Tucson. But as Mexico's internal problems increased over the subsequent years, less money and fewer troops were made available to protect the Old Pueblo's civilian population from the Apache raiders. As a result, Mexican officials were forced to switch to a scalp-bounty system late in the 1830s. Specifically, bounties were placed on "Apache" scalps with the largest (approximately \$1.00 American) being paid for adult males and lesser amounts for women and even children.¹⁸

Unfortunately, there was no exact way for the examining committees who paid the money to accurately distinguish between Apache, Papago, or even Mexican hair. As a result, many friendly Indians were killed and entire Mexican villages were wiped out as greedy scalp hunters scoured the southwest in search of the reward money. The most notorious of those was an American trapper and mountain man named James Kirker. With his band of two hundred followers, Kirker was reported to have collected \$100,000 in bounties in 1839 alone. Those scalp hunters, and the fur trappers who also arrived in Arizona during those years, served as the advance parties for the American pioneers who would shortly follow.¹⁹

THE MEXICAN WAR

In the 1846-1848 war between Mexico and the United States, Arizona was of little significant strategic importance to either side. During that period, only two sizable American details marched across the area. The first was led by Lt Col Philip St. George Cooke, who was the commander of the Army's famed Mormon Battalion. His task was to open a wagon road from New Mexico to California. On 14 December 1846, the battalion had advanced as far as the outskirts of the Mexican presidio of Tucson.²⁰

The commander of the small Tucson garrison, Captain Jose Antonio Comaduran, was not prepared to fight an entire battalion with the small force he had available. In a gallant bluff, he dispatched a small party of Mexican soldiers to inform Cooke that the American forces had his permission to continue on unmolested if they would march around the presidio and not through it. Colonel Cooke refused the "generous offer" and the next day demanded the surrender of the settlement. When no capitulation was forthcoming, the battalion approached to the edge of town and made ready to fight a hot and bloody battle. On 17 December, the force marched

triumphantly into the presidio without the least bit of armed resistance. Comaduran, all of his soldiers, and a large portion of the civilian population had fled during the night.²¹

It was during Cooke's short two-day stay in the Old Pueblo that the "Stars and Stripes" were raised over the city for the first time. The flag, however, did not remain for long. After resting and gorging themselves on the food from the public stores, the American contingent left Tucson and continued westward to complete the opening of the trail which was later to become known as Cooke's Wagon Road.²²

The only other major military movement across Arizona in that period was handled by Major Lawrence P. Graham who had the task of leading five hundred soldiers from Monterrey, Mexico to San Diego, California. Their march, like Cooke's, carried them through Tucson. One of the officers, Lieutenant Cave J. Coutts, reflected his disappointment at the sight of the town when he wrote in his diary that Tucson was ". . . no great deal after all."²³ The Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago effectively put an end to the war in 1848. With the subsequent Gadsden Purchase agreement in 1853, the area now known as Arizona became a part of the United States under the territorial jurisdiction of New Mexico.²⁴

THE FRONTIER YEARS 1854-1912

Although Tucson became a possession of the United States in 1854, it wasn't until two years later, on 14 November 1856, that the first permanent military forces arrived. On that day, Major Enoch Steen and his three companies of the U. S. Dragoons entered the walled city and unfurled the American flag. Those troops later continued southward from the Old Pueblo to establish Camp Moore 25 miles east of Tubac. The name of that installation was subsequently changed to the more familiar Fort Buchanan in 1857.²⁵

During the period of the 1850s, several important developments took place. In addition to Fort Buchanan, other military posts sprang up across Arizona; the mining industry began to gain a significant reputation; and the federal government began to subsidize the mail. The mail subsidy brought with it one additional benefit—regular stage coach service. The stage line was a major factor in increasing the growth of the city and by 1860 the population had climbed to over six hundred people. The sudden growth also brought the town a reputation as a lawless haven as outlaws and adventure seekers openly roamed the Old Pueblo's streets ". . . armed to the teeth." Those years additionally served as a brief respite from the Indian problem as the Apaches, for the most part, lived in peaceful coexistence with the Americans. After years of almost constant war with first the Spanish and later the Mexicans, the Apaches found the U. S. government to be a tolerable, if not desirable, improvement over its predecessors. At least that was the case until 1861 when the famous Chiricahua chief, Cochise, entered the picture.²⁶



*Brigadier General Philip St. George Cooke
(Century, 1887)*



The significance of Cooke's Wagon Road became apparent in 1849 when it served as the major traffic artery leading to the California gold fields.

COCHISE AND THE Chiricahua APACHES

Cochise's involvement in Tucson history came about as the result of a terrible blunder on the part of the military at Fort Buchanan. It all began when a local rancher, John Ward, got drunk and beat his stepson so badly that the boy ran away. Still drunk, Ward rode out to Fort Buchanan and reported that Cochise had abducted the boy and stolen some of his cattle. Fifty-four soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant George W. Bascom, left the fort in hot pursuit. The events which subsequently transpired came to be known throughout the country as the "Bascom Affair."²⁷



Apache warrior (Miles, 1896)

The troops set up camp in Apache Pass which was known to be where Cochise maintained his camp. The next day, the curious Cochise and a handful of his followers peacefully entered the Army encampment, unaware of any potential danger. He was immediately confronted by Lieutenant Bascom who demanded the return of the boy and the cattle. When the Chiricahua chief denied any knowledge of the transgression, Bascom ordered the group held as hostages. In the melee which followed, Cochise managed to make good his escape but another warrior was clubbed and bayoneted. Three Indian men, a woman, and two children were taken prisoner. The three men were later hanged along with three other Chiricahua braves captured in a separate excursion.²⁸

The entire affair so enraged Cochise that he launched a total war which eventually lasted 12 years. His avowed intention was to exterminate every American man, woman, and child in Arizona. While Lieutenant Bascom was receiving an Army commendation from his superiors, the Apaches were ending the short period of peace with a bloody war which would eventually result in the loss of hundreds of lives and thousands of dollars worth of property.²⁹

THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES

Problems with the Apaches were further aggravated by the War Between the States which loomed precariously on the horizon. Arizona, in itself, was of no special value to the South except for its geographical location and its developing mineral resources. The location had the potential to serve as an open line of communication to encourage prompt action on the part California secessionists. To a smaller degree, the gold and silver available from Arizona mines also served as an impetus for a quick Confederate occupation of the area.³⁰

Public sentiment throughout Arizona, and particularly in Tucson, was almost unanimously pro-southern and anti-union. The inhabitants made no secret of that fact. In 1861, a convention at Tucson seems to have informally declared the territory as a part of the Confederacy by electing Grandville H. Oury as a delegate to the southern convention. News of the Fort Sumter victory brought about a wild celebration in the streets of the Old Pueblo, complete with band music, speeches, cheering, and the raising of the "Stars and Bars." Most of the Union officers serving in the southwestern posts at the time were southerners who hastened to join the Confederate cause. The most famous of those was Captain Richard S. Ewell, commander of Fort Buchanan, who went on to become a prominent Confederate general. Interestingly, the frontier Army privates almost unanimously remained faithful to the Union. While there is no definite proof to explain such unfaltering loyalty, one possibility

rests in the fact that many of the lower ranking soldiers of that period were European immigrants who had no specific regional ties and little stake in the question of slavery.³¹

With the outbreak of the war, the Union forces were ordered to burn their forts and non-transportable supplies and pull back to consolidate along the Rio Grande River. The order was promptly obeyed and the Apaches and Mexican banditos seized the opportunity to roam and plunder at will in all areas of the territory except Tucson.³²

On 13 January 1862, Jefferson Davis signed a bill, effective on 14 February, recognizing Arizona as a Confederate territory. Later on 28 February 1862, a force of Texans (The Arizona Volunteers) under the command of Captain Sherod Hunter arrived in Tucson to occupy the city for the South. There was, of course, little or no opposition to their presence. Most of the few remaining pro-unionists fled south into Mexico. In relating the story of his welcome, Captain Hunter stated that *"My timely arrival with my command was hailed by a majority, I may say the entire population, of the town of Tucson."* In a later description of the Confederate presence, a local citizen noted in a sworn statement that *"his (Hunter's) company was not drilled or disciplined during its stay in Tucson. The horses of the said company were kept in the corral of the Overland Mail Company. . .the men. . .slept each where he liked, in any part of the town he chose, as a general thing. . ."*³³

The Southern occupation was short lived. Hunter's forces retreated in April 1862 after learning of an advancing Union army of 1,800 "California Volunteers" moving toward him from the west. Colonel James H. Carleton's California Column entered the Old Pueblo on 20 May 1862. They established an Army supply depot called Camp Tucson (later Camp Lowell) at the site presently occupied by the Santa Rita Hotel in downtown Tucson.

Colonel Carleton arrived later on 8 June and proclaimed the news that the U. S. Congress was preparing to recognize Arizona on a separate territory with no connection to New Mexico. The change finally came about in February 1863 when President Lincoln signed the bill awarding Arizona separate territorial status. Initially, the territorial capital was established in Prescott where it stayed until 1867 when it was moved to Tucson. The Old Pueblo remained as the seat of the territorial government until 1877 when it moved back to Prescott and finally to Phoenix in 1889.³⁵

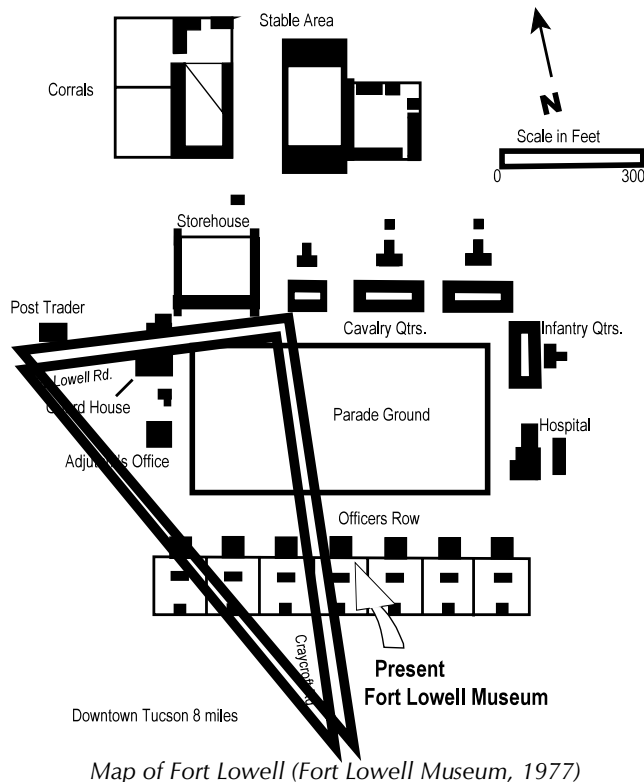
FORT LOWELL

With the end of the war, more Anglo settlers began pouring into the West and Tucson started a transformation which changed it from a small village into a bustling commercial center. In August 1866, the small Army supply depot was made into a permanent base and renamed Camp Lowell in honor of Brigadier General Charles Russell Lowell, Jr., who had been killed during the Civil War. By 1869, the post had become a major supply center for the troops operating in southern Arizona against the Apaches.³⁶



First seal of the Arizona territorial government (Bancroft, 1889)

The exact location of the depot was changed several times during its existence. From 1862 to 1864, it was situated in the heart of the town. It was relocated to the outskirts in 1864 and remained there until 1866 when it was again returned to the town plaza. Because of the high rent spent for 10 city buildings, the Army ordered the unit to construct a new camp (at little or no added expense) again on the outskirts of the Old Pueblo.



Those facilities, built of adobe by the soldiers, were of such poor quality that they were later described in an official military report as “. . .unfit for animals, much less the troops of a civilized nation.” As the city expanded eastward to the edge of the camp, the post’s water supply became contaminated. As a result, sickness (especially malaria) increased significantly among the troops. In 1873, a permanent facility was established on Rillito Creek; then seven miles northeast of Tucson. The camp was subsequently redesignated as a fort in 1879. The partially restored ruins and a museum of old Fort Lowell are located today several miles north of Davis-Monthan AFB at the intersection of Craycroft and Fort Lowell Roads.³⁷

THE INDIAN WARS

Military attempts to control the marauding Indians in the years immediately following the Civil War were, for the most part, ineffective. For instance, the Apaches managed to kill more than 50 Pima County citizens between July 1868 and June 1869. Eastern sentiment at the time favored making peace with the Indians and then placing them on reservations under civilian control. Arizona settlers,

on the other hand, found such ideas to be totally unacceptable. They viewed reservations merely as havens where the Apaches could get free food while still slipping out to conduct regular raids on the civilian populace. President Grant, however, was more influenced by the eastern politicians than by the Arizonans. Therefore, Grant’s Peace Policy became the rule of the day.³⁸

CAMP GRANT MASSACRE

In line with President Grant’s Indian policy, three hundred Aravaipa Apaches surrendered to the commander of Fort Grant in the spring of 1871. They were subsequently settled in Aravaipa Canyon and began their new life engaged in farming. Soon thereafter, Indian raids began to increase in southern Arizona. The enraged citizenry went to the Army for assistance, but they were informed that the current policy prevented their intervention in the matter. Undaunted by the Army’s refusal, the people took it upon themselves to solve the problem. Correspondingly, they touted a civilian militia of six Americans, 48 Mexicans, and 92 Papago Indians. On the morning of 30 April 1871, they executed a surprise attack on the Aravaipa reservation. Approximately eight Apache men and 77 women and children were slaughtered in the dawn raid. Another 29 children were captured and returned to the Old Pueblo where they were sold as slaves by the Papagos or taken into Tucson homes.³⁹

News of the event caused a cry of outrage in the East where it quickly earned the title of the “*Camp Grant Massacre*.” Later that year, 108 of the participants were brought to trial in Tucson. The local jury, however, acquitted them all. It was simply not in the nature of Arizonans of that day to convict a person for killing an Indian—regardless of the Indian’s age or sex. Learning from that experience, other Indians became understandably reluctant to surrender and accept reservation life.⁴⁰

Opposition to the peace movement also had some of its roots in the economics of the community. Specifically, some of the Tucson merchants found the Indian Wars to be, simply stated, good business. As trouble from the hostiles worsened, an ever increasing number of Army troops flooded into the territory. As the size of the frontier army blossomed, so did the profits from the sale of rations, liquor, grain, and hay.⁴¹



Realistic sketch of a cavalry officer in campaign dress (Century, 1892)



Many of the troops in the Indian Wars were infantrymen who were transported by any means available, preferably mules (Outing, 1887)



Typical cavalry sergeant (Century, 1891)

CROOK'S FORCES

Continued federal emphasis on resettlement eventually began to show progress and four thousand Indians were persuaded to accept reservation life. Even the infamous Cochise and his Chiricahua Apaches agreed to live on their own reservation after working out arrangements with Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard. The remaining stragglers were set upon by Lieutenant Colonel George Crook’s forces and by the spring of 1873 another 2,300 hostiles had surrendered. For all practical purposes, that achievement effectively marked the end of the Indian Wars and earned Crook a reputation which resulted in his promotion directly to the rank of brigadier general. From that point until 1886, problems with the Indians mainly involved renegade groups who took refuge in Mexico after sporadic attacks across the border. Even the most noted of those holdouts, Geronimo, had surrendered by September of that year. It was the cessation of the Indian problem that proved to be the most significant event in marking the passing of the frontier.⁴²

PASSING OF THE FRONTIER

The years following the end of the Indian Wars marked a period of steady progress throughout the territory. American law finally became reality and tales of outlaws and gunfights were reserved for telling to grandchildren. Telegraph lines reached the city in 1873 and seven years later the first train pulled into town to be met by the majority of the Old Pueblo's population of seven thousand.⁴³

The Territorial University was given the go-ahead by the 1885 "Thieving Thirteenth" legislature as it was unflatteringly called. The Tucson citizenry awarded the legislature that unusual title after the representatives failed to acquire approval for a significant territorial-funded project for the city. The Tucsonans had been hoping to be picked as the home for the Territorial Insane Asylum with its \$100,000 price tag. Instead, the legislative delegation returned home with an appropriation of only \$25,000 for the establishment of the territory's first university. Some Old Pueblo residents were so outraged and disappointed that they went so far as to throw dead cats at their representatives when they arrived back in the city.⁴⁴

STATEHOOD

In 1891, Fort Lowell was finally abandoned and turned over to the Interior Department; thus putting an end to the initial U. S. military presence in Tucson. The passing of the frontier had brought the city great prosperity and with that new wealth came thoughts of statehood. After many years of political bickering, the dream was finally realized on Valentine's Day, 14 February 1912, when President Taft signed the proclamation which admitted Arizona into the Union as the 48th state.



The days of the armed and independent cowboy became numbered as Arizona approached the 20th century and the law, rather than brute force, became the rule.

CHAPTER II

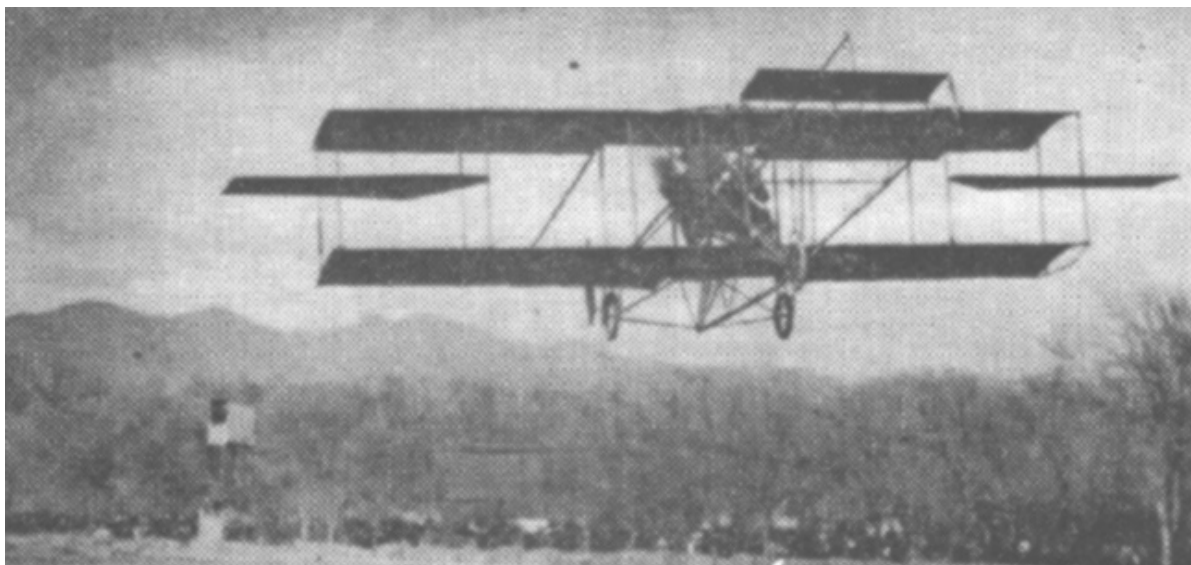
EARLY AVIATION ERA

AN IDEAL PLACE FOR AVIATORS

Tucson's reputation as "*an ideal place for aviators*" had its beginnings two full years before Arizona achieved statehood and only seven years after the Wright brothers astonished the world over the windswept sands of Kitty Hawk. The first recorded instance of an aircraft in the sky over the Old Pueblo was the result of a daring financial gamble engineered by two prominent citizens; Emmanuel Drachman and George F. Kitt. Both were instrumental in persuading several other local businessmen to pledge \$2,000 as a guaranteed fee for an aerial exhibition by the renowned aviation pioneer, Charles Hamilton.¹

The plan was simple. They all intended to make a tidy profit by charging admission to Drachman's Elysian Grove Amusement Park for the thousands of people who would obviously wish to witness such a marvelous demonstration of flight. Hamilton's subsequent arrival in Tucson served as an omen of what was to come when he pulled into the city aboard a common locomotive. His Curtis "Pusher" biplane was neatly and safely packed away in several crates.²

But true to his contract, Hamilton assembled his plane and in 19 February 1910 he taxied the craft across the baseball diamond at the Elysian Grove Amusement Park and climbed slowly into the air. The moment of truth thrilled the crowd who had paid admission to witness the event. Unfortunately for the entrepreneurs, it also thrilled the much larger crowds outside the park who had been foresighted and practical enough to realize they would be able to observe the demonstration without charge. Financially, the highly visible nature of aerial flight had turned the venture into an unqualified flop. Only \$808 had been collected in admissions, leaving the disgusted businessmen to make up the \$1,192 difference out of their own pockets. Nevertheless, the seed of aviation in Tucson had been sown and the quiet desert skies were never quite the same after that.³



Charles Hamilton, in his Curtis "Pusher" biplane, performed the first aerial flight over the City of Tucson on February 19, 1910

The city found itself in the national aviation spotlight just one year later when it was to serve as the only place where two pilots, both attempting to establish transcontinental flight records, would cross paths and meet. Both were after a \$50,000 prize offered by the famed publisher, William Randolph Hearst, for the first person to fly coast-to-coast in 30 days or less. Robert G. Fowler was attempting the west-to-east route and Calbraith (Calvin) Perry Rodgers made his trip in the opposite direction.⁴

The most noted aviation authority of the day, Orville Wright, claimed that it couldn't be done. A Chicago bottler backed Rodgers to the tune of \$100,000 to prove Wright wrong. Fowler landed in a vacant lot near the University of Arizona on 29 October 1911. Upon learning of Rodgers' anticipated arrival, he decided to remain in Tucson to greet him. Three days later, Rodgers brought his famous plane *VIN FIZZ** down for a landing on East Ninth Street. Soon after his dramatic arrival, his special train pulled into town carrying mechanics, equipment, spare parts, Mrs. Rodgers, and even an automobile.⁵

Fowler never finished his eastward journey and history was to prove that Wright was right after all. The persevering Rodgers finally arrived at Long Beach, California, after taking 84 days to make the trip--49 of those in the air. Along the way, *VIN FIZZ* suffered a total of nine crashes and had to be rebuilt so many times that only two small pieces of the original craft managed to make the entire journey. The trip westward from Tucson also had its high points. Rodgers had forgotten to refuel in Yuma and ended up sitting in the middle of the desert with a bone-dry tank. The determined aviator suffered the final insult of his trip just as Long Beach came into view. A befuddled but courageous eagle attacked the cloth-covered monster, nearly causing Rodgers to crash again. Nonetheless, the aviator did set a record by becoming the first person to complete a flight across the United States. He enjoyed that fame, however, only briefly. The following April, he was killed when his plane went down into the sea off Long Beach.⁶

A practical application of aircraft use was demonstrated for residents in 1915 by a teenager, Katherine Stinson. Affectionately known as the "*Schoolgirl Aviatrice*," she used her Partridge Tractor biplane to give acrobatic aerial exhibitions during three days of the Pima County Fair. More importantly, she departed the fairgrounds each of those afternoons with a pouch of mail to publicize the newly inaugurated parcel post service. After flying low over downtown Tucson, she dropped the pouch of mail into the vacant lot behind the Post Office. That accomplishment earned recognition as U. S. Mail Route Number 668001 and garnered Miss Stinson a permanent place in the annals of Tucson aviation history.⁷

Even before Miss Stinson's demonstrations, the air-minded members of the Tucson Chamber of Commerce had formed an Aviation Committee; a very significant achievement in light of the fact that the city had no airfield as such nor any citizens who owned aircraft. The Old Pueblo's sincere interest in and appreciation of aviation so impressed a pioneering Army flyer, Major Theodore C. Macauley, that he described Tucson in a 1919 article for the Saturday Evening Post as " . . . a friendly and appreciative city. . . an ideal place for aviators."⁸

AN AERIAL FIELD

It was perhaps Major Macauley's article praising Tucson's interest in aviation that brought the city to the attention of officials of the Air Service. Whether it was or not, the mayor of Tucson (O. C. Parker) received a letter from the Air Service on 9 May 1919 requesting that the city consider construction of a permanent airfield. The suggestion was turned over to the Chamber of Commerce which, in turn, recommended that land

*The aircraft had been named after a new soft drink being promoted by the bottler.

with an erected hangar be provided. The recommendation was accompanied by the stipulation that the federal government would have to assume any other expenses associated with the project. A proposal incorporating those conditions was subsequently transmitted to the War Department where it was met with a polite refusal.⁹

Two months later, an aviation-minded councilman, Randolph E. Fishburn, was successful in educating the Mayor and Common Council to the inherent potential of aviation. On 21 July 1919, the body agreed to have Tucson finance and build an airfield with a portion of the funds normally allocated to the Chamber of Commerce. That act marked the beginning of the first municipally-owned airport in the United States.¹⁰

An 82.64-acre tract of land four miles south of the city on the Nogales Highway was selected as the site for the field. That location is where the Rodeo Grounds exist today. "Swede" Myerhoff, with Councilman Fishburn as a passenger, made the first landing at the new airfield on 20 November 1919 in a Curtis biplane. Initially, the airport was called New Macauley Field until 1920 when it was rechristened as Fishburn Field. In 1923, Councilman Fishburn moved to Texas and the name was changed soon thereafter to Tucson Municipal Flying Field. That unpaved airport served the local community faithfully until 1927 when a new facility was constructed. Today, a small plaque is all that remains at the Rodeo Grounds to commemorate the historic aerial field.¹¹

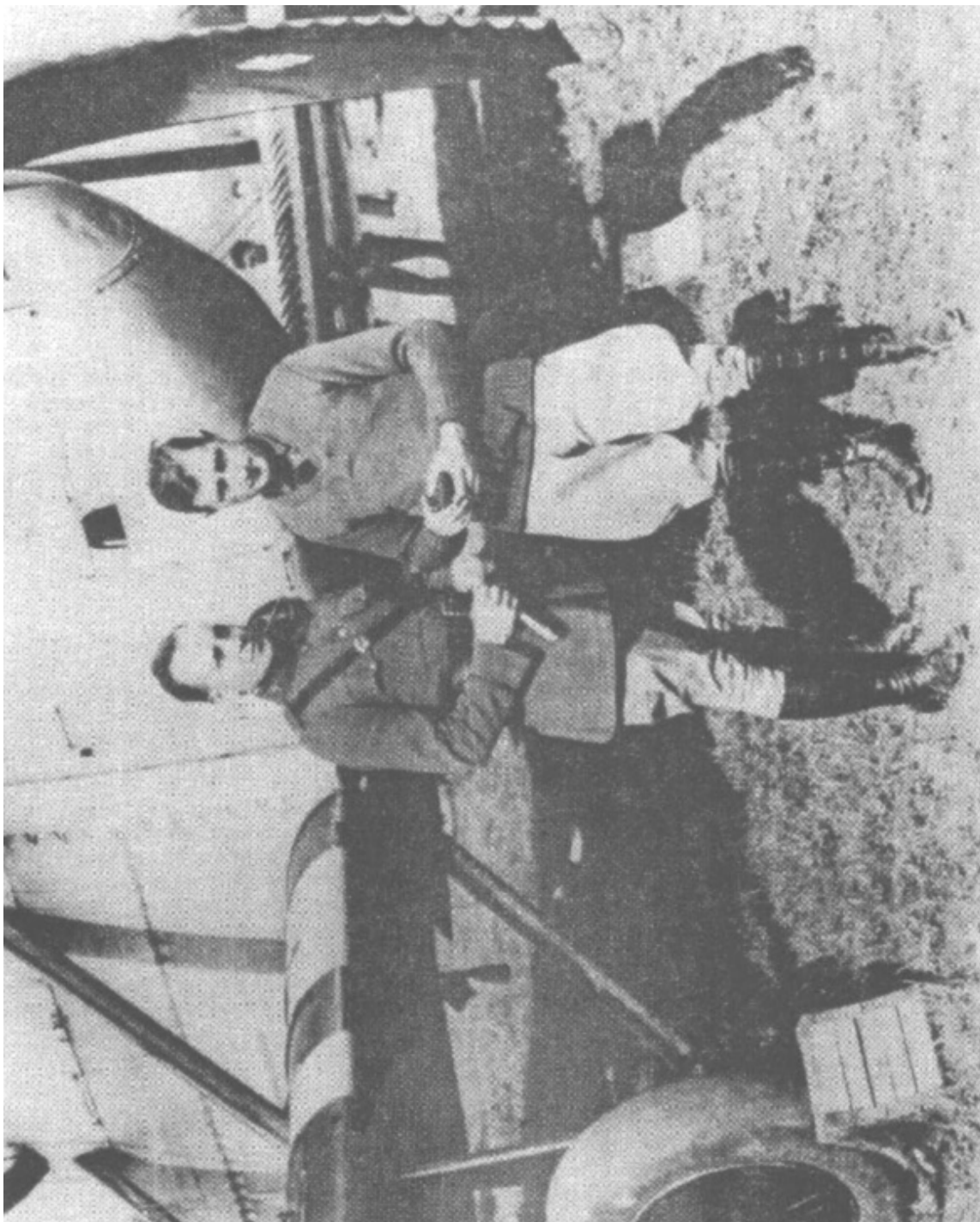
Several significant aviation events occurred during the period that the first field was in operation. In 1924, Captain Lowell H. Smith landed his Douglas World Cruiser, the *CHICAGO*, at the field while completing his record-setting Around the World Flight. Although he remained for only a few hours, Captain Smith was destined to reappear in Tucson's history 18 years later as the commander of Davis-Monthan Field.¹²

The following year, one of the most colorful personages in the development of the Old Pueblo's aviation heritage appeared on the scene. Staff Sergeant Dewey Simpson was sent to the Tucson Municipal Flying Field by the U. S. Air Service to establish a refueling and service stop for Army planes which were landing in Tucson with increased frequency. He had previously served in France and knew most of the Army pilots personally. As such, he soon became a sort of de facto airport manager. It was during his assignment there that demands on the old field began to expand dramatically. As a result, thought was given to the construction of a new airport. Unknown at the time, the new airfield under consideration would later serve as the nucleus of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.¹³

DAVIS-MONTHAN FIELD (MUNICIPAL AIRPORT)

The proposed location for the new facility was on a tract of land initially given to the University of Arizona in the 1920s by the federal government. During the administration of Claude H. Marvin as the university president, however, the land had been turned back to the government and opened for homesteading in 1925. The specific section desired by the city for the new airfield had been settled by John B. Harrison and O. P. Knight, both of whom were pilots. Upon the suggestion of the Pima County Engineer, Councilman Pete Waggoner, approached both men and asked them to relinquish their claims to the property so it could be developed into the Old Pueblo's next airport. They agreed and the land was subsequently released to the city.¹⁴

That one section in itself was not nearly enough to handle the proposed airport. Correspondingly, it was decided that two local men, Kirke T. Moore and Gilbert Sykes, should be sent to the state land office in Phoenix to acquire one additional section. While there, the pair learned of an adjoining plot of 640 acres which could be purchased for only \$19.50. Even in those days, the bargain was too good to pass up. After scraping up the money out of their own pockets, they proudly returned home with the titles to two sections rather than one. The Council was not especially impressed with their astute shopping abilities, but reluctantly agreed to reimburse



Captain Lowell H. Smith (right) in front of his Douglas World Cruiser CHICAGO which landed at the Tucson Municipal Flying Field in 1924.

the two men and accept title to the additional plot of unsolicited land. All together, a total of 1,280 acres had been acquired and work began shortly thereafter on the new municipal airport.¹⁵

Construction of the new facility, located southeast of the city and just east of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, was completed in late 1927. Two hangars for the field were obtained from the federal government. One was moved from the old municipal field at the Rodeo Grounds and the other was a dismantled hangar located in Nogales, Arizona. With financial assistance from the federal government, a lot of work on the part of the Tucson Engineering Department, and funds collected by the Central Trade Council, the pieces were brought from Nogales and assembled. The first airport floodlight, paid for by many small donations from the people of Tucson, was also erected that year and named the "Lindy Light" in honor of Charles Lindbergh.¹⁶

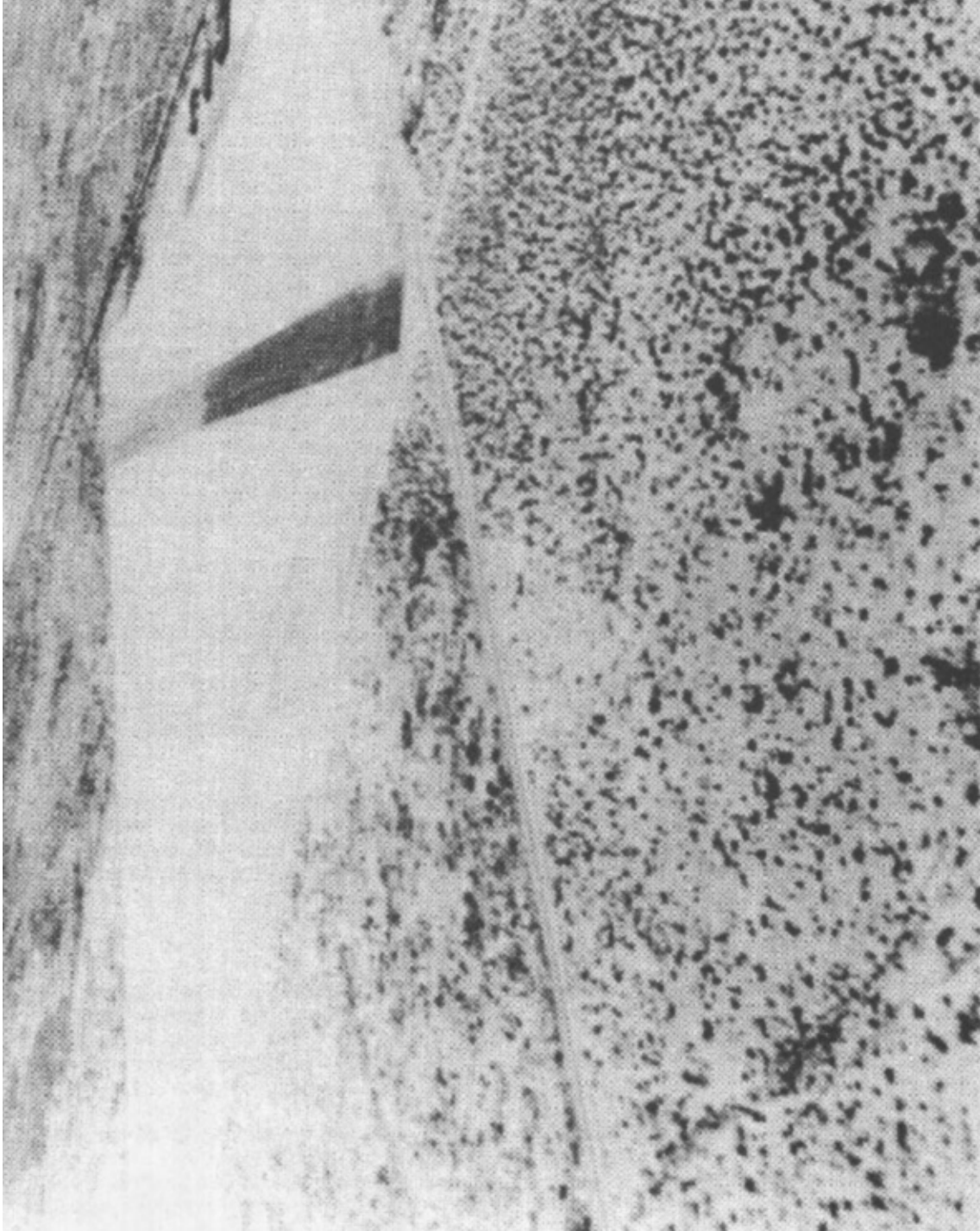
The Light's namesake, Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, was on hand on 23 September 1927 to dedicate the new facility as Davis-Monthan Field. He was greeted on his arrival by the sight of thousands of cheering Tucsonans and the most unusual aircraft ever to grace a runway at Davis-Monthan Field. Appropriately named the *SPIRIT OF TUCSON*, the craft was a non-functional cactus monoplane constructed of ocotillo spines, saguaro ribs, prickly pear tunas, and a barrel cactus split in half for the nose. Its creator, florist Hal Burns, spent about a week of steady work to build his first and only airplane. After the dedication of the new airfield, his astonishing display was torn apart and placed in the garbage.¹⁷

The city which had constructed the "first" municipally-owned airport in the country had just reason to be proud because its replacement instantly became the "largest" municipal airport in the nation. Davis-Monthan Field was to go on to distinguish itself many more times over the coming years; paying additional tribute to the two Tucson military aviators for whom it had been named.¹⁸

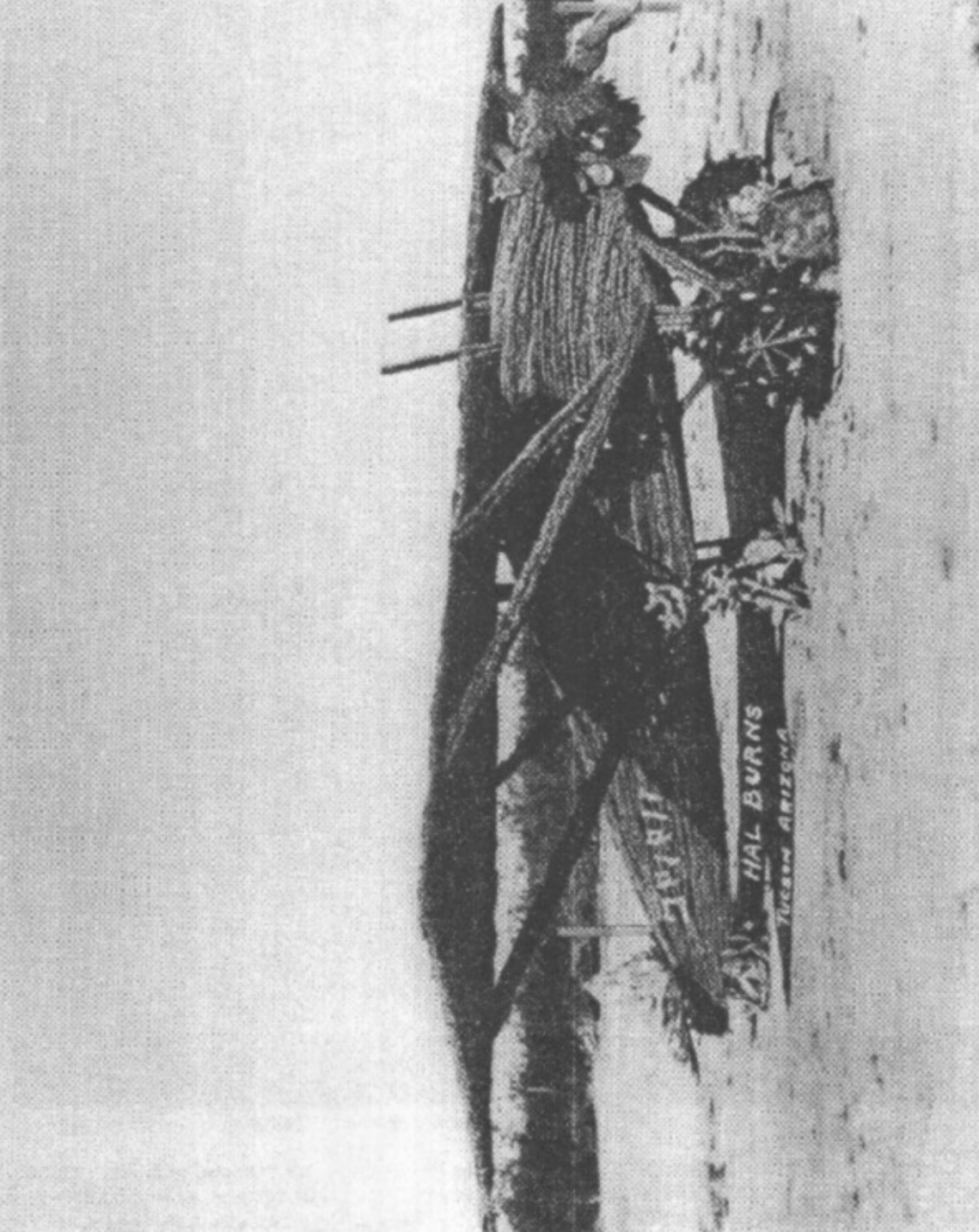
LIEUTENANTS DAVIS AND MONTHAN

Lieutenant Samuel Howard Davis was born in Dyer County, Tennessee, on 20 November 1896, but came to Tucson with his parents in 1904. He attended the city's public schools and graduated from Tucson High School in 1913. The young Davis was enrolled in the Texas Agriculture and Mining College for one year before returning to the Old Pueblo to continue his education at the University of Arizona.¹⁹

He joined the U. S. Army at the time America entered World War I, received his preliminary air training, and was then commissioned a second lieutenant. After undergoing advanced flying training at the Austin Flying School in Austin, Texas, he returned to southern Arizona and spent his initial duty tour at Fort Huachuca. Subsequently, Lieutenant Davis was assigned to Kelly Field, Texas, where he met and married Marjorie Cameron in 1918. While at Kelly Field, he served as a flying instructor for the duration of the war.²⁰



Davis-Monthan Field became the largest municipally-owned airport in the country when it was dedicated on 23 September 1927.



SPIRIT OF TUCSON
Field on 23 September 1927.

- a replica of Lindbergh's famous plane was built out of cactus for the dedication of Davis-Monthan



Lieutenant Samuel Howard Davis

Following his discharge in 1919, Davis came back to Tucson and was put in charge of a commercial flying field operated by several of the city's air-minded businessmen. His tenure in that position was short and he had to relinquish the job when recalled to the Reserves in 1920. He was killed on 28 December 1921 in an aircraft accident near his home station at Carlstrom Field, Florida.²¹

The airport's other namesake, Lieutenant Oscar Monthan, was born in Dewsbury, England, in 1885. His parents moved to Canada 12 years later, but eventually settled in Tucson in 1900. The Monthan family farmed and ranched at Tanque Verde and later at their Rancho Del Lago near Vail, Arizona. Along with his brother, R. J. Monthan, he established the Monthan Brothers Nursery. He subsequently enlisted in the Army as a private in 1917. After graduation from the Boston School of Technology in 1918, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant ground officer and assigned to Maxwell Field, Alabama.²²



Lieutenant Oscar Monthan

Following the armistice, Lieutenant Monthan was trained as a pilot and stationed at Rockwell Field, California, in 1919 and later at McCook Field, Ohio, in 1922. During his tour at McCook Field he married Mae Paquette of Plattsburg, New York. By that time, his work as an advanced aeronautical engineer was well recognized and he gained a service-wide reputation as an expert in his field. In 1923, he was ordered to foreign service at Lake Field, Hawaii, where he was later killed along with four others in the crash of a Martin B-2 bomber on 27 March 1924.²³

EARLY AIRPORT OPERATIONS

Standard Airlines, later to be absorbed by American Airlines, owned the first building on Davis-Monthan Field and began a regular schedule of flights into and from Tucson in 1928. The first military presence at the field began soon after its dedication when Sergeant Simpson entered the picture once again by relocating his refueling/service operations to the new municipal airport. He brought with him a log book in which he recorded the comings and goings of the field's many customers. The log reads like a virtual *Who's Who* of early aviation greats.* Included within its pages are names such as Foulois, Lindbergh, Earhart, and Doolittle. James H. Doolittle, later to be awarded a well-deserved Medal of Honor for his famous Tokyo raid, had the distinction of being the first official military customer at the field.²⁴

The initial conversations between the United States Army and the City of Tucson concerning the establishment of an Army air base began in 1929. In that year, the efforts of 23 cooperating citizens permitted the city to purchase 19 sections of land from the state. Located adjacent to Davis-Monthan Field, the \$79,000 purchase was made on Arizona's thirty-five year installment plan. By 1932, the city had made payments totaling \$29,000. As it turned out, however, the War Department was not particularly interested in establishing an air base there and the city ended up being stuck with 19 sections of land it could ill afford to pay for. As a result, Tucson soon stopped making payments and when negotiations were re-opened with the Army in 1940, the city was eight years in arrears on the debt.²⁵

Although the Army had been involved in Tucson's municipal airfields in a small way since 1925, it did not make a significant financial investment until 1931, when it spent \$55,000 for the construction of a steel and concrete hangar and an operations building. Between 1934 and 1937, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) further updated the field by adding modern paved roads and taxi strips. However, the 1930s were characterized by isolationism, neutrality, and anti-militarism. As a result, the field was rechristened with the less militaristic name of Tucson Municipal Airport. Although the facility had been officially redesignated, most of the local people continued to refer to it as Davis-Monthan Field.²⁶

CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS

The people of Tucson were not about to be denied their dream of an Army air base. In June 1940, the Aviation Committee of the Chamber of Commerce once again approached the War Department with a request to have a military field established at Tucson. This time, however, the war clouds which crowded the horizon caused the Army to take a closer look at the city's proposal. The first definite indication that the Old Pueblo

*That log book is maintained by the Davis-Monthan AFB Base Historian and is available for public inspection during normal duty hours.

was being given serious consideration came when a three-member board (Colonels Earl DeFord, F. L. Jones and O. R. Meredith) from the War Department spent two weeks in Tucson conferring with the Chamber of Commerce's Aviation Committee and City of Tucson officials. The board had been tasked by the War Department to select the locations for six new air bases.²⁷

In those discussions, the proponents backing Tucson's bid noted that the city had more to offer than just its ideal climate. Specifically, they pointed out the city's strategic location. For example, the Old Pueblo was only 500 air miles from Los Angeles, 300 from El Paso, 70 from Mexico, 760 from San Antonio, 750 from San Francisco, and 160 from the Gulf of California.²⁸

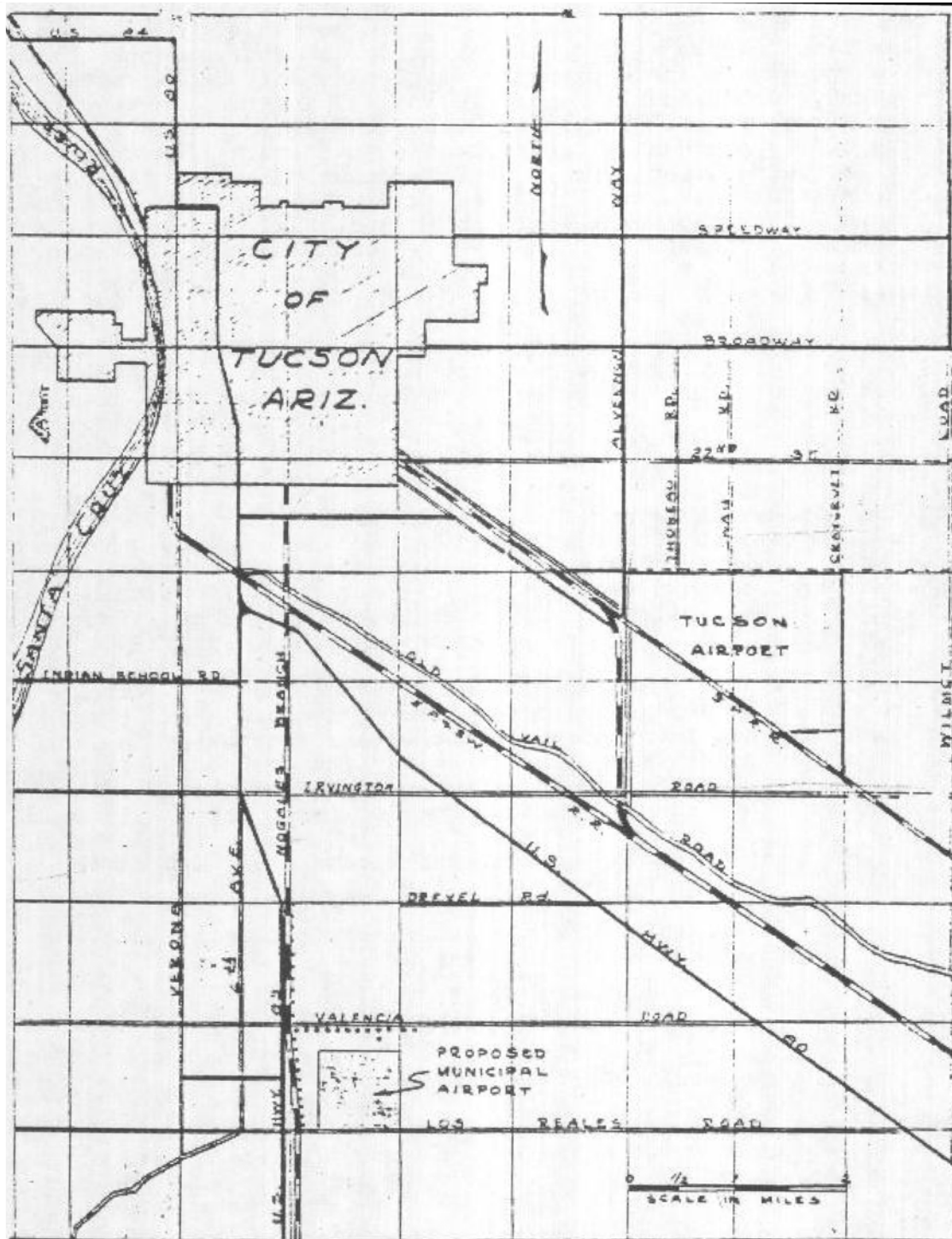
In addition, the Aviation Committee offered the Army an extremely large plot of more than 16,000 acres to be used as a military reservation. The whole area consisted of the two sections then used in part for the municipal airport, the two sections immediately east, two sections south along the west side of Wilmot Road, three sections east of Wilmot Road, and the 19 sections which had initially been purchased in 1929.²⁹

There were several reasons, both written and implied, which prompted the city to make such a generous offer. For one thing, the Tucson officials had been flatly informed that the War Department could make no commitments until proposals had been received from all of the other cities under consideration. Hence, a large degree of competition was involved. Other reasons, not necessarily in the order of importance, included:³⁰

1. *The city had the land and wanted to do its share for the national defense program.*
2. *It wanted a military base and specifically the aviation arm of the Army.*
3. *It still owed \$50,000 on 19 sections of desert for which it had no practical use. With an exchange of federal lands for state lands, the debt would be eliminated.*

The city's original plan, however, did not initially work out as well as had been hoped. The Secretary of War could see no use at that time for the heavily mortgaged so-called military area of 19 sections. All that was wanted was the land west of Wilmot Road that stretched to Alvernon Way. Under those conditions, it was officially announced on 29 September 1940 that the War Department had decided to build an air base at Tucson. Soon thereafter, however, the original construction plans were drastically expanded. Accordingly, the Army went back to city officials and requested the remainder of the 16,000 acres which had originally been offered.³¹

The delighted Old Pueblo officials were overjoyed with the change in plans. They immediately took action to assign the land over to the Army. A prominent local merchant, Monte Mansfield, was sent to Washington, D.C., to handle the details from that end, while the Mayor and City Council journeyed to Phoenix to obtain final clearance from the state government. The City of Tucson, in turn, leased the property to the War Department for one dollar annually, renewable on a yearly basis. Thus was born the entity officially known as "Air Base, Tucson, Arizona" or less formally as Tucson Air Base.³²



Location of Tucson Municipal Airport in relation to the city limits of Tucson in October 1940.

CHAPTER III

WORLD WAR II ERA

TUCSON AIR BASE

Along with the War Department's decision to establish Tucson Air Base came the commitment for a substantial construction program of \$1,250,000 for housing units plus an additional \$784,151 for runway expansion. Plans for the beneficial occupation of the field called for the reassignment of the 1st Bombardment Wing Headquarters, the 41st Bombardment Group, and the 31st Air Base Group to the field during May 1941.¹

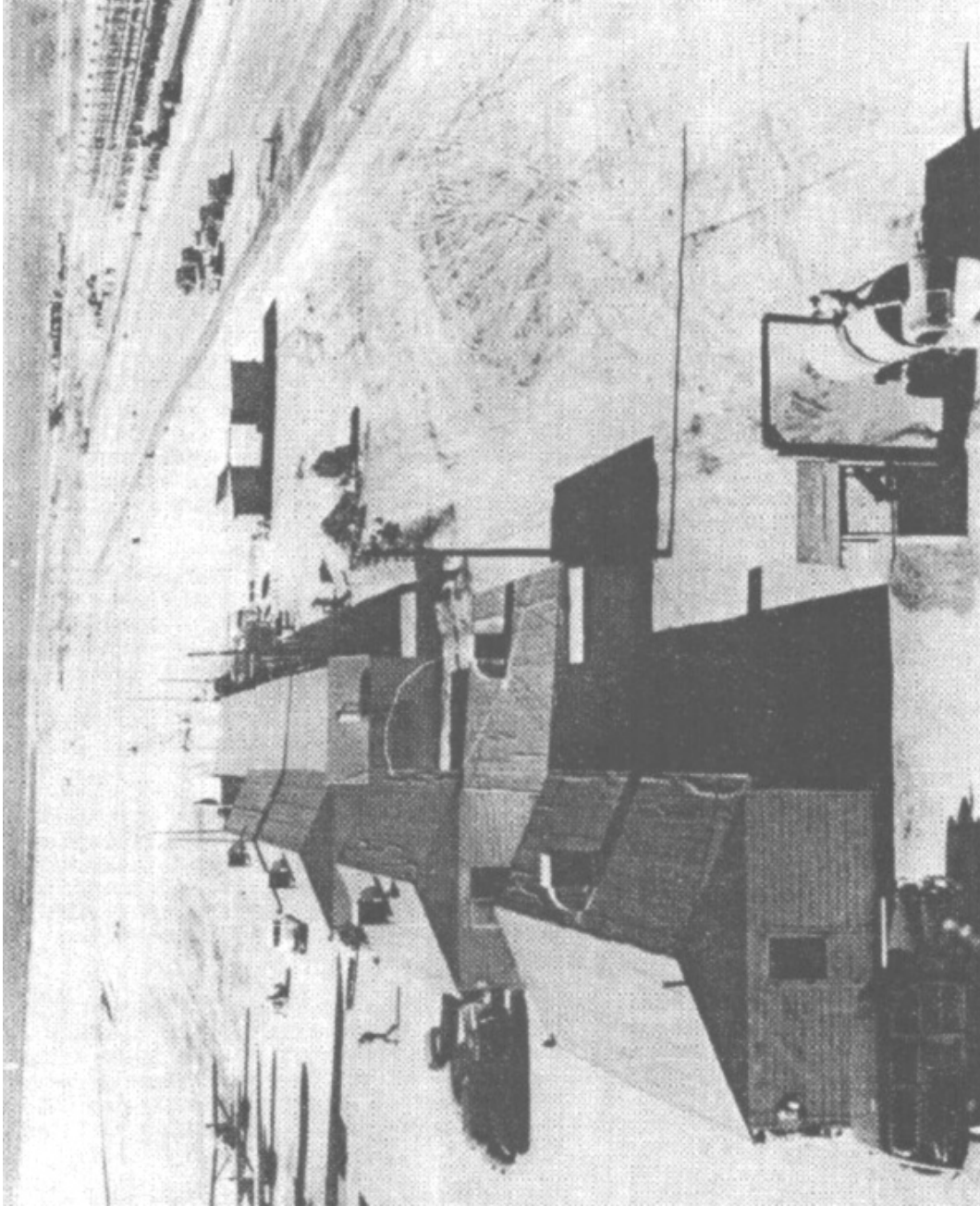
Work on the expansion of Tucson Municipal Airport prior to the actual occupation of the military airfield was in full swing in the latter days of 1940. The job of laying blacktop on the new main highway was in progress and Army engineers were busily working out the final details in their plans for the construction of 116 temporary buildings at the eastern end of the airport. The contract for that ambitious project was subsequently awarded to the M. M. Sundt Construction Company of Tucson on 4 January 1941.²

Eleven days later, the Army announced to City of Tucson officials that the 88th Reconnaissance Squadron--a bombardment unit from Fort Douglas, Utah--would arrive in the near future to conduct bombing practice. The 88th made its appearance on 21 January and established itself in a bivouac of approximately one hundred tents east of the municipal airport. Composed of 130 enlisted men and 40 officers, the outfit remained on temporary duty for three months. During that time, the unit practiced with dummy bombs over two fenced-off sections of land located in the 12,000-acre military area east of the field.³

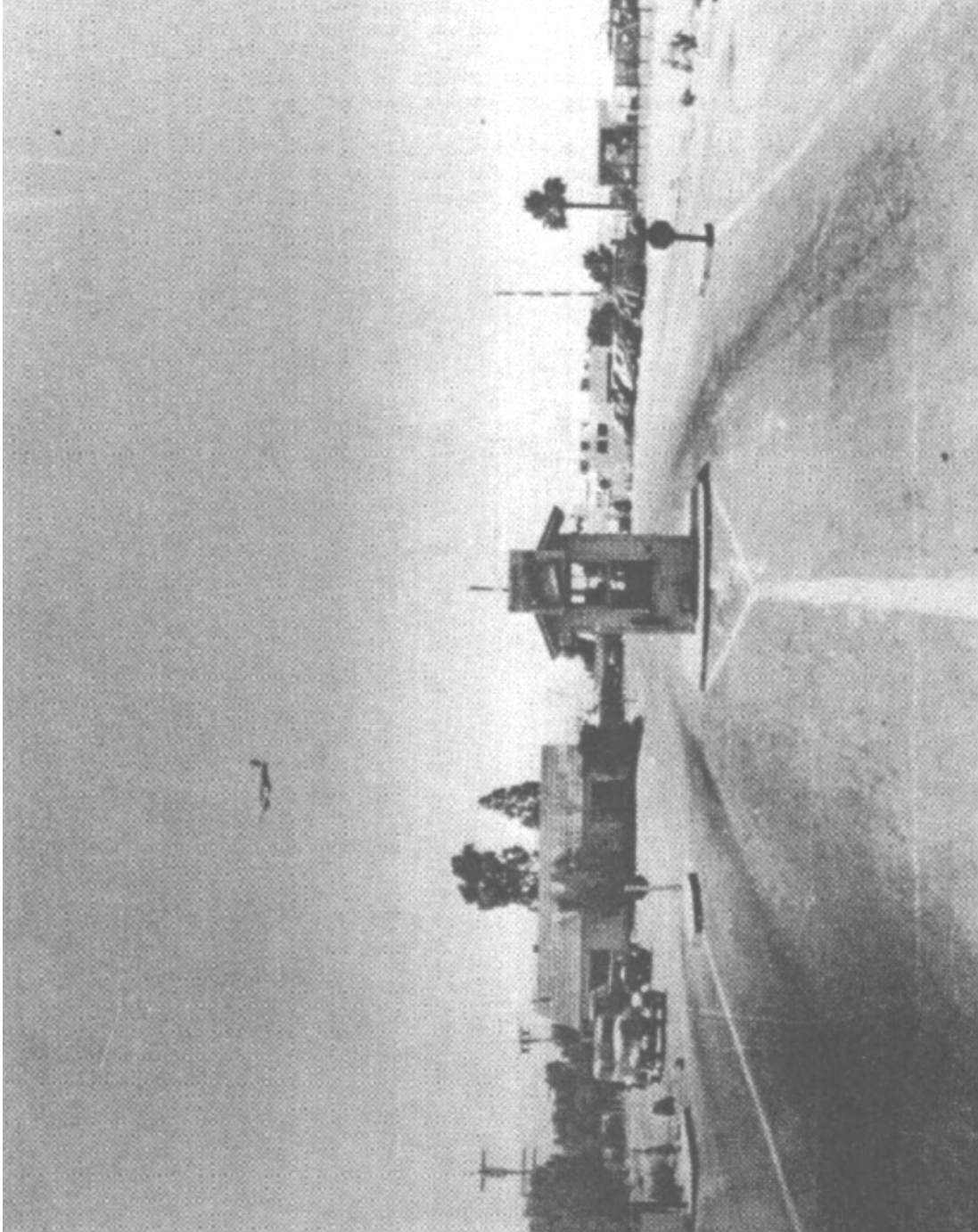
Work on the air base began on 4 February 1941 when Lt Col Ames S. Albro arrived. Colonel Albro, along with two noncommissioned officers and 20 boys from a nearby CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camp, immediately jumped into the task of building warehouses and preparing the field for full scale occupation. The 251st Separate Quartermaster Company arrived soon after, pitched their tents, and joined in the work.⁴

Six B-17 Flying Fortresses made a flight from March Field, California to the Old Pueblo on 4 March; thus becoming the first B-17s to land at the new air base. The planes were ferrying members of the 38th Reconnaissance Squadron who had been assigned to the field on temporary duty for bombing practice. The 38th was a part of the 1st Bombardment Wing which was scheduled for permanent reassignment to the base at a later date.⁵

By the first part of April, grading and leveling of the new air field had been completed and paving had begun on two runways which were 3,400 and 4,800 feet long. Tucson Air Base was officially activated on 17 April 1941 and less than a month later, on 1 May, the 1st Bombardment Wing Headquarters accepted formal occupancy of the field. However, it wasn't until 27 May that the first contingent of personnel from the 1st Bombardment Wing, 41st Bombardment Group, and the 31st Air Base Group made an appearance. The initial truck convoy consisting of one officer and 42 enlisted men arrived that night. More followed by rail the next day and others continued to arrive by private automobiles. Brigadier General Frank D. Lackland, 1st Bombardment Wing Commander, reached Tucson on 30 May and assumed his position as the first Base Commander the following day. That advance party of 202 enlisted men and officers was only a minute portion of the 2,800 soldiers and 60 aircraft initially earmarked for assignment to the base.⁶

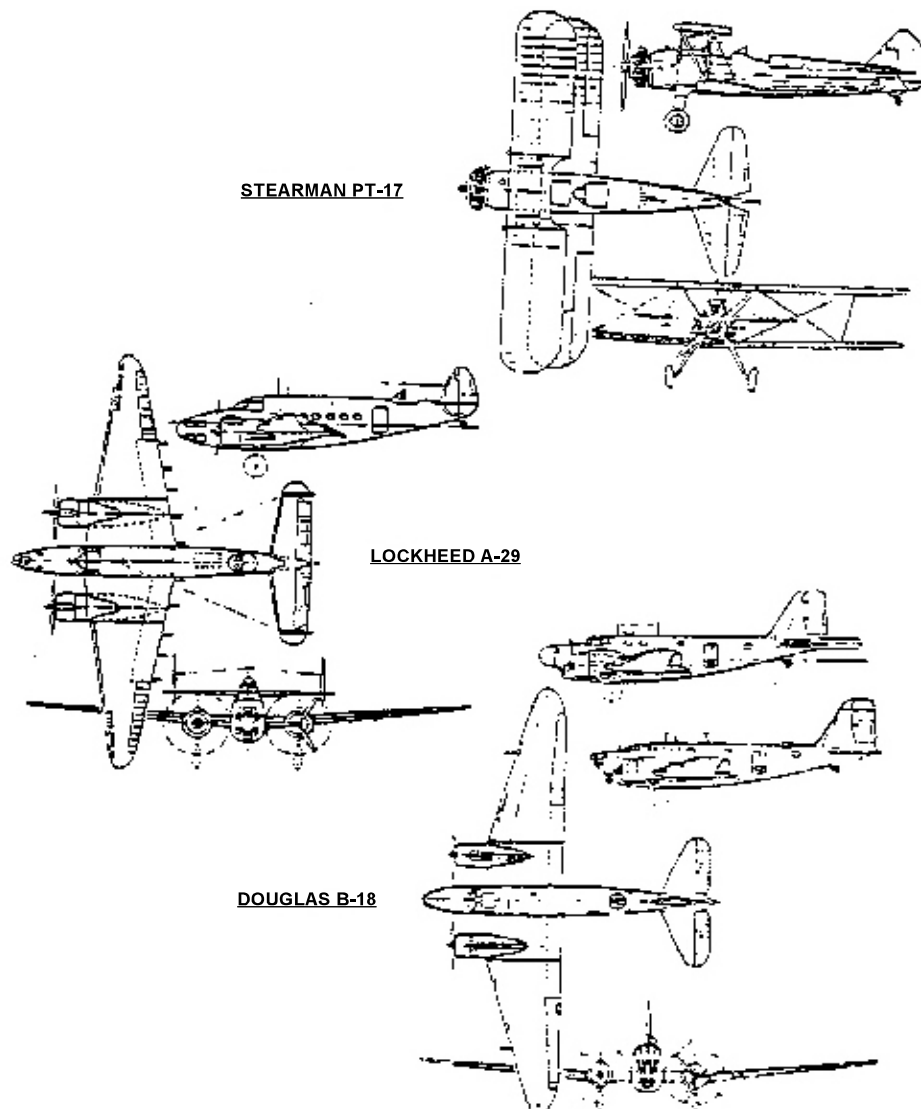


The process of converting the Tucson Municipal Airport into a military air field began late in 1940 and continued throughout 1941.



The first Main Gate for Tucson Air Base was located on the far west side of the base and fronted along Alvernon Way.

The first military aircraft assigned to the field were mostly obsolete Douglas B-18 (Bolo) twin-engined medium bombers. The remainder of the inventory consisted of a small number of LB-30s, A-29s, and a few Stearman PT-17 biplane trainers. The Stearman was utilized mostly for administrative flying and simulation of air raids against units on maneuvers. Four of the 41sts squadrons were devoted strictly to a bombardment mission, but the fifth squadron had reconnaissance responsibilities.⁷



COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE

The arrival of the 41st Bombardment Group and its associated aircraft represented the culmination of a community dream begun 12 years earlier. The men were welcomed with open arms by a grateful Tucson citizenry who made every effort to make sure that the enlisted personnel were adequately provided for. Individuals within the city attempted to make the soldiers' extracurricular time as interesting as possible. For example, Miss Helena Link organized a choral group composed of the base's airmen. Others opened the doors to their homes and welcomed the soldiers in for quiet family evenings and Sunday dinners.⁸

Civic organizations made a concerted effort to supplement the meager equipment supplied by the Army's Morale Branch. During 1941, for example, five of the base's 15 day rooms were furnished by contributions from local organizations such as the Elks, the Tucson Junior Women's Club, and the Tucson Chapter of Bundles for Britain. The latter group had within its ranks a small number of British war veterans known as the Sherwood Foresters. A 1941 letter written by a Tucson Air Base soldier, James A. Tschappat, illustrated the splendid relationship which existed between the airmen and the local townspeople. It noted:⁹

The Bundles for Britain movement is facing the astonishing possibility of being out-bundled, and by whom? The British of all people!

A group of British residents of Tucson, members of the Sherwood Foresters, a famous old British regiment which dates back to the 17th century and Robin Hood, decided that the bundle idea could work both ways, so they got together and established a fund to equip a day room for the 42nd Materiel Squadron, station at the Tucson Air Base.

Day room, as civilians who are familiar with the Army will know is the Army for "lounge." The Sherwood Foresters plan to provide tables, chairs, sofa, radio, Venetian blinds, interior decorations, and practically everything the most luxury-loving soldier could desire. A biographical sketch of the regiment will be engraved on a scroll, which will hang in the day room.

The Sherwood Foresters fought side-by-side with the Americans in the First World War, and probably have, therefore, an even stronger attachment for the American soldier than most British. Still the Bundles for Britain people can't afford to be complacent. Now that what must certainly be called the Bundles for America movement is under way, there is no telling where it will lead. Perhaps the first Battles of Bundles the world has ever seen is already in progress.

AN OLD NAME - BUT A NEW WAR

Construction activity continued throughout the year and on 1 December 1941 the air field was rechristened. The designation "Air Base, Tucson, Arizona" was officially changed to "Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona." The revision in nomenclature created no problems in the community as most of Tucson's residents had continued to use the Davis-Monthan name informally over the years.¹⁰

On Sunday, 7 December 1941, the Japanese Imperial Government unleashed a sneak air attack on the Hawaiian Islands. The strike on Pearl Harbor and the ensuing rush to war had a marked effect on the activities at Davis-Monthan. It became immediately apparent that the base could play a significant role in the defense of the hemisphere should the Japanese appear in Mexico or on the west coast of the United States.¹¹

By Sunday evening, the air field had been fully alerted and all personnel were immediately placed on a 24-hour duty status. Leaves and furloughs were cancelled, aircraft were dispersed, and other precautions against air raids were ordered. Base units were instructed to be prepared to operate under blackout conditions and to evacuate the barracks to preclude casualties in the event of air attack. Ammunition was issued, base defense weapons were readied for action, and the soldiers were required to carry gas masks at all times. Later that night, modified blackout procedures were initiated by an order which required that all windows on the base be painted black.¹²

When the Japanese attack hit Hawaii, Davis-Monthan Field had a total of 163 officers and 2,012 enlisted man assigned. With the rushed measures taken to strengthen the national defenses at other locations, many of the base's personnel were immediately shipped out. As a result, the official Morning Report for 8 December reflected an assigned strength of only 61 officers and 471 enlisted man present for duty. Two days later, the air elements of the 1st Bombardment Wing and the 41st Bombardment Group departed for the Pacific in their Douglas B-18 medium bombers.¹³

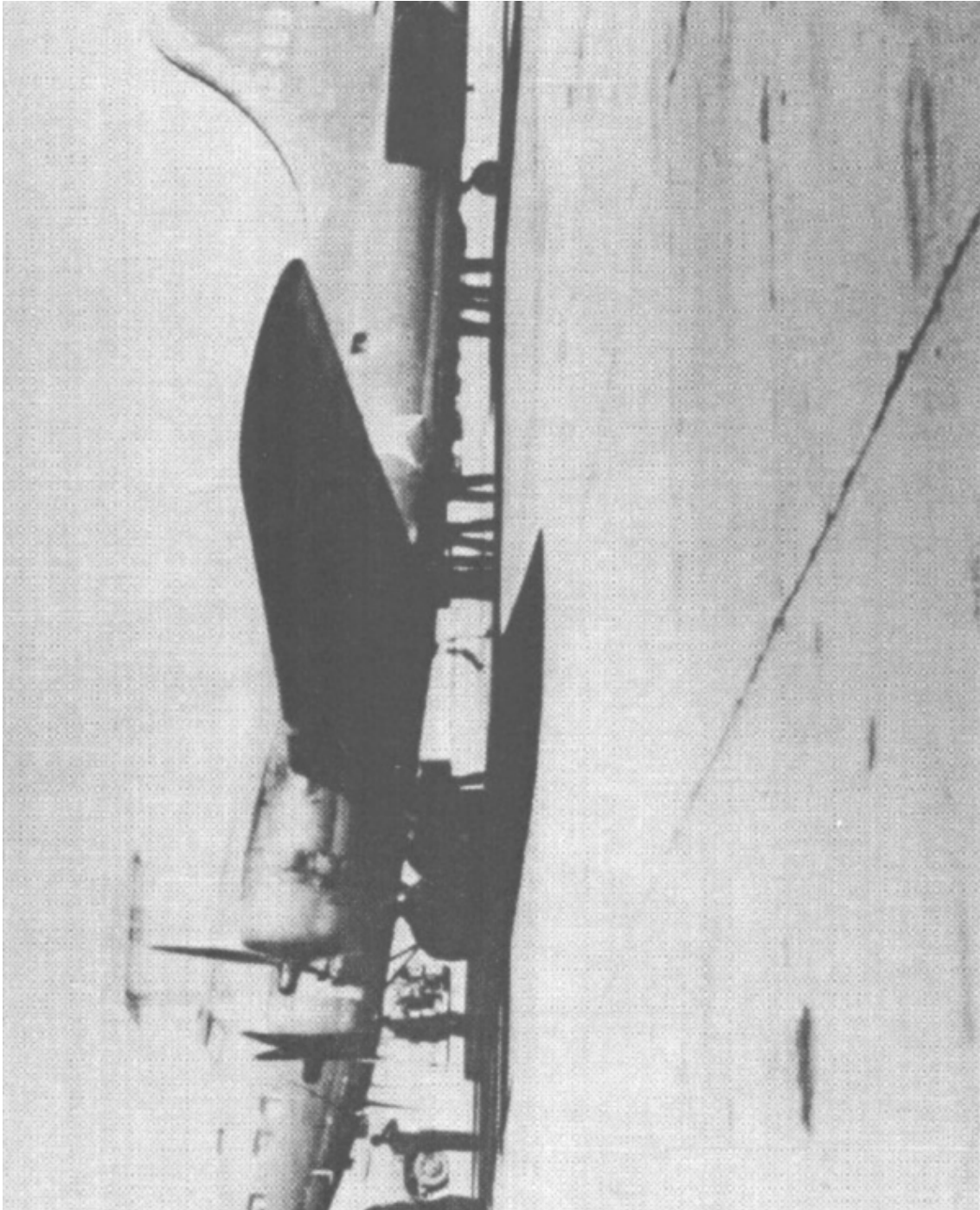
The base immediately requested and received authority to spend approximately \$3.5 million for the expansion of the field during 1942. The scheduled projects included barracks, administration buildings, mess halls, officers' quarters, armament and supply buildings, hospital facilities, a theater, chapel, and recreation buildings. With the resulting expansion, Davis-Monthan soon became one of the nation's key installations for the training of both medium and heavy bombardment units.¹⁴

Base personnel strength also increased drastically over the war years. By the end of 1941, the field had 90 officers and 1,490 enlisted men assigned. During 1942 the population rose to 1,204 officers and 8,438 enlisted. Between 1943 and 1945, the total assigned figures remained at a level of between 8,000 and 9,000 with the peak being reached in September 1945 when 10,300 were present. The New Year of 1946, however, witnessed a dramatic drop when those figures were reduced to a total of only 1,681 as a result of the wind down at war's end.¹⁵

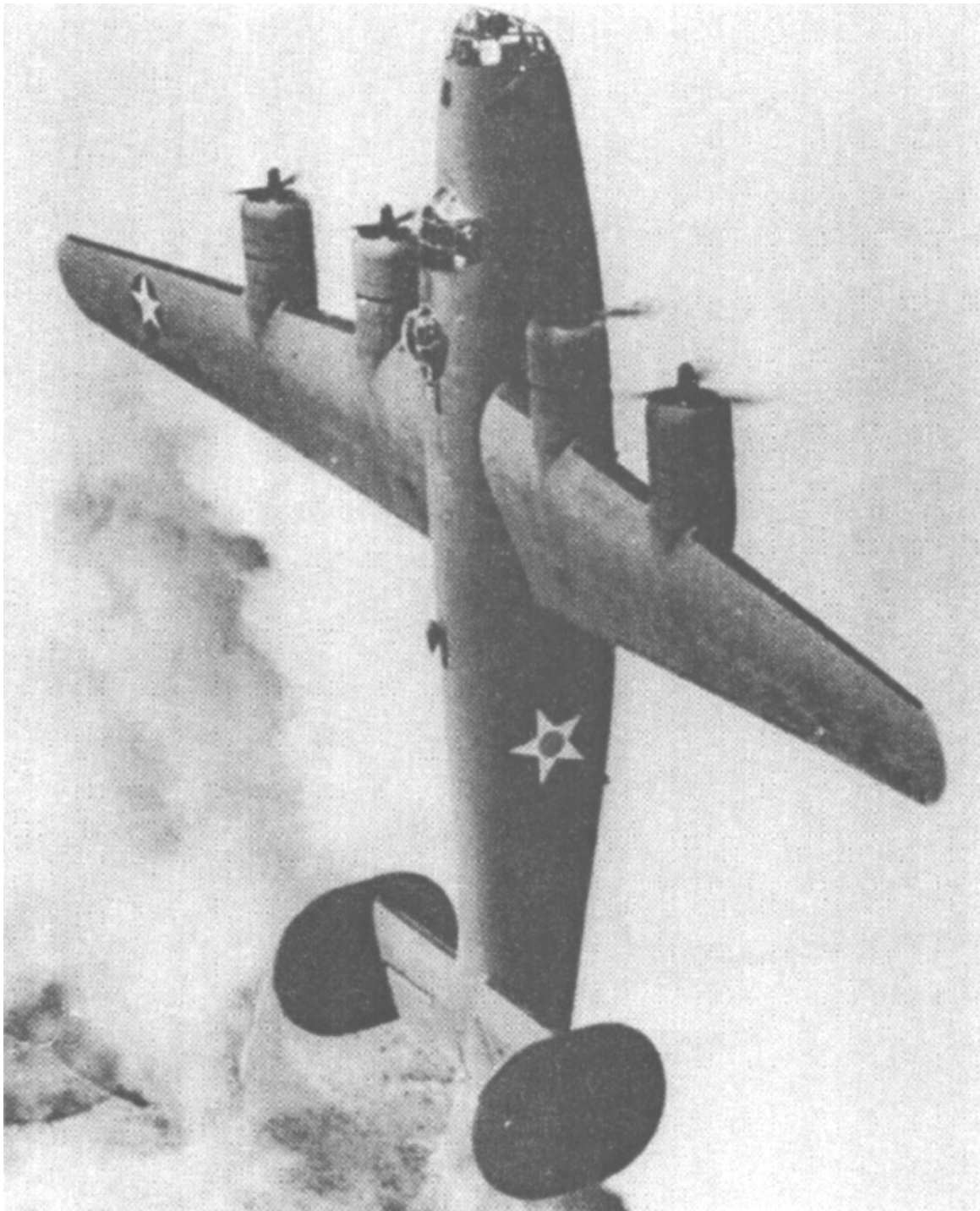
Jurisdiction over Davis-Monthan Field was transferred from the Fourth Air Force to the Second Air Force on 26 January 1942. The following month, the 39th Bombardment Group arrived from Geiger Field, Washington, and immediately began training B-17 and B-24 units and crews; first as an Operational Training Unit (OTU) and later as a Replacement Training Unit (RTU). The Willcox Playa Lake and Sahuarita Bombing Ranges were opened shortly after the Group's arrival.¹⁶

COLONEL LOWELL H. SMITH

It was in February 1942 that Lowell H. Smith, now a colonel, reentered the history of Davis-Monthan to begin a long period of service as the new installation commander. Born in Santa Barbara, California, and educated as a mechanical engineer, he served in the Mexican Air Service for a brief period of time before enlisting in the aviation corps of the U. S. Army in 1917. After winning a commission and earning his pilot rating, he



B-17



B-24

served in a non-combat position for a short period until World War I ended. The Distinguished Service Medal he received for his services during that period was but one of many he was destined to go on and win. For example, he was awarded the coveted Mackay Medal for 1919-1924 as the outstanding military aviator of those



Colonel Lowell H. Smith, Base Commander and renowned aviation pioneer, cuts the dedication ribbon for Chapel #2, constructed in 1942

years. Of particular note during that period was his participation in the historic first demonstration of a practical aerial refueling operation for which he was presented with the Distinguished Flying Cross. In 1924, he garnered a second Distinguished Service Medal as the leader of the Army's first successful Around-the-World Flight. Utilizing specially modified Douglas "World Cruiser" single-engined biplanes, the 26,103-mile mission required a total of 365 hours, 11 minutes of actual flying time. The flight, which began on 6 April 1924 in Seattle, Washington, ended there on 29 September.¹⁷

Colonel Smith also held 16 world flying records for speed and endurance, along with the French Legion of Honor. In 1925, he went on to win the Helen Culver Medal for *"distinctive work in broadening the boundaries of world knowledge."*¹⁸

THE COLONEL'S DOG

Although the period of Colonel Smith's assignment as Base Commander was generally characterized by the serious business of training bombardment crews, it also had its lighter moments. One of the most humorous memories of

those days involved Lowell Smith's large Irish Setter "Big Red" who had a particular fondness for riding in automobiles.¹⁹

In the course of a normal day, the Colonel's driver was required to run many errands. On each of those trips he was accompanied by Big Red who always took a position alone in the middle of the staff car's back seat. Military pedestrians on adjacent sidewalks, aware of a figure in the car, would immediately "snap to" and render the appropriate salute. Although Big Red always managed to take his celebrity status in stride, some frustrated soldiers were known to take a second glance, clench their teeth, and swear, *"Oh _____, I've saluted that damn dog again."*²⁰

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE WAR EFFORT

Two events symbolic of the times took place in the latter part of March 1942. On 16 March, base officials met with news media representatives from throughout Arizona to discuss the problems associated with the voluntary censorship necessary for the nation's war effort.²¹ Captain Edward V. Rickenbacker, the famed World War I ace, visited the base just four days later. During his stay he granted an interview to a local

newspaper during which he berated public apathy and effectively expressed the sentiments of many of the military personnel involved in the war effort. He was quoted by the Arizona Daily Star as saying:²²

We can't win this war in spare moments; there aren't enough moments as it is, if we use them all.

Our complacency adds two years more to this war, two years more than if we had been ready, that is the fact which Mr. and Mrs. Public must awaken to. Nuts to this spare time war effort; nuts to these entertainment programs. The boys on Bataan are on a 24-hour shift--24 hours of living hell. The boys at sea in our ships and airplanes--they are on a 24-hour shift--in living hell, too.

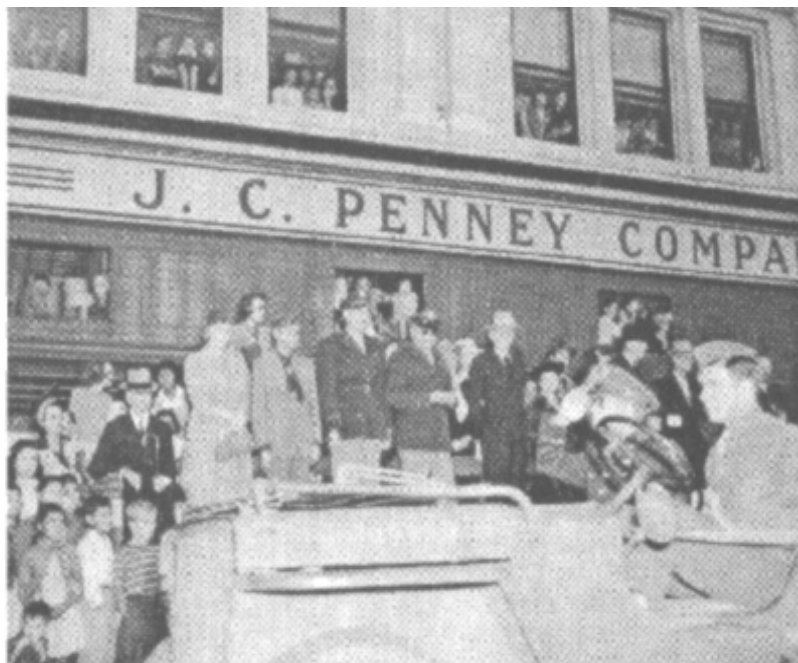
And there's no punching of time clocks at Davis-Monthan Field. They are just as anxious to serve as the boys going through hell. Now it's up to the public to get on the job--24 hours a day, and back up the boys in the service 24 hours a day.

And if the public does not, America will sacrifice her youth on the altar of selfishness and greed.

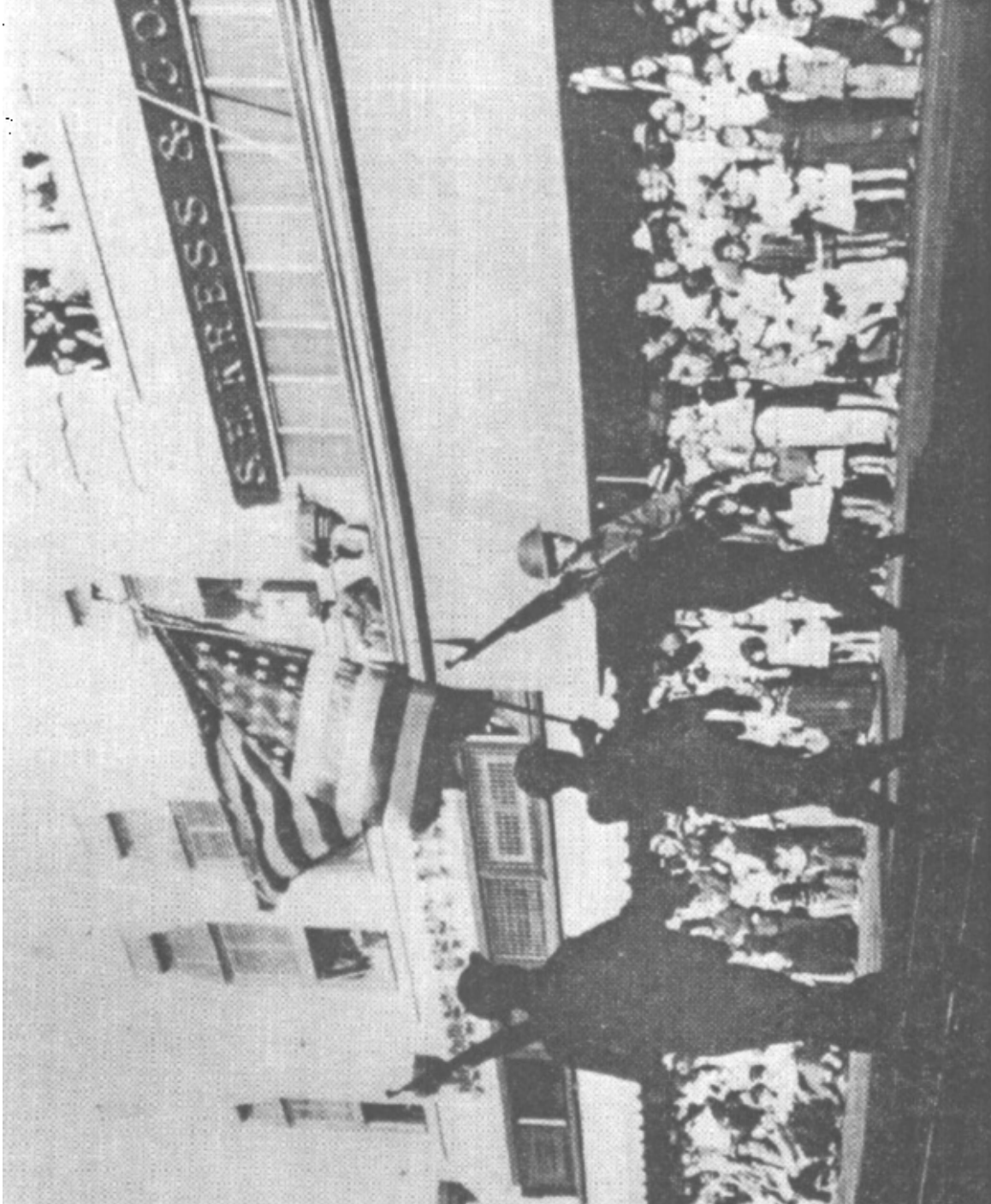
Captain Rickenbacker's statement on that day was not directed specifically at the Tucson citizenry as a whole; only to a small minority of the population. Overall, support on the part of the Old Pueblo's residents was outstanding. As they watched aircrew after aircrew complete training and head for combat, their own efforts increased in support of the war effort. Repeated bond rallies helped to produce millions of dollars for the defense coffers, patriotic citizens rushed to the Red Cross to regularly donate blood, and local businessmen contributed significant amounts of goods and services. After sunset, the city dimmed its lights in compliance with the wartime "brownout" laws.²³

In appreciation of those efforts, Colonel Smith opened the field for a public program on Decoration Day, 1942. For the first time since the attack on Pearl

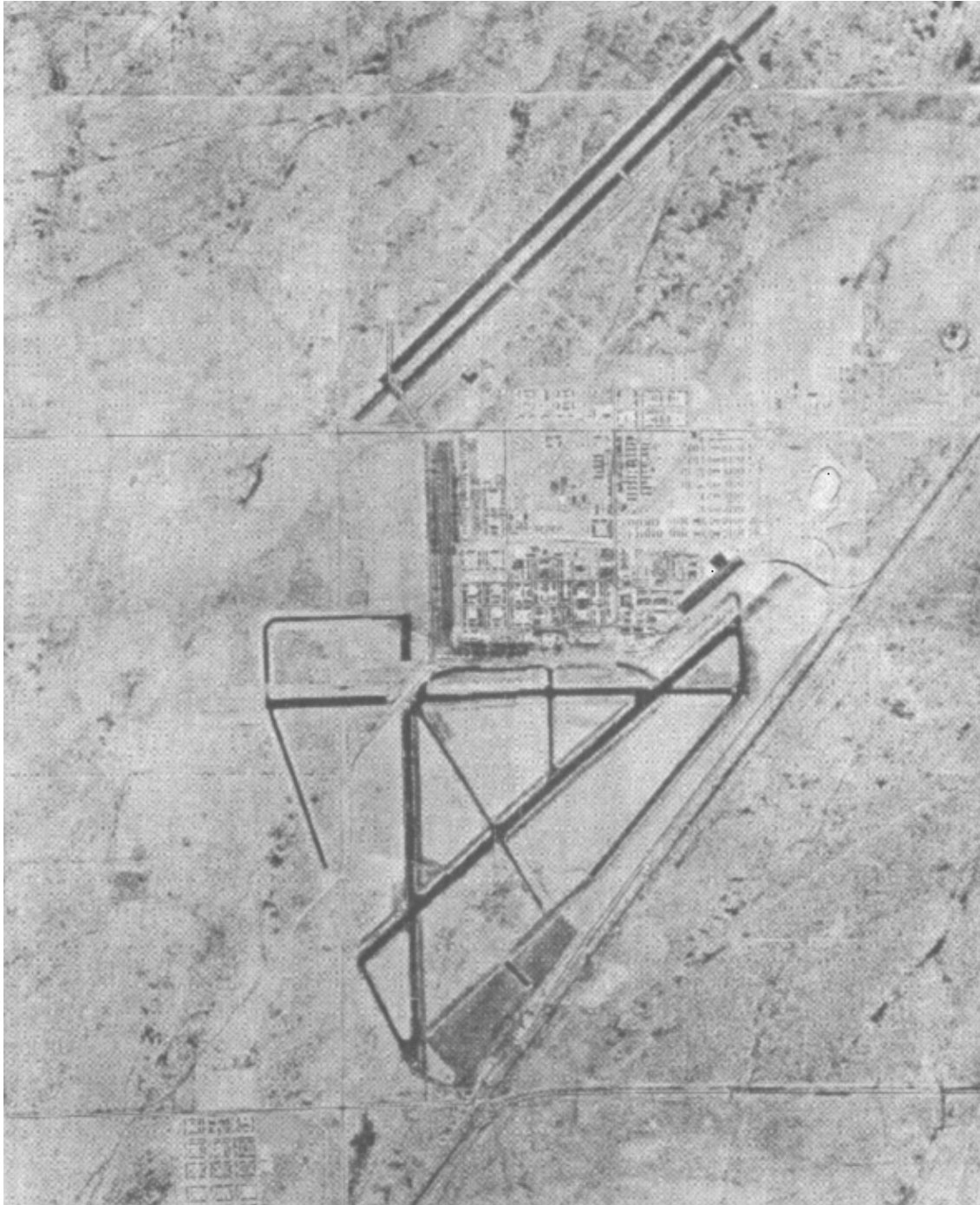
Harbor, visitors were admitted to the base without having to comply with strict gate pass regulations. Several thousand people took advantage of the opportunity. Following a brief ceremony, Colonel Smith reviewed a parade of the field's troops. After giving the visitors a chance to look around, the base was cleared and the spectators moved back out the gate.²⁴



Colonel Lowell Smith reviews the parade held during a bond rally in downtown Tucson in 1942



Tucson's patriotic fervor during World War II was symbolized by repeated bond rallies. These occasions, usually involving parades, displays, demonstrations, and speeches were used to encourage the purchase of war bonds.



Aerial mosaic of Davis-Monthan Field

EXPANSION AND CONSTRUCTION

Growth of the Second Air Force and the subsequent increasing demand for facilities to support the base's personnel and aircraft led to an ambitious building program throughout 1942. The effort was launched with an initial contract of \$900,632 plus several supplemental contracts totaling an additional \$453,085.50. Those contracts covered the construction of various buildings such as dining facilities, barracks, theater, chapel, and hospital buildings. An additional contract was approved for a new aircraft apron and runways which were completed in December 1942.²⁵

Specifically, the construction program was launched under the provisions of Contract W-509-ENG-1934 which originally provided for the expenditure of \$900,652 to construct barracks for 1,562 man (22 buildings), four recreation buildings, five mess halls, a resident officers' mess, and three facilities which served as officers' quarters for 132 man. The funding also covered a program designed to provide 10 operations/administration buildings, 11 hospital buildings, and various other structures. All facilities authorized by the original and supplementary contracts were completed and put into use by 7 October 1942.²⁶

Supplemental Contract #2 called for an expenditure of \$288,140.50 and provided for 14 additional hospital structures and a school building. The third supplemental contract allotted \$100,445 for barracks to accommodate 20 officers and 442 enlisted men. A much smaller fourth supplemental contract for \$64,500 provided for the construction of four celestial navigation towers and a boiler house.²⁷

A section of the field known as "1,000 Man Camp," located immediately east of the present day Base Library, was completed on 24 February 1942. That work was accomplished under Contract W-509-ENG-236 and provided accommodations for 1,050 enlisted men and 44 officers. Another supplemental contract, completed on 23 March 1942, gave the base a "500 Man Camp" just west of the present Base Library.²⁸

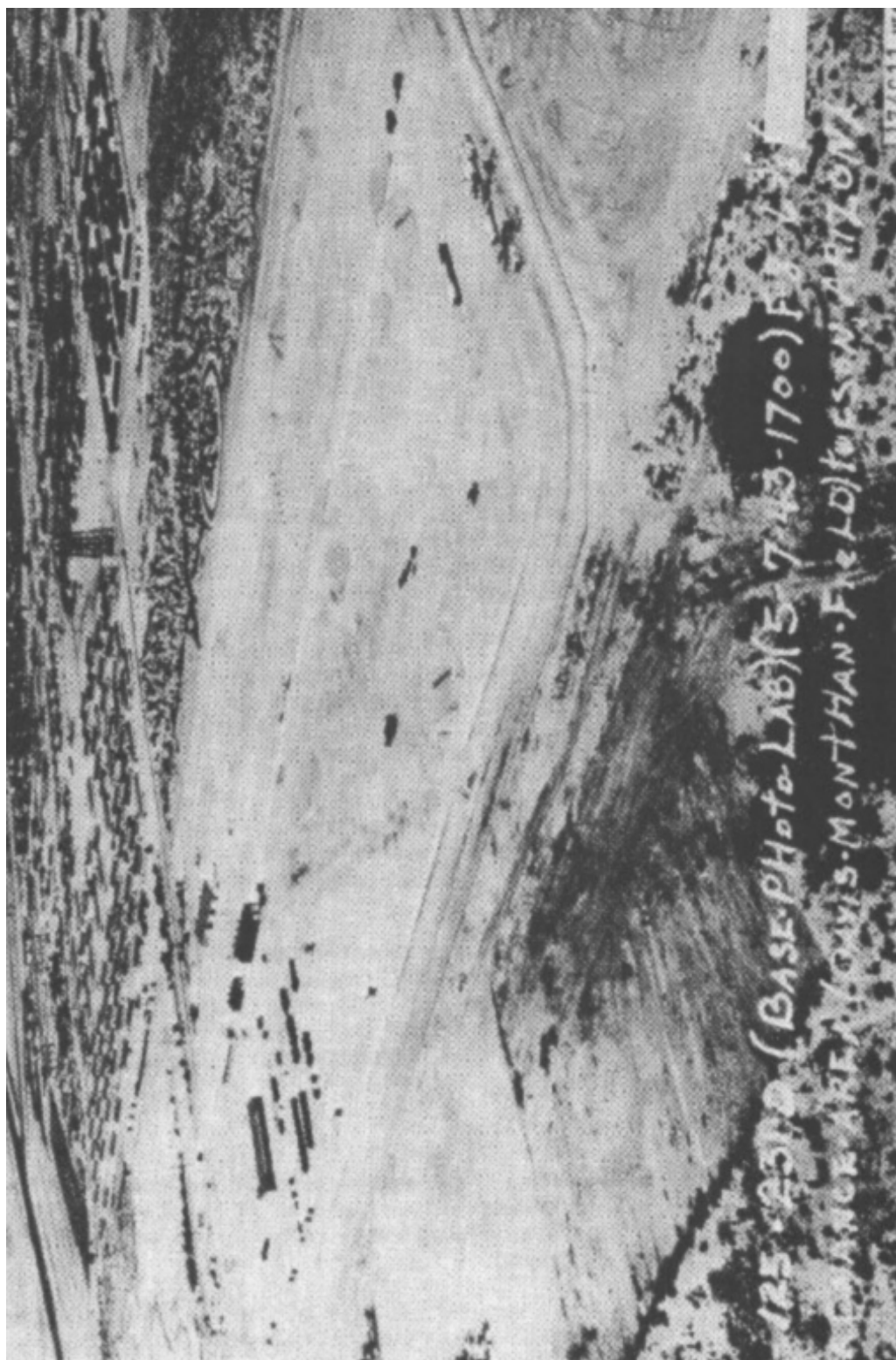
One of the other major construction efforts during the year involved the erection of an engineering shop building with arch rib trusses and steel sashes. The same contract (W-509-ENG-2048) provided for the movement of the parachute building to a new location. All contract requirements for those projects were completed on 4 May 1942 at a total cost of \$107,640.²⁹

On 8 December 1942, the Post Engineers received custody of several buildings at South and West Camps, a Service Club, and additional magazines in the ordnance area. That construction was provided under Contract 2654 at a cost of \$621,925. The same month, Contract 3270 and supplementary contracts (1 through 4 inclusive) were completed. They provided the base with a new aircraft parking apron and additional runways for \$857,487.³⁰

COMBAT CREW TRAINING

Brigadier General Robert Olds, the then newly appointed Commander of Second Air Force, paid an official visit to Davis-Monthan Field on 20 May 1942. During his stay, the general made a point of emphasizing his desire to set a new standard of perfection for flyers trained in the western area.³¹

A seasoned bomber pilot from the earliest days of the B-17 Flying Fortresses in 1937, General Olds stressed the vital importance of America's flyers during World War II. In part, he stated:³²



Ordinance area, Davis-Monthan Field (This area later became the base gold course.

... And by flyers I mean not only pilots, I mean every man who makes up the crews of the four-motor bombers. Not just the pilot and co-pilot, but the navigator, the bombardier, the radio operator, gunners, and aerial engineer.

The American flyer is noted for his daring, ingenuity, and intelligence. Add to that the complete coordination which teaches him to function automatically with all other members of the crew, and you have a flight combination which is unbeatable.

Each man must be perfectly trained, not only in his particular job, but as a component part of the whole crew if maximum efficiency is to be obtained.

Superior combat crews unreservedly extol the expert ability of fellow crew members. Full confidence has been attained in one another, individually and collectively, as a split second accurate team. Then is when flight and squadron commanders have something of real value with which to work. . . that is our Second Air Force objective.

Many of the pilots, bombardiers, and navigators who later trained on four-engined heavy bombers at Davis-Monthan initially came from the base's enlisted ranks. Those who volunteered and were accepted for combat flying training had to pass exhaustive physical and mental tests. They then took further classification examinations to determine which crew positions they would be trained in.³³

The vast majority of the men were without any previous flying experience. Before entering the Army, most had held occupations such as electricians, construction workers, clerks, school teachers, and other assorted specialties. As a result of the selective process they had endured, many were found qualified to train as flying officers. As Air Corps Cadets, they received six months of flight training after which each was awarded a commission and the rank of second lieutenant.³⁴

Immediately after the disaster at Pearl Harbor, the Air Corps found itself faced with a pressing need for complete new flying units of every type. Those units were trained through the Operational Training Unit (OTU) program. At the same time, a Replacement Training Unit (RTU) program was initiated to supply replacements for combat air crews that had been lost to enemy action or reassigned stateside. Davis-Monthan Field's first war-time mission was to provide 12 weeks of OTU instruction to new heavy bombardment units. Those new bombardment outfits had basically been formed by breaking off a cadre of experienced personnel from the groups assigned to the four domestic air forces. The experienced nucleus was supplemented with new graduates from flying and technical schools. Both ground and flying personnel were trained together as each unit was capable of feeding, clothing, and housing itself.³⁵

At Davis-Monthan, the newly acquainted heavy bombardment crews trained together until each individual crew member felt assured that all the rest knew their jobs and could be counted on to do the right thing in an emergency. It was only after they were welded together as a cooperating crew that they were taught how to fly along side other crews.³⁶

Each crew was taught formation flying at high altitudes; first as part of a small flight and then later in a whole squadron. Instruction included evasive formation actions and how to fly steady bombing approaches of less than 20 seconds to avoid anti-aircraft predicted-fire. Gunners were taught to fire not only in the defense of their own planes, but to protect comrade aircraft from fighter attack.³⁷

As air action in the combat theaters increased, so did the need for replacements. Correspondingly, the mission of Davis-Monthan's 39th Bombardment Group changed replacement training. Under that concept, flying personnel were placed under the tutelage of instructor crews; many of whom had vast combat experience. First, the trainees worked at achieving proficiency in individual skills, became familiar with equipment and techniques, and learned to work together as coherent teams.³⁸

Second, they concentrated on formation flying. Upon completion of that phase, they moved on to a training area designed to approximate a battle environment. There, the students flew long formation bombing missions both day and night. It was in this last phase that they learned to live, work, and fight together under simulated combat conditions.³⁹

During those years, changes were also apparent in the organization of the base in relation to its training mission. For instance, the 16th Bombardment Wing was transferred to Davis-Monthan from El Paso, Texas, early in 1943; but was moved back to El Paso in October of that year as the result of the dissolution of the XX Bomber Command. The designation of the 39th Bombardment Group was changed to the 39th Combat Crew Training School (CCTS) on 1 December 1943. By the end of that month, there was a total of 150 combat crews in training at Davis-Monthan. That figure declined steadily until February 1944 when the last OTU group departed the base. Over the next several months, the 39th served only as a training school until March 1944 when a modification to the previous command function placed the Base Commander under the direct supervision of the Second Air Force Commander. Consequently, the strength of the wings was greatly reduced and they became mainly supervisory and inspection units. For the 39th CCTS, the change resulted in it being redesignated as the 233rd Air Force Base Unit.⁴⁰

THE PRICE OF VIGILANCE

In conjunction with a campaign to increase the production schedule for crew training, General Olds called for a vigorous program to eliminate air accidents. Specifically, he advanced a safety plan which created a completely rated chain of command utilizing flying commanders who could do whatever they ordered their subordinates to do. In presenting his plan, he noted that 56 percent of the aircraft accidents which took place during training were due to poor landings and 10 percent involved improper taxiing.⁴¹

To augment the new safety program, Second Air Force designated a limited number of carefully selected locations to which aircraft could proceed when trapped by adverse weather. Those emergency fields were equipped with every known aid to assist in blind approaches. General Olds felt that 80 percent of all aircraft accidents were avoidable and he intended to see that much eliminated.⁴²

However, aircraft accidents in the rushed war-time training environment at Davis-Monthan occurred with an alarming regularity. Between 1941 and 1945, aircraft assigned to the field, or using the base runways, were involved in 26 major aircraft accidents that resulted in the death of more than 145 crew members and passengers.⁴³

One of the earliest of those crashes resulted in injury to only four of an ill-fated plane's 15 passengers. On the night of 23 December 1941, an LB-30 from Davis-Monthan Field crashed into a residence at 3504 E. Elida Street in Tucson. Amazingly, the civilian occupants were home at the time but escaped without injury.⁴⁴

Fate played a significant role in another spectacular accident on 1 February 1943. On that date, a Navy PB-1 patrol bomber crashed into Davis-Monthan's 1,000-man consolidated mess hall. The crash killed the two Navy fliers and one air base soldier. The resulting fire destroyed the plane and most of the building.⁴⁵

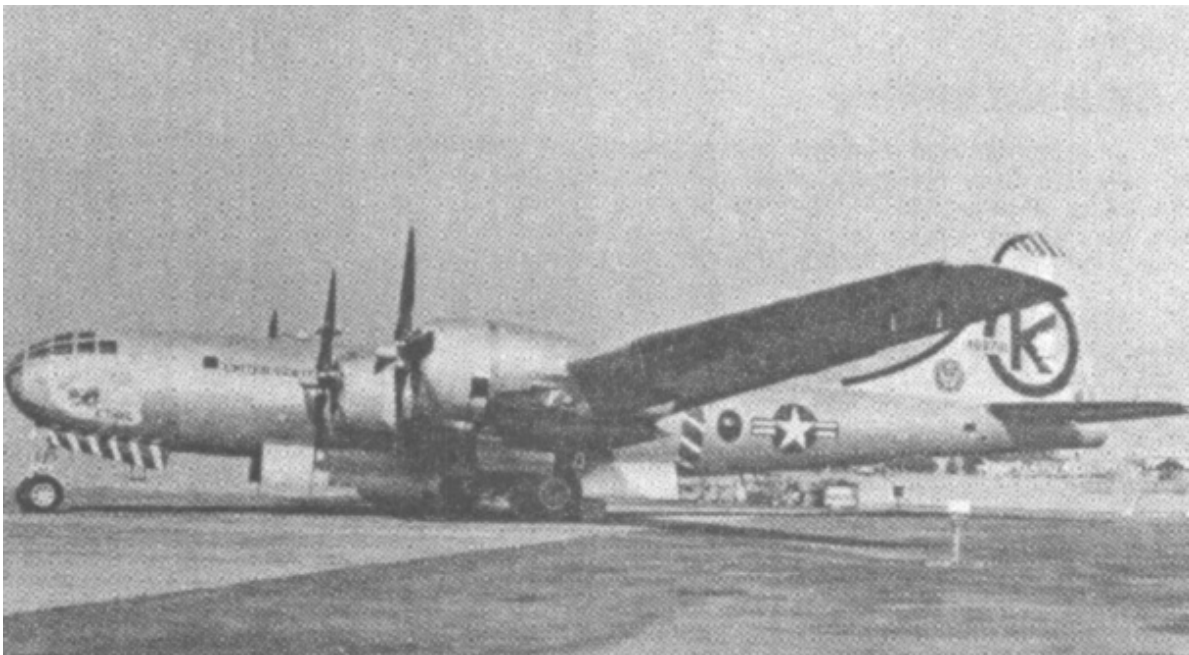
Twenty men were inside the building at the time the plane ripped through the structure. Several were eating in the East Wing while a number of cooks and kitchen personnel were at work in the central portion of the facility when the aircraft struck. Although the building immediately burst into flames, all of those inside were able to escape without injury.⁴⁶

The body of an innocent bystander, Sergeant Roy West, was not discovered until two hours after the flames were extinguished. It was subsequently determined that he had been walking in front of the facility when struck by the careening plane. Ironically, Sergeant West had just been promoted that morning and was carrying temporary duty orders directing him to proceed to Texas.⁴⁷

Following inspection of the wreckage, base engineering officials reported that the mess hall was a total loss and would require complete replacement. A crew of men was immediately put to work clearing away the debris. In less than two months, on 26 March, construction of the replacement facility was completed at a cost of \$55,716.⁴⁸

CONVERSION TO THE B-29 SUPERFORTRESS

Davis-Monthan Field was well on its way to converting to a B-29 Superfortress training program in December 1944. Under the supervision of the U. S. Corps of Engineers, work began on 20 December on a War Department approved \$1.5 million construction effort necessary to support the big B-29. The first Superfortress arrived at the base just nine days later.⁴⁹



B-29 Superfortress

With the graduation of Class TU-1-18 on 10 January 1945, B-24 Liberator combat crew training came to a standstill for the first time in two years. Although training was curtailed, there was little let up in activity as personnel prepared new schedules, attended B-29 technical schools, and reviewed the program in anticipation of the arrival of the first Superfortress crews. In line with the change in mission, Second Air Force authorized a new manning ceiling of 6,570 assigned static personnel. That number included 4,239 enlisted members, 600 officers, and 1,741 civilians. In comparison to the 31 December 1944 levels, the change reflected an overall increase of 1,961 billets to support the new Superfortress training mission.⁵⁰

When B-29 training began on 6 February 1945, instructor personnel had to face the complex problems of new gunnery, bombing, and navigation equipment. That was in addition to learning to fly a new and considerably more complicated aircraft. Long range cruise problems and large crews were other troublesome factors which accompanied the changeover. By the end of April, the inventory of B-29s at Davis-Monthan had increased to 44. Of those, however, only 25 percent were in commission.⁵¹

As the field's mission underwent revision, so did the command structure. Specifically, command jurisdiction over Davis-Monthan was turned over to the 16th Bombardment Operational Training Wing (BOTW) on 8 February. The change was made in line with a general reorganization of combat crew training wings in Second Air Force. Since 5 September 1944, the field had been directly responsible to Headquarters, Second Air Force, Colorado Springs, Colorado. With the return of command authority to the 16th BOTW, Second Air Force was once again provided with an intermediate commander who could exercise control over other Second Air Force units in the southwest.⁵²

However, the period of Davis-Monthan's involvement as a B-29 training center was short-lived with an abrupt end coming soon after the cessation of World War II in August 1945. The end of the short eight-month effort came as a welcome relief for almost everyone involved in the B-29 program at Davis-Monthan. During its brief existence, the base's B-29 training program had been plagued by a series of minor and major aircraft accidents. All told, there had been 12 major Superfortress crashes during the period.⁵³

SOLO IN A SUPERFORTRESS

Although the inherent airworthiness of the mammoth Superfortresses might have been questionable, the quality of training was not. A tribute to that training was received on 23 June 1945. On that date, a 23-year old veteran of the European theater, First Lieutenant Morgan C. Higham, rode a blazing B-29 down alone for a safe landing at the base after ordering his crew to take to the "chutes."⁵⁴

While flying a routine combat training mission north and east of Tucson, Lieutenant Higham suddenly became aware of a fire in one of his engines. After ordering the crew to bail out, the pilot chose to remain with the plane rather than allow it to crash into a populated area of the Catalina Mountain foothills. Alone in the huge bomber, he managed to bring the blazing aircraft in for a successful landing. Crash wagons and fire trucks were waiting as the plane ended its roll. The flames were extinguished and the solo pilot emerged unhurt.⁵⁵

**At the time of the incident, many of Higham's fellow pilots claimed that this feat was probably the first time any individual had ever soloed in a B-29. This historian, however, was unable to locate any supporting evidence to back up that claim.*

When asked why he chose to remain with the crippled Superfortress, Higham remarked:⁵⁶

After all of my crew had parachuted from the ship, the only reason I didn't bail out was because I was on the residential edge of the city, and I figured that with a full load of gasoline, someone would catch it, so I just didn't have the heart to.

D-M SOLDIER HANGED

One of the most somber, yet least known, events in the history of Davis-Monthan Field took place on 26 March 1943. On that day, Colonel Lowell H. Smith had to face up to one of the most disturbing decisions he had ever encountered; so disturbing, in fact, that he had expressed serious doubts about his ability to function as the Base Commander. Nevertheless, he faced up to those responsibilities and reluctantly gave the command that consummated the first and only execution ever conducted at the field. His order at 0700 that morning put a quick end to the life of Private Francis A. Line.⁵⁷

Just a few minutes before, the calm and resolute young soldier made a statement advising other young men to stay away from strong liquor and young girls. He had been convicted the previous October for the rape of a 12-year-old girl in nearby Tucson.⁵⁸

The temporary gallows had been constructed at a considerable distance from the other inhabited buildings on the field.* Besides the soldiers and officers directly concerned with the execution, the only other witnesses were a few officers and two civilians.⁵⁹

WOMEN ALSO SERVED

With the growth of the war effort during the 1940s, and the resulting drain on available manpower, military and civilian women began to assume an increasingly important role in the operation of the field. Typical of that movement were the civilian women who drove everything from dump trucks to carryalls while performing double duty which included maintenance of their vehicles. Other female employees were hired immediately after graduation from high school and put to work as parachute riggers at the base.⁶⁰

The first contingent of 49 WAACs (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps) and two female officers arrived at Davis-Monthan Field on 20 May 1943 to form the 757th WAAC Detachment. They were assigned to various duties throughout the base. Of those, a large percentage performed in specialties which were considered non-traditional. For example, female maintenance jobs on the flight line included aircraft mechanics, sheet metal workers, welders, and instrument technicians. Others served in more technically oriented fields such as link trainer operators, photo lab technicians, and hospital technicians. The abilities of the women were well recognized as evidenced by an article in the Tucson Daily Citizen in which Colonel Lowell Smith was quoted as saying: "The WAACs are working effectively at Davis-Monthan, and we are proud of them."⁶¹

*Although specific documentation was not available to pinpoint the exact location of the execution, interviews with several people assigned to the base during that period indicate that the wooden gallows was constructed in the area of the base now occupied by the golf course parking lot.

DEWEY SIMPSON RETIRES

Major Dewey Simpson bade farewell to a long-time involvement in Davis-Monthan history during April 1945 when he retired after serving in the Army since 1916. Known as the "First G.I." at Davis-Monthan Field, he relinquished his post as the Commander of the all-Black Company "C" when he retired.⁶²

Prior to receiving his commission as a captain in December 1942, Major Simpson had served as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Army's small airfield detachment in Tucson for 16 years. In 1929, he left the Army temporarily to accept a position with Standard Airlines but reenlisted in 1931 and returned to duty at Tucson. Until the creation of Tucson Air Base, life had been relatively quiet at the municipal airport where Simpson's small crew refueled and performed emergency repairs for transient Army planes. When the Air Corps moved in on a larger scale, Master Sergeant Simpson took over as the Line Chief for the 32nd Air Base Squadron until he received his commission in 1942.⁶³

PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMP

One of the least known historical facts about Davis-Monthan during the war years was the existence of the 1949th Service Command Unit prisoner-of-war camp for German captives. Establishment of the camp had been requested by base officials early in 1944, but it wasn't until May 1945 that the meager sum of \$10,024.15 was authorized for materials to build the required compound. Construction labor for the project was provided by 36 German naval POWs brought down temporarily from Phoenix's Papago Park POW Camp. The new compound was located between Eighth and Ninth Streets and extended from "L" to "N" Streets. In relation to present day facilities, the camp was situated east of Craycroft Road in an area behind the Base Theater and Recreation Center.⁶⁴

When the compound was finished, the initial group of construction-POWs was returned to Papago Park. Soon afterwards, on 19 June 1945, Davis-Monthan received 135 German prisoners-of-war when a truck convoy arrived on base from Papago Park. All had been prisoners for some time. Having been sent to the base by the Ninth Service Command, the newly arrived POWs were immediately put to work on different manual labor details throughout the field. First priority went to kitchen police duty, and second to general duty.⁶⁵

Located at what was then considered a remote area of the base, the tightly enclosed stockade included the prisoners' own mess facility and post exchange. Internees washed their own clothes and bedding. They were fed on a restricted diet which did not include butter, grade-one meats, or any other food items that were listed as critical to the air base.⁶⁶ Working prisoners were paid the internationally-established rate of eighty cents per day in the form of post exchange coupons. Although not permitted to purchase tobacco products, they could buy shaving equipment, reading material, and living necessities. All clothing issued to the POWs was termed "Class X" which meant it was unsuitable for issue to Army personnel. With the exception of underwear, shorts and caps, all prisoner attire was stamped with the initials "PW" in large six-inch letters.⁶⁷

The camp, however, remained in existence for only a short time before it was discontinued on 31 March 1946. Nothing remains on the base today to suggest that the prisoner facility was ever present. The stockade was demolished long ago and only two cactus-covered vacant lots exist today to mark the spot where the compound once stood.⁶⁸

SEPARATION CENTER

The cessation of war in Europe resulted in the return of huge numbers of troops, many of whom were sent to Davis-Monthan to relieve static personnel for reassignment to overseas duty in the Pacific Theater. As a result, during August 1945, the base witnessed an extensive turn-over of personnel. The same month also saw large parties at the field and in Tucson as the airmen and local citizens joyously celebrated V-J Day. Victory over Japan! The war was over at long last.⁶⁹

With the Japanese capitulation came radical changes at Davis-Monthan Field. Prior to September, the primary mission of the base had been training. That soon changed, however, when Davis-Monthan became one of three installations in Second Air Force charged with the responsibility of separation processing.⁷⁰

As expected, the transition to a separation mission brought with it a myriad of problems. The field temporarily suffered from severe overcrowding while crammed with 11,614 people in September. Correspondingly, the morale, welfare, and recreation facilities were taxed to their limits. Organizations such as Special Services, the Red Cross, and the service clubs worked long hours to combat the problems of forced idleness and anxiety over separation from the service. Those conditions were later reduced by a small degree as the result of more liberal directives from higher headquarters concerning leaves and furloughs for both officers and enlisted personnel. In spite of those many difficulties, the base was able to adapt. Within a month, the Separation Center was operating as a smoothly functioning organization and nearing its quota of separating 300 military personnel per day. When the Separation Center was finally closed on 30 November 1945, a total of 9,435 people had been processed through it.⁷¹

CHAPTER IV

THIRTY YEARS OF SAC STEWARDSHIP

A NEW STRATEGIC ROLE

Davis-Monthan Field, no longer charged with the responsibilities of B-29 training and personnel processing, passed from the jurisdiction of Second Air Force to the San Antonio Air Technical Service Command (SAATSC) on 15 November 1945. Subsequently, the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) was activated and assigned the mission of extended aircraft storage for Army Air Force planes. It was additionally given the responsibility for maintenance of the base's lifeless flight line and its profusion of deserted buildings. For a brief period, aircraft storage was the only activity taking place at the once bustling airfield.*¹

This period of general inactivity, however, lasted only long enough to serve as a convenient reference point for future historians. Modern Davis-Monthan history began on 31 March 1946 when the newly formed Strategic Air Command (SAC) assumed jurisdiction. The next day, the 248th Army Air Force Base Unit took over host unit responsibilities as a part of Fifteenth Air Force. The 4105th AAF Base Unit continued to conduct operations under the command of SAATSC as an aircraft storage detachment in accordance with a prior transfer agreement. At the time of the transfer, the field had a total population of 279 officers and enlisted personnel. Although the numbers were few, the air was filled with excitement as preparations began to resurrect the field.²

The first elements of SAC's 444th Bombardment Group (BG), the 40th BG, the 25th Air Service Group, and the 28th Air Service Group arrived at Davis-Monthan on 6 May 1946. The 444th had formerly been stationed at Castle Field, California, while the 40th had arrived from Merced Army Air Field, California. Once again, the skies over Tucson began to fill with the thunderous din of flights of B-29s; this time in a strategic rather than a training role.³

Due to the fact that the base was in a virtually inactive status prior to the assignment of the bombardment groups and was further handicapped by a lack of personnel and equipment, support during the reactivation period varied in degree from very limited to nonexistent. Therefore, on 24 May, the 444th BG and the 248th AAF Base Unit were combined in an effort to make the best possible use of available personnel and equipment. It was explained at the time that both units, while retaining their respective identities, would work together on a co-equal basis under the direct control of the Base Commander for the purpose of accomplishing the overall station mission.⁴

JACKSON CITY

The arrival of the 40th and 444th Bombardment Groups created an immediate housing problem as three-fourths of the incoming personnel were married and had families. Although the housing situation in the Tucson area had been critical for some time, publicity carried by local newspapers and radio stations—combined with the efforts of the Tucson Chamber of Commerce—resulted in the accommodation of a large percentage of the incoming families. To handle the overflow, an interim emergency Housing Program was established by base officials. Four unused hospital barracks were put back into commission by dividing them into single- and double-room units. The resulting apartments were furnished with beds, chests of drawers, and portable clothes closets. Several buildings in the vacant WAAC area and an empty BOQ (Bachelor Officers Quarters) underwent the same transformation. The entire project was conducted under the supervision of Captain Loren E. Jackson, Base

*See Chapter V for a comprehensive discussion of the storage mission over the years.

Housing Officer. His continued involvement in the effort resulted in the unofficial name of "Jackson City" for the temporary housing area.⁵

In spite of those initial efforts, the base was still unable to provide enough temporary housing to meet the needs of the growing military population. As a result, base officials had to approach the Federal Public Housing Administration (FPHA) and the Tucson Housing Committee for further help. The request was met with the donation of 24 additional West Camp barracks for conversion.⁶

That was when the real work began. All of the barracks had to be dismantled and removed from the West Camp area before the end of February 1947. Personnel already living in "Jackson City" were given the task. They worked during their off-duty hours until all of the buildings were located on Davis-Monthan proper. As part of the people were dismantling, moving, and reassembling the old barracks, another group was busily converting them into apartments.⁷

Once the entire project was completed, the "Jackson City" emergency housing area was able to accommodate 102 military families. As in any other small town, the area had its own unique problems. A shortage of pipe for plumbing facilities necessitated a return to the old method of using round tubs and buckets to haul and store water. Each barracks, however, did have a bath arrangement which was shared by three families. Additional fixtures such as lamps, stoves, and refrigerators had to be provided by the occupants. The top three noncommissioned officer grades relinquished their entire housing allowance for the temporary quarters, but the lower grade personnel had to pay only a \$6.00 per month utility fee.⁸

43RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP

Although two bombardment groups were assigned to Davis-Monthan, both were considerably under strength. As a result, in September 1946, the 40th Bombardment Group and 25th Air Service Group had their assigned manning reduced to one officer and one enlisted man each. The remaining personnel and equipment were transferred to the 444th BG and the 28th ASG. Then on 1 October, both the 40th and 444th were inactivated and their personnel and equipment were transferred to the 43rd Bombardment Group which was again activated at Davis-Monthan on the same date.⁹

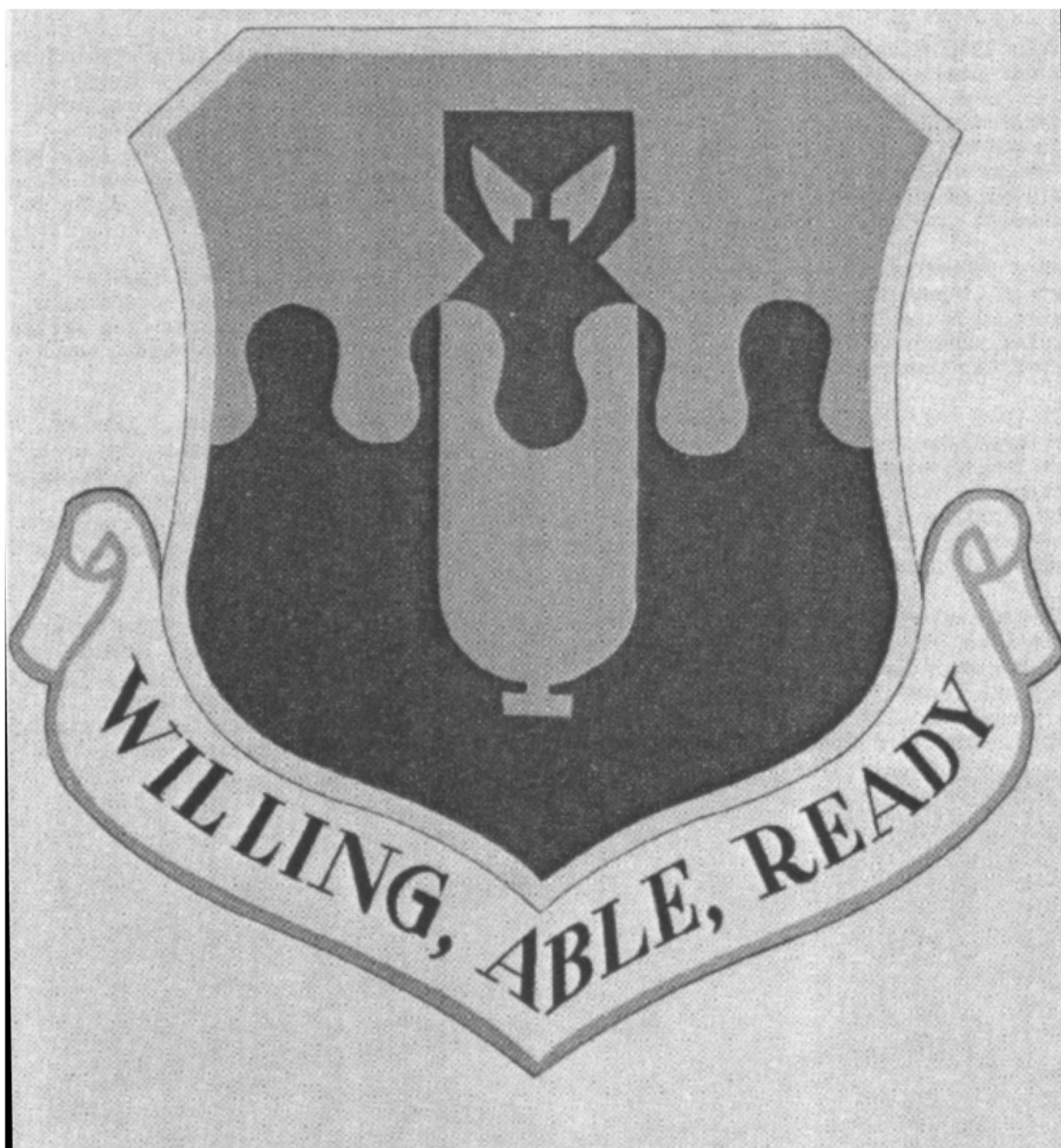
Along with that change came a reorganization of the existing Group-Base Unit policy. The new policy made the Base Unit subordinate to the Group. On 5 October, Colonel James C. Selser, Jr., Commander of the 43rd BG, assumed the additional position of Base Commander as a result of the reorganization.¹⁰

On 19 November 1946, command jurisdiction over the 43rd BG and its attendant facilities was transferred from Fifteenth Air Force to Eighth Air Force. That action followed a similar transfer of jurisdiction over the base which had taken effect earlier on 1 November.¹¹

EIGHTH AIR FORCE ERA

MAJOR OPERATIONS

The 43rd Bombardment Group found itself thrust into the international spotlight on 13 November 1946 when Colonel Selser led a flight of six B-29 Superfortresses from Davis-Monthan to Rhein-Main Air Field, Germany. They remained in Europe for almost two weeks during which time they visited several European



43rd Bombardment Group

capitals, reviewed numerous airfields to evaluate their possible use for B-29 operations, and most importantly, flew several missions along the border of Soviet-occupied territory.¹²

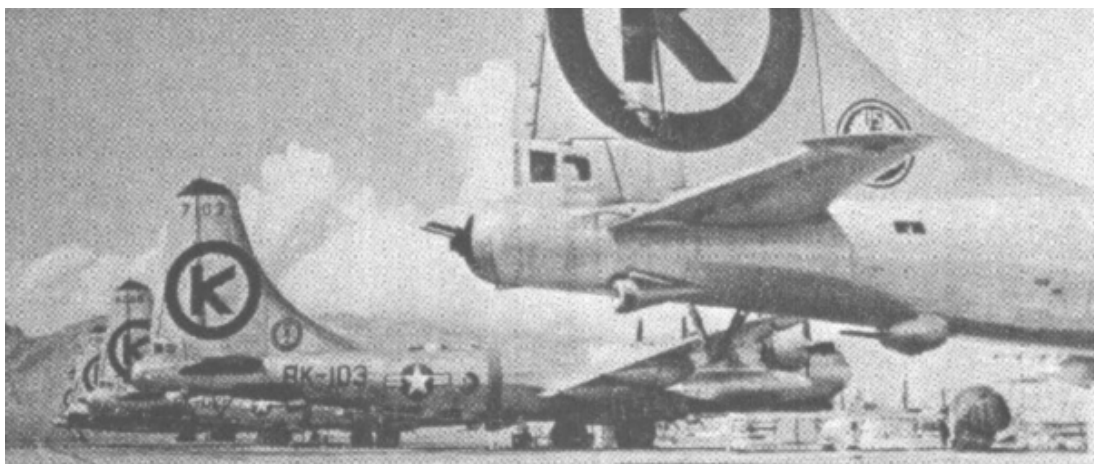
This trans-Atlantic mission had been planned and executed after two C-47s were shot down over Yugoslavia. While the 43rd's Superfortresses posed no significant threat to the Soviet Union, they did effectively demonstrate the United States' intention not to abandon Western Europe to Communist aggression. From a historical standpoint, the mission was especially important because it marked the first instance in which SAC bombers were used as an instrument of international diplomacy.¹³

From 1946 through 1950, the 43rd was also involved in a myriad of other operations, exercises, deployments, and record-setting missions. In May 1947, the Group participated in 12 days of maneuvers at Wendover Field, Utah. The deployment was considered an outstanding accomplishment in terms of training for the unit.¹⁴ Upon its return from Wendover Field, the 43rd immediately began intensive preparations for the Strategic Air Command's first "Maximum Effort" formation mission scheduled to be flown over 10 eastern United States cities. On 16 May 1947, Colonel Selser led his group's B-29s to a successful completion of the historic operation.¹⁵

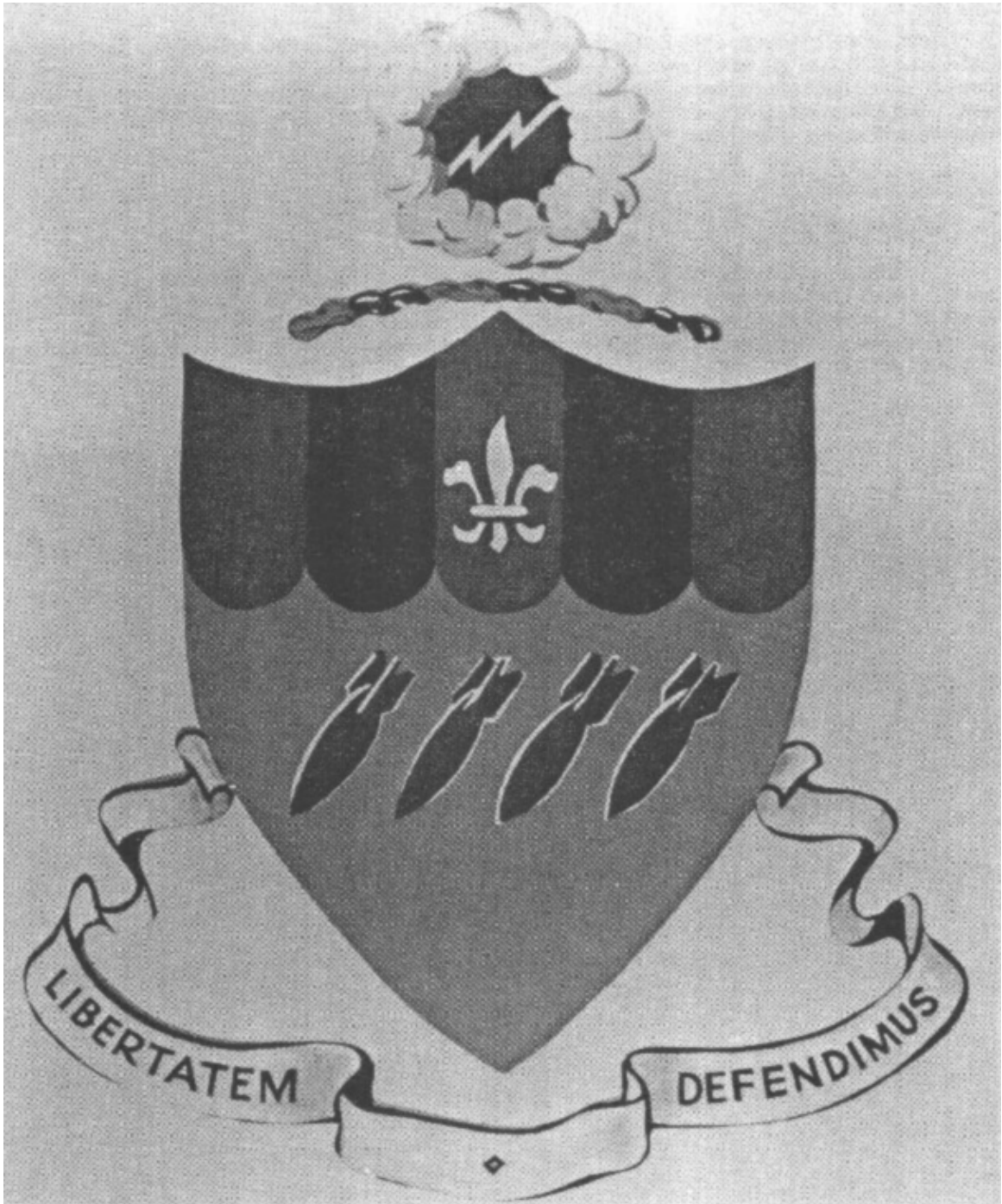
Nine Superfortresses of the Group's 65th Bombardment Squadron departed Davis-Monthan on 25 May for Yakota, Japan. There, they participated in 30 days of training maneuvers with the Far East Air Force. The 65th's deployment was the first of a series of similar undertakings that would be accomplished by the 43rd's three tactical squadrons over the forthcoming years.¹⁶

In July 1947, the 2nd Bombardment Group was assigned to Davis-Monthan. However, it was immediately reassigned to temporary duty at Andrews Field, Maryland. The unit did not become operational until it arrived at its more permanent home at Davis-Monthan in September 1947. The 43rd and 2nd were subsequently upgraded to "Wing" status and for the first time, Davis-Monthan became a dual-wing base. However, the 2nd Bombardment Wing (BW) remained at the desert base for only a short time before it was transferred to Chatham AFB, Georgia, in April 1949.¹⁷

Davis-Monthan Field was officially redesignated as Davis-Monthan Air Force Base on 13 January 1948. The change was part of a blanket revision in which all installations formerly called airfields were redesignated as air force bases. Just a little over a month later, on 20 February, the first B-50 in the SAC inventory (A Model, Serial Number 46-017) landed at Davis-Monthan AFB and was delivered to the 43rd Bombardment Wing. The



43rd Bombardment Group B-50As modified to "D" model with external fuel tanks



2nd Bombardment Wing

43rd Air Refueling Squadron (ARS) was assigned to the base on 18 June 1948. Along with the 509th ARS (Roswell AFB, New Mexico), the new unit shared the honor of being the first air refueling squadrons in the Air Force. Both units began receiving tanker aircraft—specially modified B-29s designated KB-29Ms—late in 1948. Those early tankers utilized the British refueling system of trailing hoses and grapnel hooks.¹⁸

From 1947 through 1949, the base supported between 5,000 and 6,000 personnel. The field had 280,000 square feet of parking aprons and 142,000 square feet of warehousing space. The tactical groups used four hangars and five runways, the longest being 8,000 feet. Approximately 400 family housing units were available to support the military members and their families.¹⁹

HISTORIC FLIGHTS

PACUSAN DREAMBOAT

The 43rd wasted no time in establishing itself in the book of great aviation feats. Just three days after the unit's reactivation, one of its B-29s, *PACUSAN DREAMBOAT*, took off from Hawaii on a historic non-stop flight to Cairo, Egypt. The following year, *PACUSAN DREAMBOAT* went on to establish the international closed course aviation records.²⁰



PACUSAN DREAMBOAT

HAWAII TO CAIRO FLIGHT

The 10,000-mile flight of the *PACUSAN DREAMBOAT* from Hawaii to Cairo was initially planned to break the then existing non-stop record of 7,929 miles. Just a few days before the scheduled departure, however, a Navy P2V, the *TRUCULENT TURTLE*, completed an 11,236 mile non-stop flight from Perth, Australia to Columbus, Ohio. Although a record was no longer possible, it was decided to go ahead with the flight on the basis of the valuable operational lessons that would result.²¹

In the early morning hours of 4 October 1946, the extensively modified Superfortress piloted by Colonel Clarence S. Irvine departed Hickam Field. The flight took *PACUSAN DREAMBOAT* over Alaska, the North Pole region, Iceland, England, France, Italy, and across the Mediterranean to Cairo. On 6 October, after 39 hours and 36 minutes in the air, the big B-29 landed at its destination.²²

The aircraft had previously undergone several modifications to make such a long distance mission possible. Specifically, it had been equipped with a stronger landing gear and heavier fuselage. Enlarged bomb bay gasoline tanks held the 13,000 gallons of fuel required for the flight. Take-off weight was established at 147,000 pounds; 27,000 pounds over the standard B-29s maximum gross weight.²³

INTERNATIONAL 10,000 KILOMETER SPEED RECORD

On 31 July 1947, the *PACUSAN DREAMBOAT* added an international air record to its rapidly growing list of aviation achievements when it established a new 10,000 kilometer closed course speed record. To earn that accolade, the aircraft flew a 2,500 kilometer course between Dayton, Ohio and Benson, Arizona four times in 22 hours and 27 minutes.²⁴

The mammoth B-29, piloted by Lt Col Olbert F. Lassiter, averaged 277 miles per hour during the 6,214 mile trip. The total elapsed time bettered the previous record, established by Commandant Rossi and Adjutant-Chief Emont of France in 1939, by almost 10 hours.²⁵

INTERNATIONAL CLOSED COURSE DISTANCE RECORD

PACUSAN DREAMBOAT went on to establish its second international record within a week when it flew 8,854.3 miles over a triangular course. The plane took off at 0723 on 1 August 1947 from MacDill Field, Florida. It landed 39 hours later at the same place after having twice traversed a triangular course between MacDill Field, Davis-Monthan Field, and Andrews Field. Lieutenant Colonel Lassiter again served as the command pilot for this second record-breaking flight.²⁶

The new distance record eclipsed the former mark established by Angelo Tondi, Roberto Dagasso, and Ferruccio Vignoli of Italy in 1939. The Italians had flown 8,037.8 miles in a tri-motor Savoia-Marchetti S-82PD over a closed course which originated in Rome.²⁷

LUCKY LADY AND GAS GOBBLER

Davis-Monthan once again found itself in the world aviation spotlight on 22 July 1948 when three B-29s of the 43rd Bombardment Wing departed the base in an attempt to circle the globe. The 15-day mission had been originally scheduled to take 14 days, but a delay was experienced when one of the aircraft crashed into the Arabian Sea killing 17 of its 18 crew members.²⁸

The two remaining B-29s (*LUCKY LADY* and *GAS GOBBLER*) finished the mission and landed back at Davis-Monthan on 6 August. The 20,000 mile flight had required eight intermediate stops and 103 hours, 50 minutes of actual flying time. First Lieutenant A. M. Neal commanded the *LUCKY LADY* and Lieutenant Colonel R. W. Kline commanded the *GAS GOBBLER*.²⁹

B-36 / B-50 ROUND-TRIP FLIGHT TO HAWAII

From 7 to 9 December 1948, a B-50A from the 43rd Bombardment Wing at Davis-Monthan joined with a B-36B of the 7th Bombardment Wing in a record setting non-stop flight from Carswell AFB, Texas, to Hawaii and back. The B-36 flew an 8,000 mile mission in 35 hours and 30 minutes. The 43rd's B-50, however, flew a much longer route of 9,870 miles in 41 hours and 40 minutes. During the flight, the B-50 underwent three aerial refuelings by KB-29 tankers assigned to the 43rd and 509th Air Refueling Squadrons.³⁰

LUCKY LADY II

On 2 March 1949, *LUCKY LADY II*, a Davis-Monthan-based B-50A assigned to the 43rd Bombardment Wing, completed a 23,452 mile non-stop flight around the world. The crew of the record-setting aircraft was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for participation in the epic mission. The crew members went on to garner the coveted Mackay Trophy which was awarded by the National Aeronautic Association for the outstanding flight of 1949.³¹

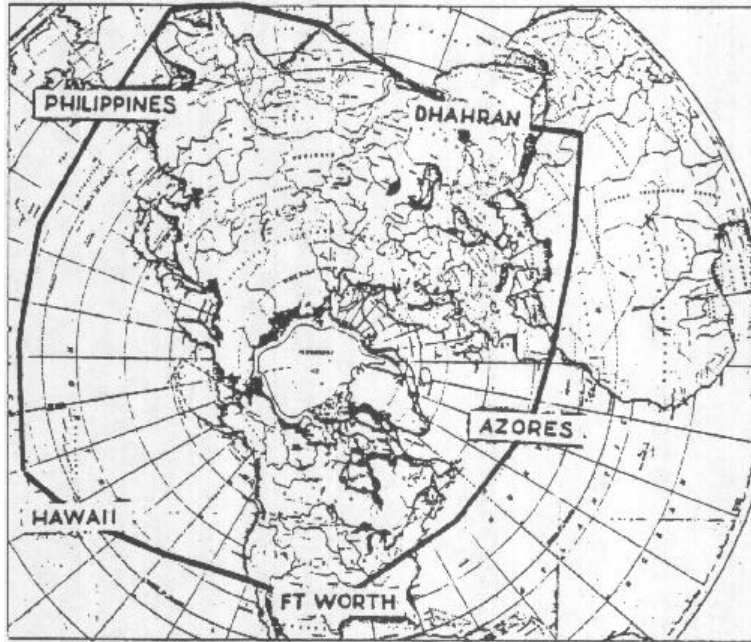
LUCKY LADY II's participation in the spectacular flight had been planned and executed under the secure blanket of extreme secrecy. The first blueprint for the mission calling for six B-50s to depart the United States individually at 24-hour intervals had been examined by Headquarters SAC in December 1948 and pronounced feasible the following month. That plan, however, was subsequently dropped in favor of a single aircraft flight wherein several planes were alerted for the mission. Each aircraft beginning the record-setting attempt was to continue on until it was forced down or it completed the mission at Carswell AFB. Each of the alerted planes was required to remain on the ground until its predecessor could no longer continue.³²

Paramount to the planning process was the problem of aerial refueling. At the beginning of 1949, the art of refueling in the air was still, for all practical purposes, in its infancy. A successful around-the-world flight would require the completion of a series of flawless fuel transfers. With that in mind, the SAC Director of Operations explained to the Secretary of the Air Force (perhaps a little too optimistically) that a single-plane, around-the-world flight attempt would have about a 25 percent chance for success.³³

Elaborate preparations were made to conceal the flight during its planning and execution stages. The 43rd Bombardment Wing, due to its extensive experience in flying and maintaining the formidable B-50, was selected to provide the crews and aircraft for the attempt. Each of the five legs of the mission was handled as a separate entity to conceal the fact that the flight was continuous. At the beginning of each outward leg, the aircraft number was changed and a new radio operator took over communications. Everyone involved was sworn to strict secrecy, including the crew members who could not even give a hint to their families about what was to transpire.³⁴

A few days before *LUCKY LADY II*'s departure, another B-50 (the *GLOBAL QUEEN*) had departed Carswell to attempt the record flight. However, a serious engine fire had forced it to land prematurely in the Azores. As a result, *LUCKY LADY II* (under the command of Captain James G. Gallagher) made ready and took off from Carswell with its 14-member crew at 1221 on 26 February with the same around-the-world flight plan.³⁵

LUCKY LADY II was refueled a total of four times during the mission by KB-29 tankers assigned to the 43rd and 509th Air Refueling Squadrons. The transfers took place over the Azores, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, and Hawaii. Although some minor mechanical problems were encountered along the way,* the oil-streaked and smoking B-50 touched back down at Carswell at 0931, Wednesday, 2 March 1949; successfully completing the first non-stop circumnavigation of the world.³⁶



Route of Lucky Lady II's non-stop around-the-world record flight

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ERA

REORGANIZATION

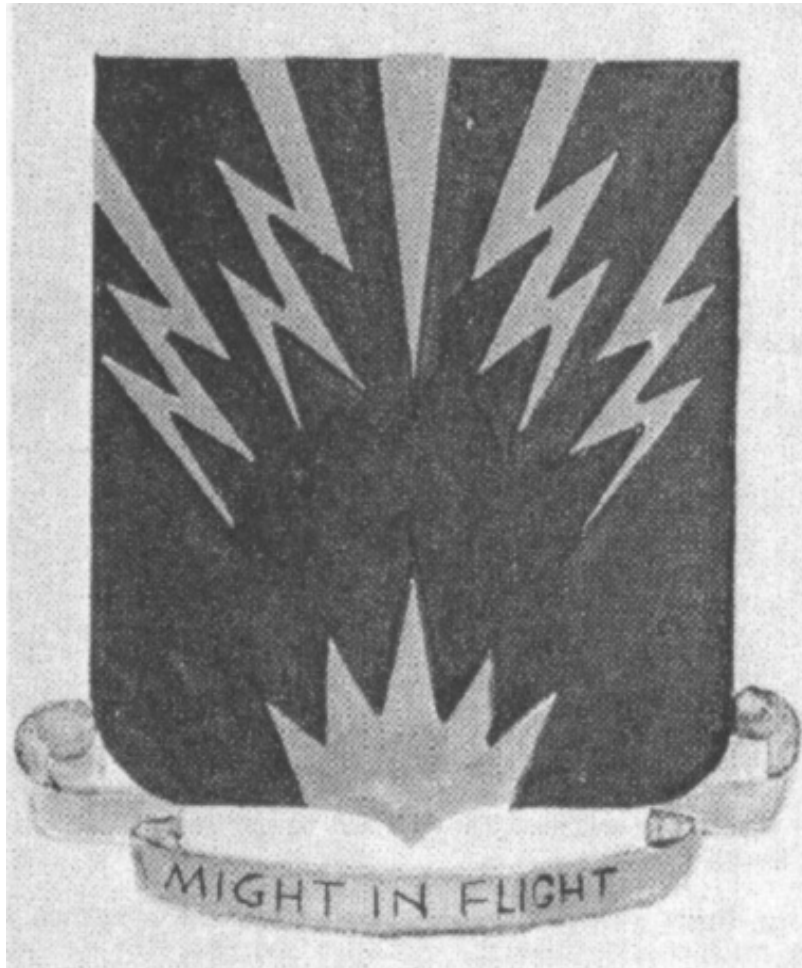
Until early 1950, each of the three numbered air forces assigned to SAC generally managed specific and distinct types of operations and weapon systems. For example, Eighth Air Force was mostly involved with medium and heavy bombers; Fifteenth Air Force with medium bombers; and Second Air Force was almost exclusively associated with reconnaissance activities. As a result, some units reported to numbered air forces that were located at extreme distances from their operations. Those geographical factors, combined with the integration of B-50s and B-36s into the command, required an organizational structure established on a geographical rather than a functional basis. Correspondingly, Second Air Force was assigned responsibility for the eastern portion of the United States, Eighth had the central region, and Fifteenth managed the western portion. Because of that reorganization, Davis-Monthan AFB was once again placed under the jurisdiction of Fifteenth Air Force on 1 April 1950.³⁷

*Those mechanical problems included: an inoperative No. 2 fuel tank pump, failure of a set of propellor deicers, oil cooler malfunction, carburetor vapor eliminator (No. 4 engine) failure, loose intercooler flap, and two backfiring engines.



Captain Lynn H. Mouthop gives his crew a final briefing before a mission from Davis-Monthan. This was a regular scene with the crew and equipment getting a final once over before the flight of one of the 43 B-50s. (18 July 1950)

On 4 September 1951, the 43rd was joined at Davis-Monthan by a B-29 unit, the 303rd Bombardment Wing. On the same date, the two wings welcomed the base's first air division, the 36th.³⁸

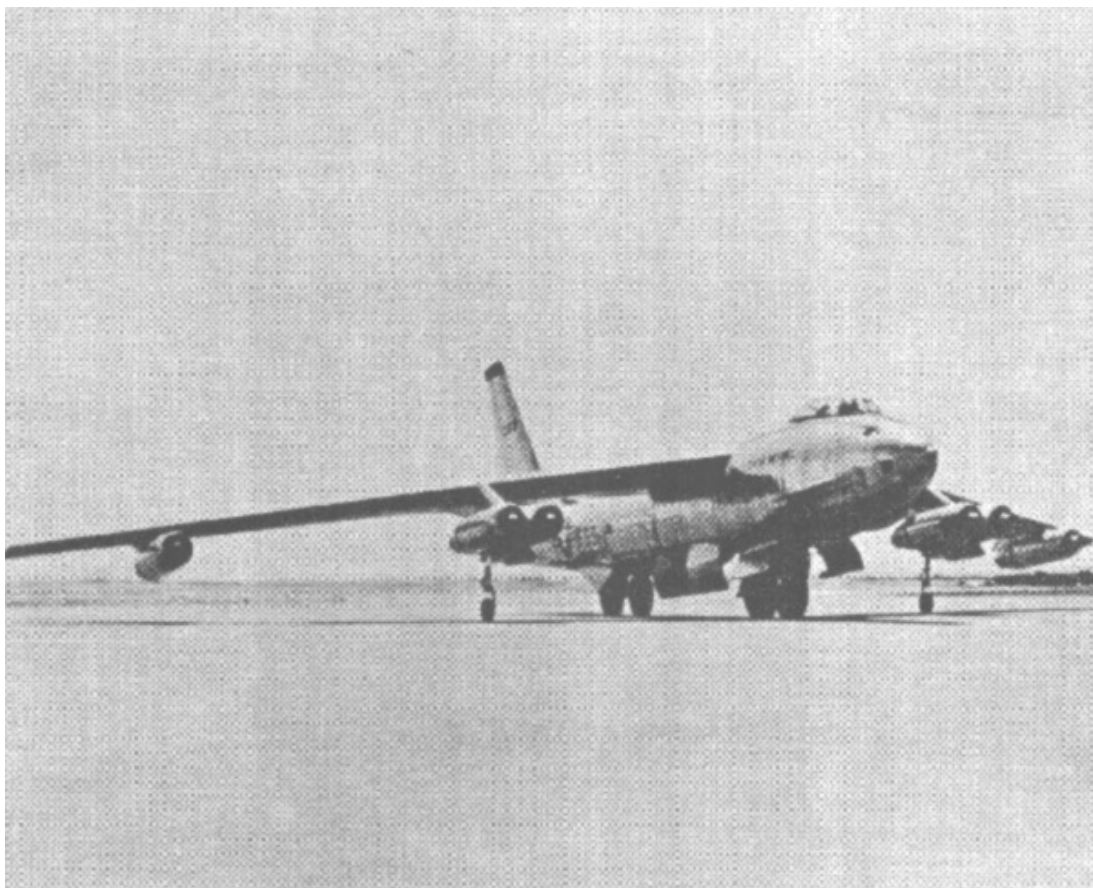


303rd Bombardment Wing

BEGINNING THE JET AGE

It was in 1953 that the "Jet Age" arrived at Davis-Monthan with the 43rd and 303rd both converting to B-47s. In preparation of that change, a new runway was opened on 17 January. The new strip, which was stressed for the largest aircraft then under construction, was 200 feet wide and 11,500 feet long. It was constructed of asphalted concrete.³⁹

The first jet aircraft assigned to Davis-Monthan arrived the following month in the form of four T-33 jet trainers which were assigned to the 303rd. The 303rd also received the first of three Boeing B-47 Stratojet medium bombers assigned at Davis-Monthan on 27 March 1953.⁴⁰

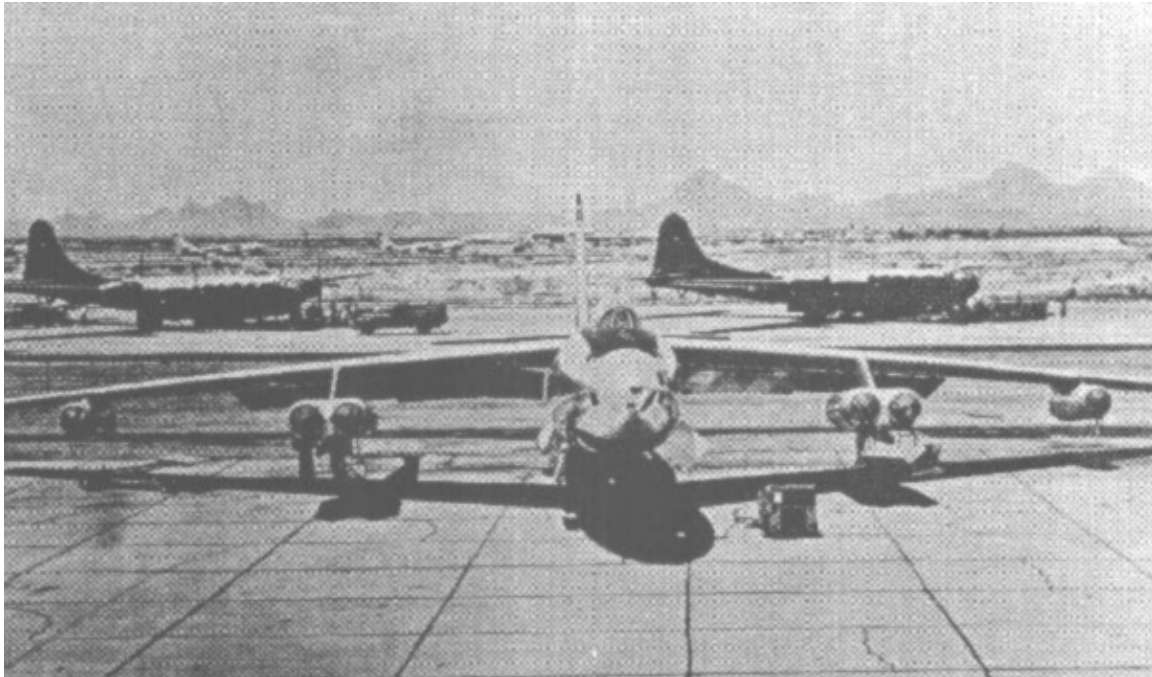


The first B-47 at Davis-Monthan AFB, assigned to the 303rd Bombardment Wing, arrived on 27 March 1953

Arrival of the three planes marked a new era in the aviation activities at the base. Powered by six General Electric turbojet engines, the new medium bombers could also call upon 18 integral rocket units for additional take-off power. Each aircraft carried a crew of three and more than 20,000 pounds of bombs. Range without refueling was in excess of 3,000 miles, but aerial refueling made the practical range virtually unlimited.⁴¹

Thus began the series of changes that would eventually convert both of Davis-Monthan's bombardment wings to an all jet force. During late 1953, the 43rd disposed of its B-50s and KB-29s. By early 1954, the wing had received the last of its new B-47 bombers and the accompanying KC-97 tankers.⁴²

The B-47s of both the 43rd and 303rd Bombardment Wings participated in numerous exercises, maneuvers, and operations between 1952 and 1960. The 43rd deployed to Guam during 1952, to England in 1953 and 1954, and to Alaska in 1958. The 303rd similarly went to North Africa in 1952 and to Guam in 1956 and 1958. Between April 1960 and March 1964, the 303rd maintained its Stratojets on alert at Guam and later in Alaska as part of "Reflex Action," a SAC program to maintain a continuous retaliatory capability at forward bases.⁴³



A new 303rd Bombardment Wing B-47 (foreground) was in marked contrast to the phased out B-29s (background) which were awaiting storage at Davis-Monthan



Maintenance training for B-47 technicians was an ongoing activity at Davis-Monthan



Members of the 43rd Bombardment Wing deployed to the United Kingdom for 90 days of temporary duty in March 1953

B-47 DISTANCE AND ENDURANCE RECORD

The 43rd managed to establish another pair of aviation records in late 1954 during a 90-day deployment to England. The new record, however, was more a matter of circumstance than it was of extensive planning. On 17 November, Colonel David A. Burchinal (Commander, 43rd Bombardment Wing) departed Sidi Slimane Air Base, French Morocco in a B-47 headed for Fairford RAF Station, England. Upon his arrival in the United Kingdom, he found Fairford completely socked in by bad weather. He attempted to return to Sidi Slimane only to discover that similar conditions had engulfed that base. With the aid of nine refuelings (426,790 pounds of fuel), he managed to keep the big B-47 aloft until the Fairford weather finally cleared on 19 November. In the process, he established a new distance and 35 minutes.⁴⁴

In addition to being a new world distance and endurance record, the flight tested and proved a number of previously undetermined aspects of high-altitude, long-range jet aircraft operations. Although not planned as a record-breaking performance, the prologated mission definitely extended crew performance expectations to a point more in keeping with the equipment capabilities of the B-47.⁴⁵

THE AIR DEFENSE MISSION

Air Defense Command (ADC) made its first appearance at Davis-Monthan on 20 April 1953 when the 15th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS) was activated and assigned. The unit was initially outfitted with F-86A Sabres, but those were replaced the following year with the newer "D" models which were capable of supersonic flight. The unit continued to use F-86Ds until 1959 when the F-89 Scorpion took over as the 15th's new interceptor. More sophisticated F-101B Voodoos were introduced in 1960 and remained as the Squadron's weapon system until 24 December 1964 when the 15th FIS was inactivated.⁴⁶

MAJOR CONSTRUCTION

Between 1954 and 1963, many major construction projects were accomplished at Davis-Monthan. By 1956, items totaling approximately \$3,500,000 were under contract. Most of that money went toward the extension of the main runway to 13,643 feet to better accommodate the base's big B-47s and KC-97s. In March 1960, a SAC alert facility was completed at the south end of the main runway. A new \$2,200,000 hospital was opened the following year. However, it was immediately apparent that the new hospital was simply too small to meet the base's growing medical needs. As a result, several World War II barracks were moved from another part of the field and connected together on the north side of the main hospital building to form an annex. In the same year, over \$1,000,000 was allocated for the rehabilitation of 412 buildings in the former Wherry housing area.⁴⁷

As B-47s began phasing out of the inventory, intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) units were being organized by SAC. Davis-Monthan was selected as the location for a Titan II missile wing. In 1960, a special site activation task force of the Ballistic System Division of the Air Force Systems Command was established at the field. Its purpose was to supervise the siting, construction, engineering, and management of the nation's first operational Titan II weapon system.⁴⁸

A PERIOD OF NEW ROLES 1960-1970

THE MISSILE ERA ARRIVES

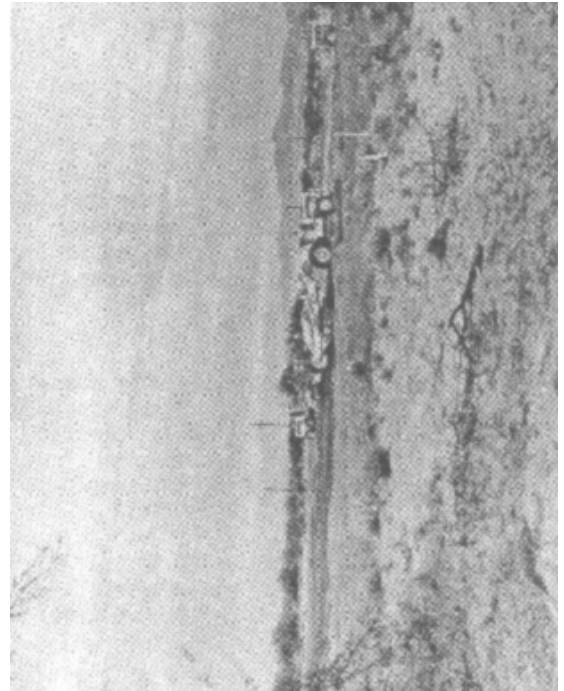
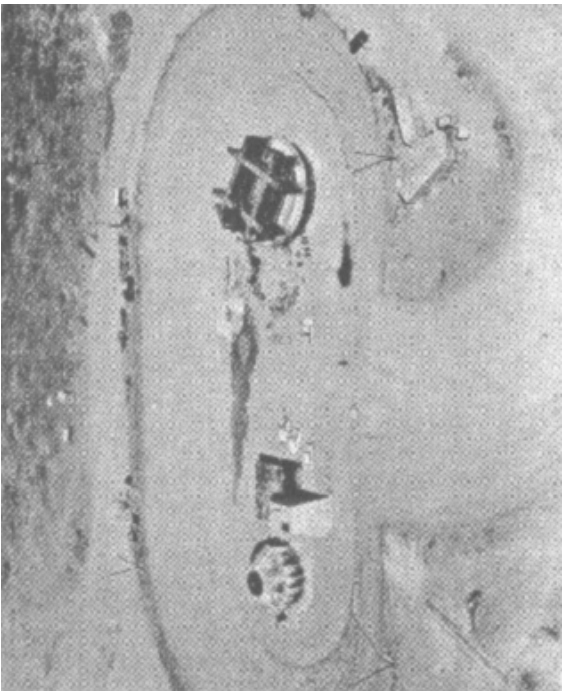
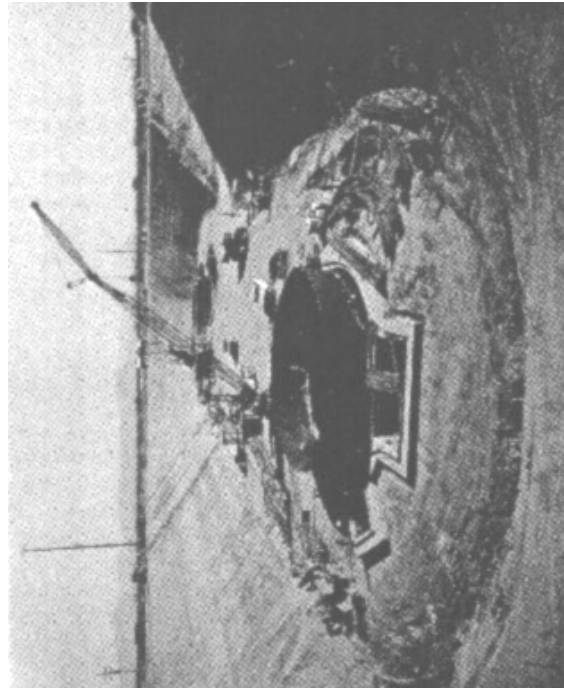
The 43rd Bombardment Wing departed Davis-Monthan in 1960 to go on to become the Air Force's first B-58 Hustler Bombardment Wing. In April of that year, it was also publicly announced that the Titan II missile surveys had been completed and soon after, in July, higher headquarters approval was given for the 18 selected site locations.⁴⁹

MISSILE SITE CONSTRUCTION AND ACTIVATION

The missile site construction program was divided into three principle, phases. Phase I covered heavy construction such as building access roads, open pit and shaft excavation, placement of structural and reinforcing steel, and the pouring of concrete walls, foundation, and control center dome. Also included in this phase was the installation of the blast lock doors. This first portion was handled by the company of Jones, Teer and Winkelman.⁵⁰

The first phase began with at Complex 570-2 on 7 December 1960. Work at the other sites was initiated soon thereafter. Phase I construction had been completed at all 18 complexes by 20 December 1961; just a little more than one year after it had begun.⁵¹

Titan II Phase I Construction



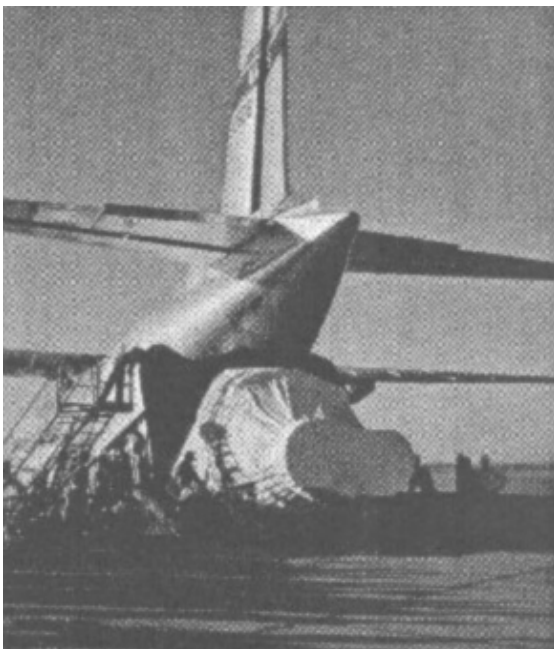
While Phase I was being completed, Phase II had already begun on 13 July 1961. This portion of the program included the completion of all heavy construction and installation of real property installed equipment such as air conditioning, the power system, and the propellant transfer system. Also included was the installation of electrical equipment, shock mountings, and the miles of wire and pipe in the silo, cableway, and control center. This portion of the construction program was accomplished by the Fluor Corporation and its sub-contractors. Phase II had been completed at all of the complexes by 14 December 1962.⁵²



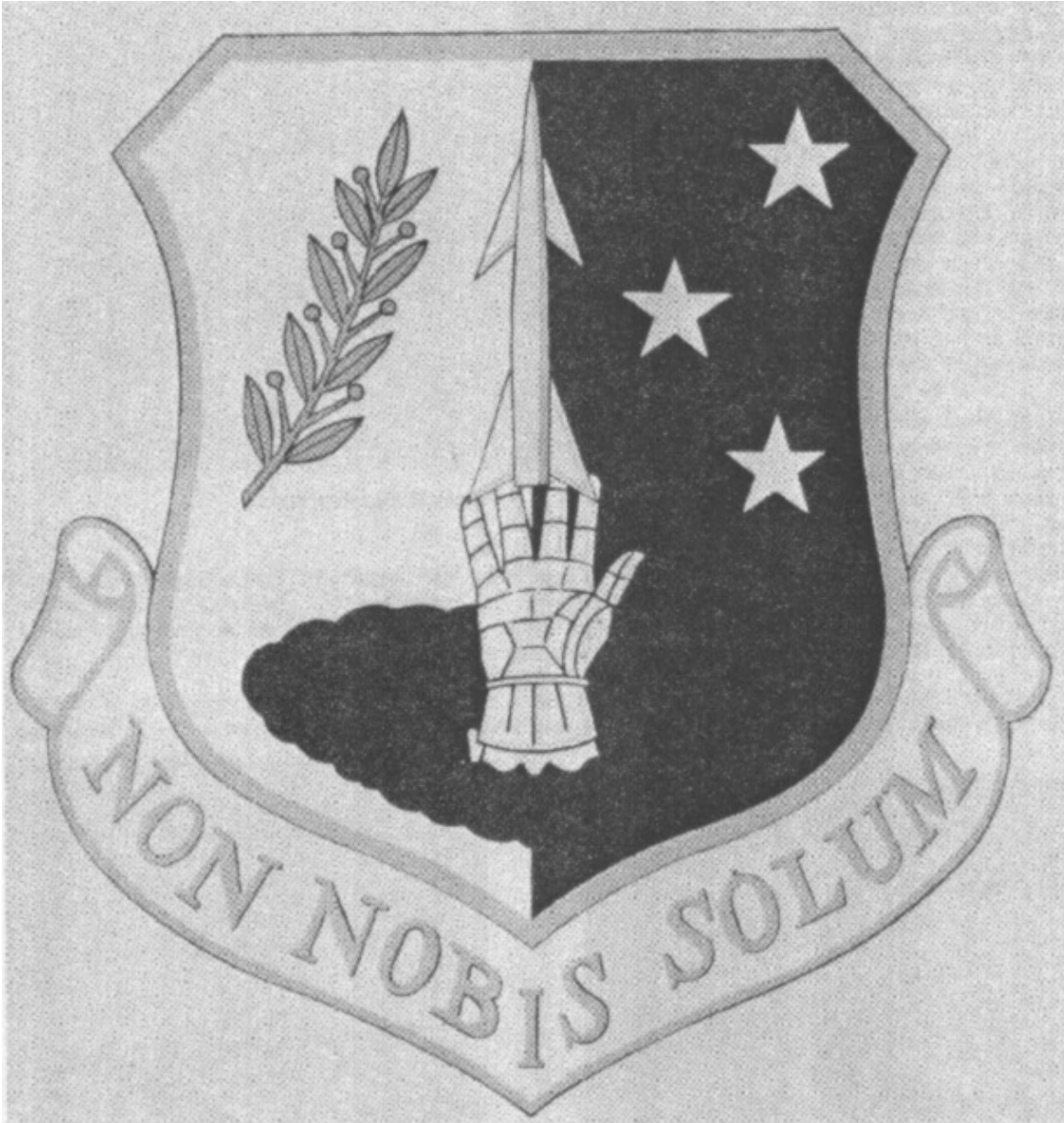
Phase II Construction

As work on the weapon system progressed, SAC began to integrate Titan II personnel into the program. The 390th Strategic Missile Wing (SMW) was activated on 1 January 1962 and personnel to man the unit began to arrive shortly thereafter. The Titan II program was based on the concept of concurrency. Basically, that meant that development of the weapon system was still being accomplished at the same time as personnel to man it were being acquired and trained.⁵³

One of the biggest steps forward in the activation program occurred on 27 November 1962 when the first Titan II missile arrived at Davis-Monthan aboard a C-133 transport aircraft. Personnel of the 390th Missile

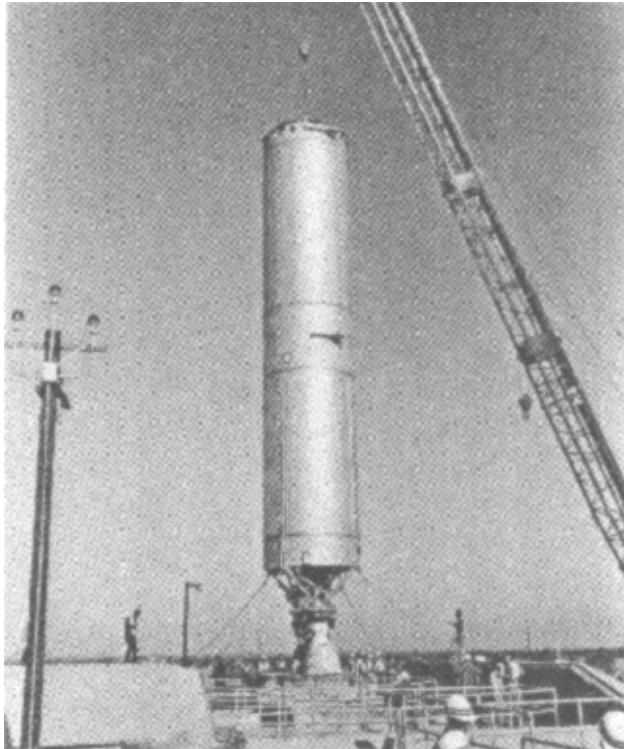


Arrival of first Titan II



390th Strategic Missile Wing

Maintenance Squadron (MIMS) garnered the distinction of being the first all-military crew to perform the Titan II off-loading function. Ingenuity played a significant role in that accomplishment. When it was discovered that there was insufficient clearance between the plane and the missile to permit unloading, someone came up with an idea to lower the pressure in the transporter tires. It worked, but just barely. When the missile finally rolled down the ramp, there was only one-half inch of clearance. That first missile was subsequently installed at site 570-2 on 8 December 1962 and the complex was turned over to SAC for operational use on 31 March 1963.⁵⁴



The first Titan II was installed at 570-2 on 8 December 1962

Construction of the complexes was not without controversy. During the first week of August 1962, three professional staff investigators from the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee visited Davis-Monthan to look into charges of waste and inefficiency in the construction program. Although it was true that costs had risen considerably above the original projections, the subcommittee later concluded that those increases were comparable to those experienced by SAC's two other Titan II wings.⁵⁵

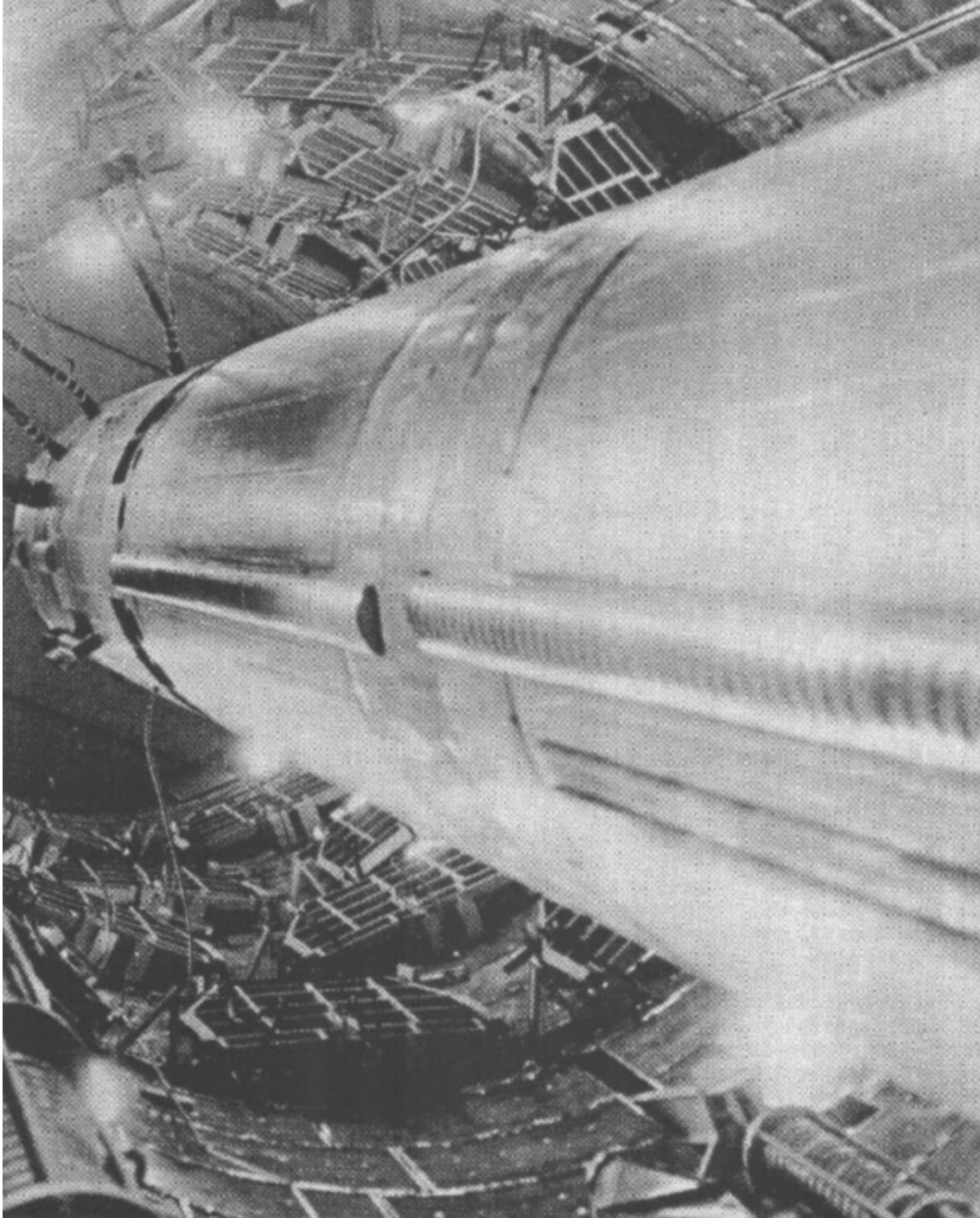
Phase III, which consisted of missile installation and checkout of the associated hardware, began at site 570-2 on 7 May 1962. The prime contractor for the Titan II system, the Martin Company, performed this operation. Phase III was completed and the final complex was turned over to SAC on 14 October 1963.⁵⁶

The wing accepted its ninth complex and declared the 570th Strategic Missile Squadron operational on 13 June 1963. A little over five months later, on 30 November, the 18th and final Titan II missile went on alert. The next day, the 571st Strategic Missile Squadron and the 390th Strategic Missile Wing were declared fully operational. With that action, the 390th SMW became the first operational Titan II wing in the United States Air Force.⁵⁷

Throughout the entire construction and activation process, base officials had to deal with repeated protest marches and demonstrations by small pacifist groups. The most active of those were the "Fellowship for Reconciliation," the "Committee Against Ringing Tucson with Titans," and the "Committee for Nonviolent Action." Generally, members of those groups peacefully picketed near the entrances to the base and the construction sites. However, several demonstrators who had previously been barred from the base had to be turned over to federal marshals for trespassing on Davis-Monthan.⁵⁸

12TH AIR DIVISION ARRIVES

Davis-Monthan's first air division, the 36th, performed its supervisory role at the desert base until 15 March 1960 when it was inactivated. Air division responsibilities returned on 1 January 1962 when the 12th Air Division arrived from March AFB, California. With the activation of the 390th SMW on the same date, the 12th



The mighty Titan II's of the 390

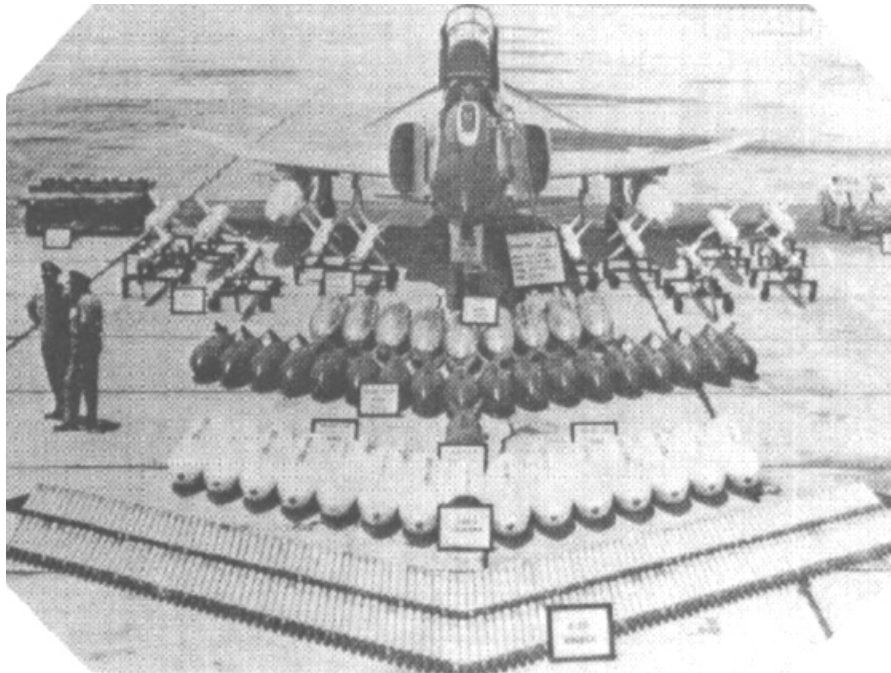
immediately found itself responsible for a two-wing station with a combined bomber-missile force. Six months later, on 1 June, the 12th Air Division was redesignated as the 12th Strategic Aerospace Division. This was in keeping with the Air Force's growing role as an aerospace force.⁵⁹

RETURN OF THE RECONNAISSANCE MISSION

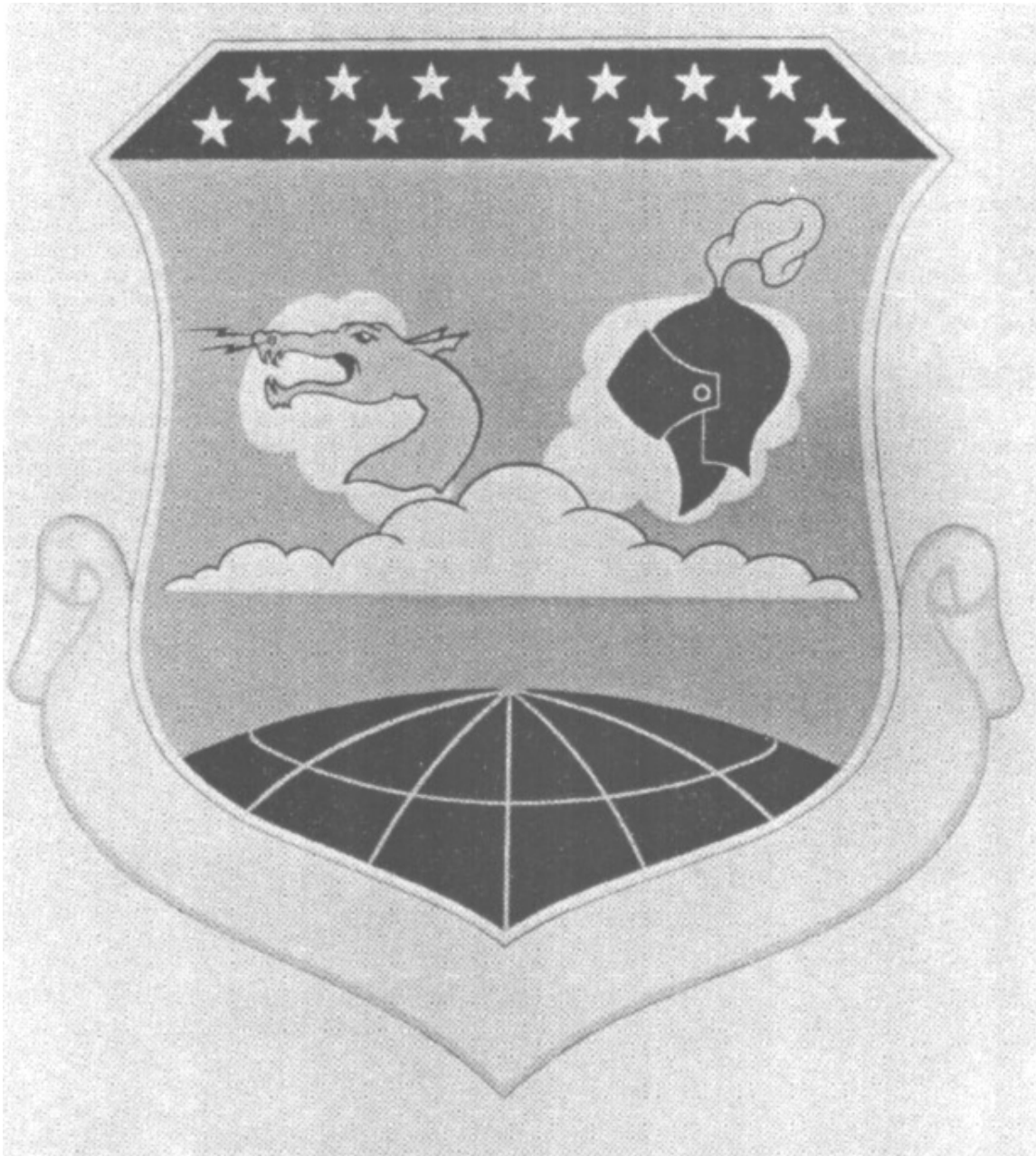
Mid-1963 brought Davis-Monthan its first reconnaissance unit since the B-18 Bolos of the 41st Bombardment Group departed in 1941. On 1 July 1963, the 4080th Strategic Wing (SW) was transferred from Laughlin AFB, Texas, to Davis-Monthan. The relocation, involving 23 WU-2 high-altitude aircraft and 1,050 people, was accomplished smoothly. This added a new dimension to the base's strategic importance. The primary mission of the 4080th SW was to conduct strategic reconnaissance operations on a global scale. It was a unique organization in that it was the only SAC unit assigned the high-flying U-2. With this move, Davis-Monthan became a three-wing station.⁶⁰

RETURN OF THE COMBAT CREW TRAINING MISSION

The end of World War II had previously put an abrupt end to Davis-Monthan's prominent role in combat crew training. However, that mission returned 19 years later, on 1 July 1964, when Davis-Monthan became the home of the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Wing (CCTW). The 4453rd, a unit of the Tactical Air Command, had moved from MacDill AFB, Florida. With approximately 50 Phantom II jet fighter-bomber aircraft, the 4453rd offered an intensive flying training program. Over the forthcoming years, that program would go on to produce the majority of the F-4 crews required during the Southeast Asia conflict.⁶¹



The F-4C Phantom IIs of the 4453rd could carry vast amounts of different armament

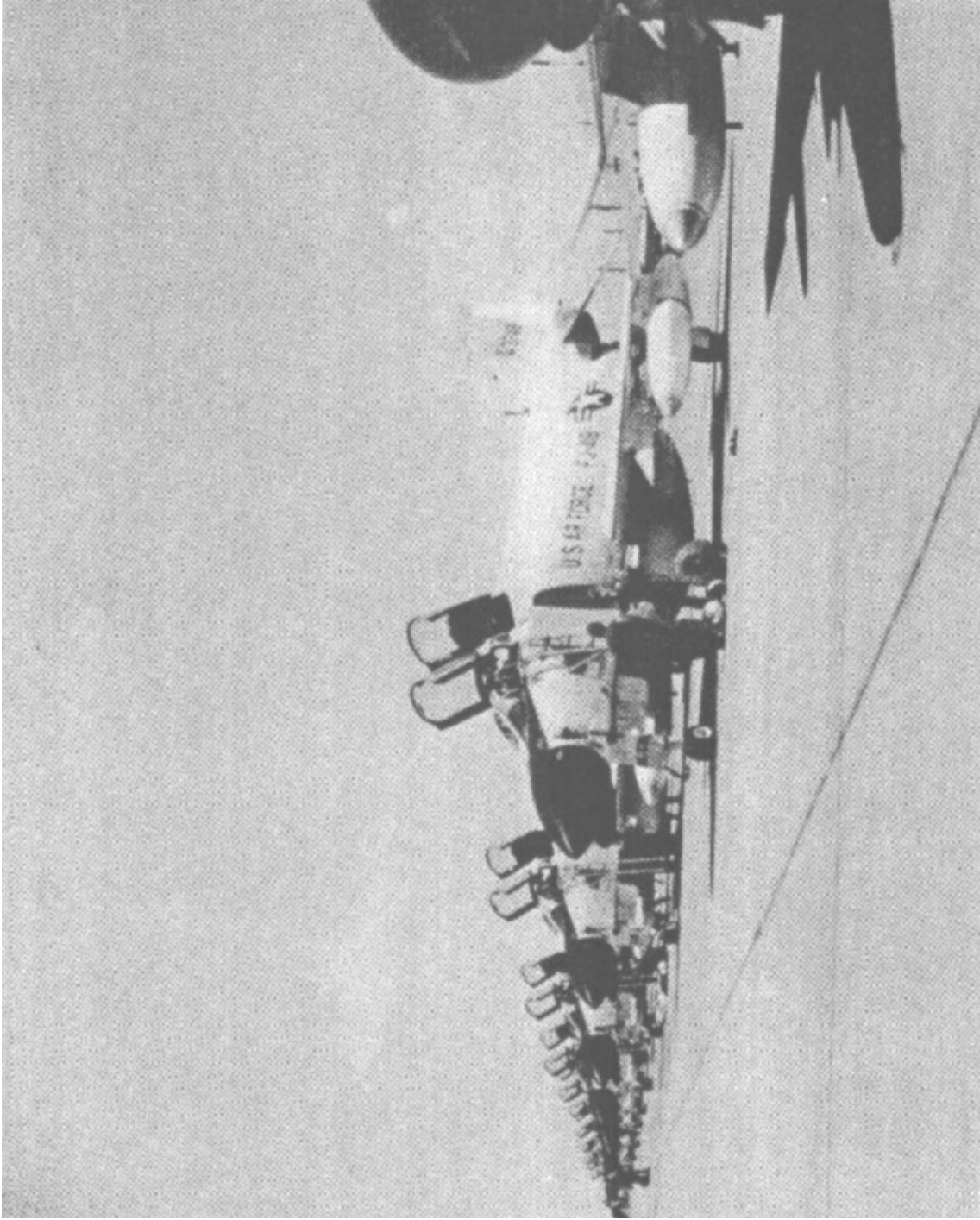


4080th Strategic Wing



The 4080 was to collect weather and reconnaissance data using the high-altitude U

5th Strategic Wing moved from Laughlin AFB, Texas, to Davis-Monthan AFB on 12 July 1963. The mission of the 4080



The first 16 F-4C Phantom IIs of the 4453

MULTI-MISSION OPERATIONS

FLYING OPERATIONS

Strategic bombardment operations from Davis-Monthan during the early 1960s were handled by the experienced 303rd Bombardment Wing. The unit, flying B-47s, participated in several important exercises and demonstrations during the 1960-1964 period to exhibit its combat readiness. The most notable of those were "Exercise Big Sickle" which began on 18 January 1960, and a presidential fire power display at Eglin AFB, Florida, on 14 May 1962.⁶²

The achievements of the 303rd were recognized on several occasions during the period. On 28 March 1963, Lt Gen Archie J. Old, Jr. (Commander, Fifteenth Air Force), presented the 303rd with the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period 1 January 1963 to 31 March 1962. Other accolades included a SAC "Hall of Fame" award for 1963.⁶³

Those awards, however, were not won without having to pay a price. The requirement for continuous alerts and the thousands of flying hours in support of its strategic mission took a grueling toll on both men and equipment. August 1961 witnessed the 303rd's first aircraft accident after more than six years of accident-free operations. One year later, the wing lost a B-47 and its crew of three in another major aircraft accident.⁶⁴

During early 1964, the 303rd was notified by Headquarters SAC that it had been selected to participate in a test of MITO (Minimum Interval Take-Off) procedures on 24 February 1964. The MITO was a system for launching more than one tactical aircraft with the shortest possible distance between each. The purpose of this type of operation was to get as many planes as possible airborne in the shortest period of time to prevent destruction in the event of an attack. The 303rd's participation involved eight of the wing's B-47s launched at night under heavy weight conditions.⁶⁵

The MITO take-offs, as scheduled, were in direct conflict with the existing peacetime operational safety rules. Nevertheless, the test nature of the event took precedence. Launch of the eight aircraft took place at 1915 on the night of the 24th. As a result of the experiment, existing regulations were later revised and new requirements for subsequent MITO operations were established.⁶⁶

Phaseout of the 303rd's operations and preparation for the turnover of the wing's facilities began early in 1964. On 16 April 1964, SAC Programming Plan 1-64 was published to outline the procedures for transferring the unit's facilities to the new TAC wing which would officially assign responsibility for them on the 15th of June. Procedures were also established for the phaseout of the wing's home alert and "Reflex" alert commitments. Reflex alert was deleted on 1 April when the 40th Bombardment Wing of Forbes AFB, Kansas, took over responsibility for the Alaskan Reflex duty. Normally, the 303rd maintained nine aircraft on alert at Davis-Monthan with 12 (plus one spare) on Reflex alert in Alaska.⁶⁷

Transfer of the unit's 60 aircraft to other wings began on 1 March 1964. The plan called for the reassignment of 15 planes per month through June. On Thursday, 11 June, the wing's last B-47 departed for Pease AFB, New Hampshire. Four days later, the 303rd was officially inactivated and Davis-Monthan lost its sole remaining bombardment unit.⁶⁸

As the 303rd was departing, components of the newly assigned 4453rd began to occupy its vacated facilities. The primary mission of Davis-Monthan's newest unit was to train the aircrews required for the complete conversions of 12 tactical wings to the F-4C aircraft. To accomplish that mission, the 4453rd conducted flying and radar training courses designed to prepare the two-man crews to fully utilize the exceptional capabilities of the new fighter-bomber. Following training, each crew returned to its parent organization as a fully qualified team. In addition, the 4453rd began a program in July 1966 to train replacement unit crews in the F-4 for direct assignment to Southeast Asia.⁶⁹

The F-4 Phantom II was one of the primary jet fighter-bombers used in Southeast Asia by the United States Air Force. It was capable of assuming the role of either a supersonic air superiority fighter or, if necessary, it could operate as a long-range nuclear or conventional bomber. As a bomber, it could carry a bomb load which was twice as large as that carried by a B-17 Flying Fortress during World War II.⁷⁰

With the beginning of F-4 training operations, the base soon found itself embroiled in a noise problem. Complaints from the local community were regular and vehement. A change in landing patterns helped to reduce the problem of normal aircraft noise and sonic boom complaints dwindled after the sonic boom corridor was changed. However, Tucson's citizenry continued to express concern about the safety of continued and heavy flight operations over the heavily populated heart of the city. Those concerns were well-founded; especially in light of the fact that Davis-Monthan was ranked as the busiest single-runway airfield in the nation by recording 67,000 landings in the last quarter of 1967. The city's worst fears were realized on 18 December 1967 when a Phantom II jet crashed into a local supermarket. Although the crew members ejected successfully, four civilians were killed and 14 others were injured.⁷¹

Davis-Monthan's only reconnaissance outfit, the 4080th SW, began to deploy WU-2 aircraft and associated personnel to Southeast Asia in the spring of 1964. The following year, the 4080th was assigned DC-130A aircraft, CH-3C helicopters, and an assortment of remotely piloted vehicles called drones. Soon after, on 25 June 1966, the 4080th was inactivated and its personnel and equipment were assigned to the newly activated 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW). The special order which directed the change specified that the 100th SRW and its subordinate units would continue to prosecute the mission previously assigned to the 4080th. A unique feature of this action was the specific authority which permitted the history and honors of the 4080th to be maintained with and become a permanent part of the historical records of the 100th. Although the 100th was permitted to maintain the history and honors of the defunct reconnaissance wing, it was not allowed to claim the 4080th's history, honors, or lineage as its own.⁷²

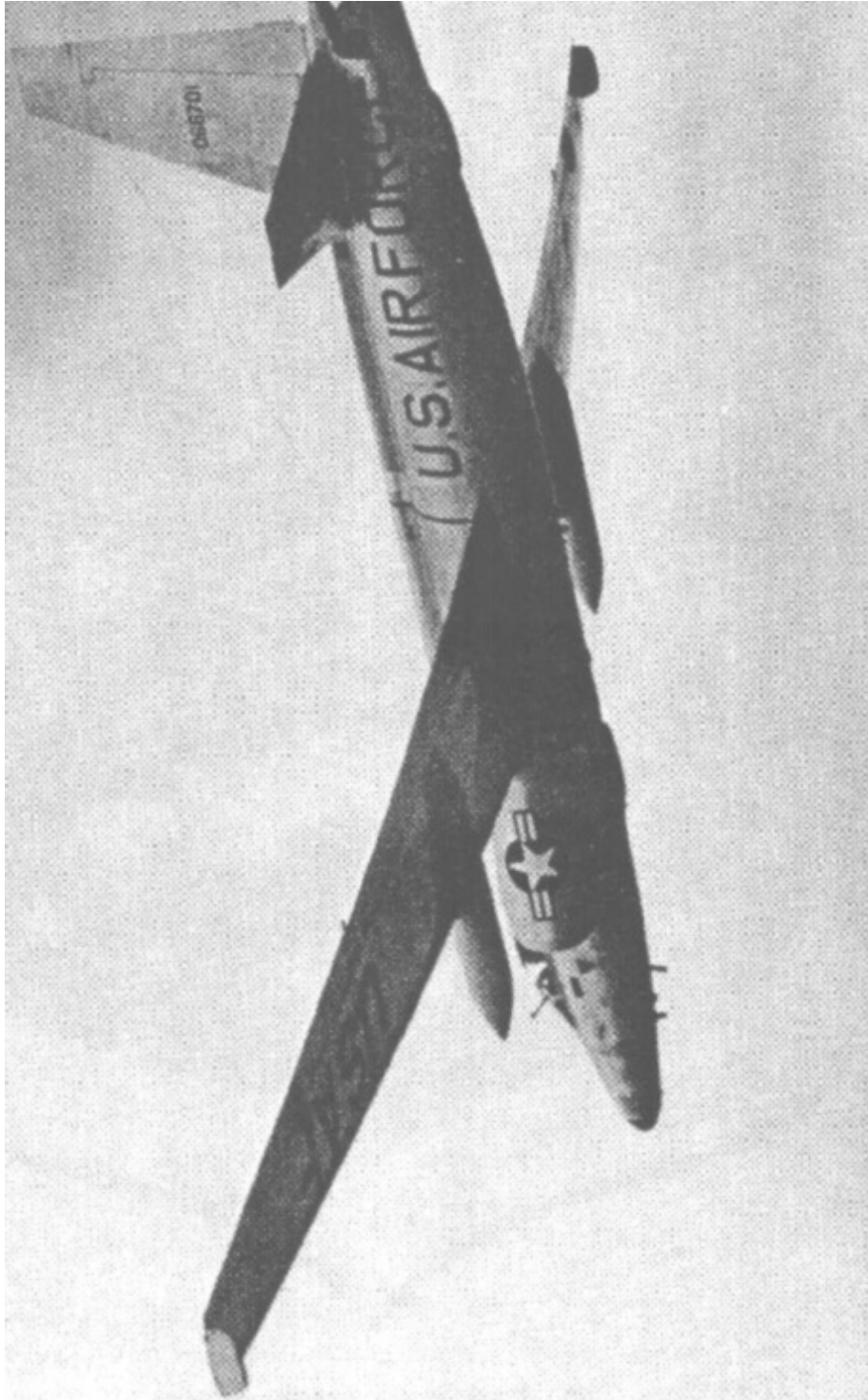
As had its predecessor, the newly formed 100th SRW continued to employ its unique reconnaissance capabilities throughout the late 1960s and the first half of the 1970s. More operating locations for the wing's U-2 aircraft and associated drone reconnaissance operations were established throughout Southeast Asia as the conflict in Vietnam intensified.⁷³

MISSILE OPERATIONS

Davis-Monthan's entire Titan II program was just three days shy of three years to completion; from the turning of the first earth on 7 December 1960 to full operational status on 1 December 1963. As the 390th Strategic Missile Wing began its alert status, Davis-Monthan AFB assumed an increased strategic posture as an essential part of the nation's nuclear deterrent force.⁷⁴



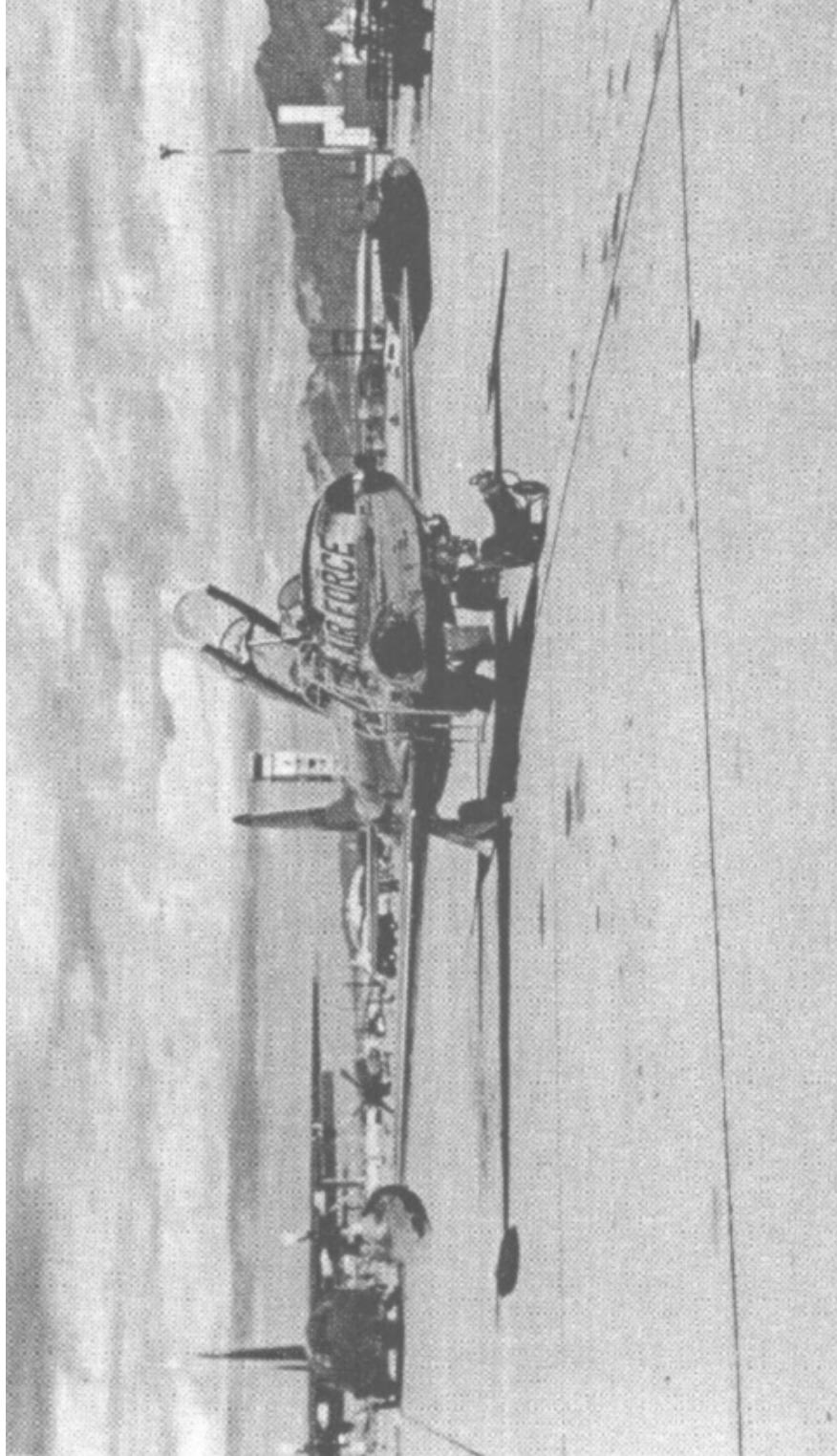
100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing



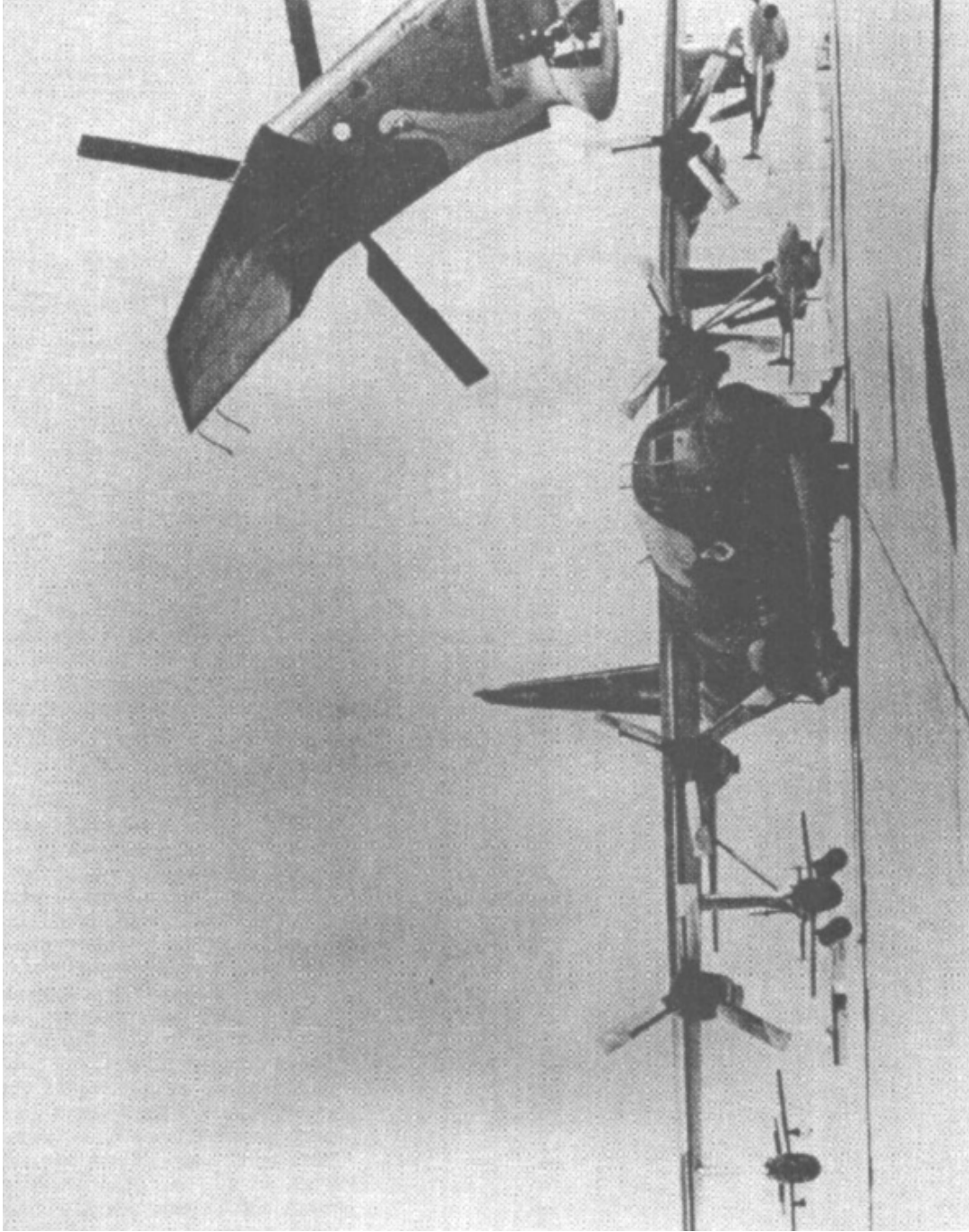
U-2C



In addition to the regular U-2s, the 100



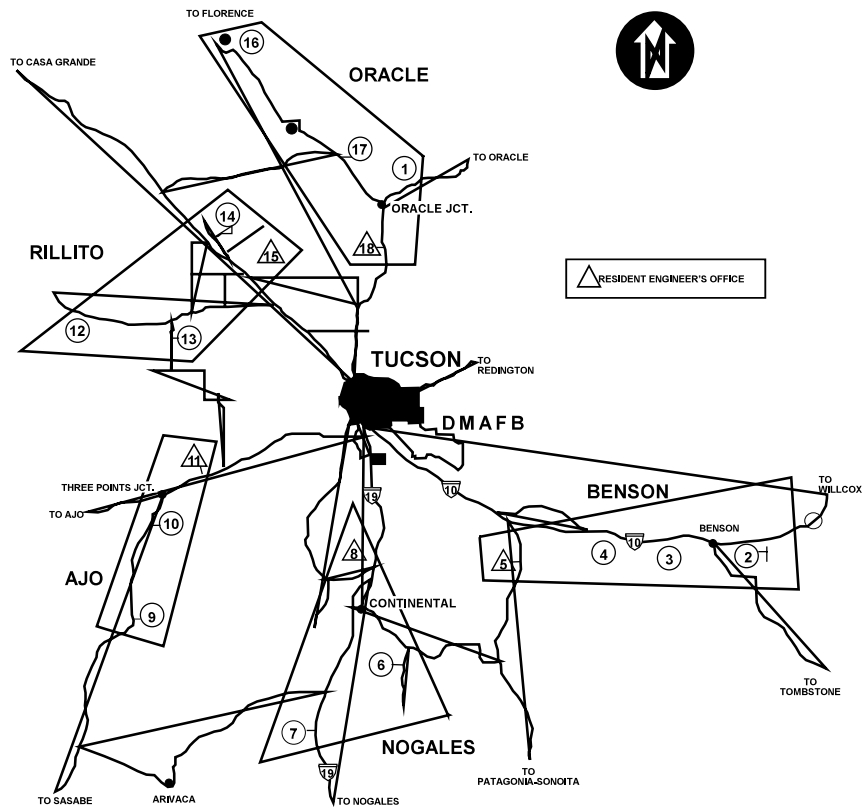
The T-33A aircraft was used as an instrument trainer for U-2 pilots at Davis-Monthan AFB



A DC-130A shown loaded with four different types of drones used by the 100

The Titan II missile, designated the SM-68B and later the LGM-25C, was longer than its Titan I predecessor and weighed 330,000 pounds. Its first stage was 10 feet in diameter and 70 feet long with an engine that produced 430,000 pounds of thrust. The second stage was also 10 feet in diameter, but only 29 feet long. The 57,000 pounds of thrust produced by the second stage engine was capable of propelling the missile to speeds in excess of 17,000 miles per hour. A conical-shaped General Electric Mark 6 re-entry vehicle (RV) rested atop the second stage. Each RV, which housed the missile's warhead, had an ablative coating which was designed to heat up and flow aft to dissipate the heat of re-entry.⁷⁵

The wing's 18 on-alert Titan IIs were housed in separate launch complexes situated in the desert around the base. They were widely dispersed to gain maximum protection with the closest 24 miles from the base and the farthest more than 60 miles away. Each Titan II was housed in its own hardened underground silo with system launch control provided from a subterranean Launch Control Center located on the site. Unlike Titan I, the Titan II missile could be maintained in a fully fueled state that permitted launch directly from its silo on a moment's notice.⁷⁶



390 SMW Missile Site Locations



Operational Titan II complex

Throughout 1963, all of the 390th's Titan IIs were maintained in a constant state of alert. Under the operational rules of that year, all missiles were required to remain on continuous alert once they became operational. Whenever a missile went off alert for any reason (be it scheduled or unscheduled maintenance, training purposes, or a missile/launch verification exercise), it had to be returned to active alert status as expeditiously as possible. To accomplish that end, maintenance personnel were often required to work an 80-90 hour work week. Such conditions quickly resulted in a demoralization of the maintenance force.⁷⁷

A new “two-thirds force” concept was implemented on 1 January 1964 to alleviate some of the heavy maintenance burden associated with keeping all missiles on constant alert. Under the new plan, the 390th was required to keep 13 of its 18 missiles on primary alert with the remainder to be used as backups. As a result, maintenance technicians could quite often delay repair of an off-alert missile until a normal duty day.⁷⁸

The main drawback to this concept was that many of the Titan IIs were employed in a backup mode when they could have been used to cover a primary alert requirement. Correspondingly, on 6 March 1964, the “two-thirds force” concept was changed back to a 100 percent alert commitment with some modifications to the maintenance response requirements. Return to the previous system resulted from in-commission rates that had greatly exceeded original expectations. However, the revised rules did permit delay of maintenance to a normal duty day if sufficient on-duty personnel were not available.⁷⁹

The first of many forthcoming modifications to the 390th's missiles and launch complexes began in 1964 with “Project Green Jug.” On 6 March 1964, the Air Force signed a \$2.6 million contract for the installation of dehumidification equipment and other changes necessary to increase the reliability of the Titan II missile force and the associated installed equipment systems. The modifications were required to prevent the rapid erosion of the missiles’ metals when the Titan II propellants came in contact with humidity. The dehumidification system was also designed to reduce corrosion of electrical equipment, machinery, and plumbing. On 30 March, the project began at Davis-Monthan with sites 570-5, 570-6, and 570-9. Project Green Jug was completed at the 390th's complexes by year's end.⁸⁰

Another major system change, “Project Top Banana,” modified certain portions of the missiles’ hardware to decrease reaction time and increase range. Phase I of the modification program began at site 571-4 on 6 July 1964. Phase II began on 27 March 1965 and was completed at all of the 390th's complexes by the 25th of June that same year. A third program, “Project Yard Fence,” began on 26 January 1966. The purpose of the “Yard Fence” modifications was to increase system reliability and provide for sustained post-attack survivability by making changes to the facility systems at the unit's launch sites. The last of the 390th's launch facilities were finished with the conversion on 30 October 1967.⁸¹



Major maintenance operations on the 390th's missiles were always performed under the watchful supervision of an experienced maintenance crew chief

On 25 February 1965, after more than three years of preparation and training, the 390th SMW performed the first operational test launch of one of its missiles. The operation took place at the Air Force Missile Test Range Facility located at Vandenberg AFB, California. This launch, nicknamed “Arctic Sun,” was the first time that any of the wing's Titan IIs had ever flown. Over the next several years, many more of the 390th's missiles would take to the Pacific skies from Vandenberg AFB. Three more (Bear Hug, Card Deck, Long Ball) were launched during

1965. Two additional operational test launches, "Winter Ice" and "Close Touch," were completed in the early part of the following year. Follow-on operational testing began in late 1966 with the launches of "Black River" and "Bubble Girl." Although follow-on testing came to a temporary halt for almost two years, the 390th resumed its participation with the launch of "Glory Trip 08T" in June 1968 followed by "Glory Trip 26T" in November.⁸²

In April 1967, the 390th participated in SAC's first missile competition, "Project Curtain Raiser" and immediately established a reputation for excellence by walking away with the trophy for Best Titan II Combat Crew. The second missile competition in 1969 (thereafter known as Olympic Arena) brought the wing additional accolades for Best Titan Wing, Best Titan Crew, and Best Titan Maintenance. The 390th continued to garner additional awards* in future editions of the Olympic Arena competition.⁸³

REVERSAL OF ROLES 1971-1976

On 30 June 1971, Davis-Monthan's 12th Strategic Aerospace Division was redesignated as the 12th Strategic Missile Division (SMD) and the 390th assumed the position of host unit for the base when Headquarters SAC implemented the host wing concept for multi-wing stations. A revised supervisory role accompanied the 12th's new name. As an aerospace division, the 12th had previously been accountable for the management of both aircraft and missile operations. A portion of those responsibilities was dropped when the division was redesignated. In its place, the 12th SMD assumed control of all three Titan II wings; the 390th SMW at Davis-Monthan, the 308th SMW at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, and the 381st SMW at McConnell AFB, Kansas.⁸⁴

However, the tenure of the 390th as the host wing was short lived. On 1 April 1972, the 12th SMD resumed its previous role as the host unit at Davis-Monthan. Less than a year later, on 1 March 1973, the 12th was again redesignated; this time as the 12th Air Division. The change in name was followed on 1 July 1973 with the reassignment of the 381st SMW from the 12th Air Division to the 19th Air Division. In a similar action, the same order reassigned the 96th Bombardment Wing (Dyess AFB, Texas) from the 19th to the 12th.⁸⁵

Another major change occurred on 1 July 1971 when the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing was reactivated and assigned to Davis-Monthan. With its inventory of A-7D Corsair II aircraft, the 355th immediately became the major TAC tenant unit. Soon thereafter, on 30 September 1971, the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Wing was inactivated and its F-4 fighter-bombers were transferred to Luke AFB, Arizona.⁸⁶

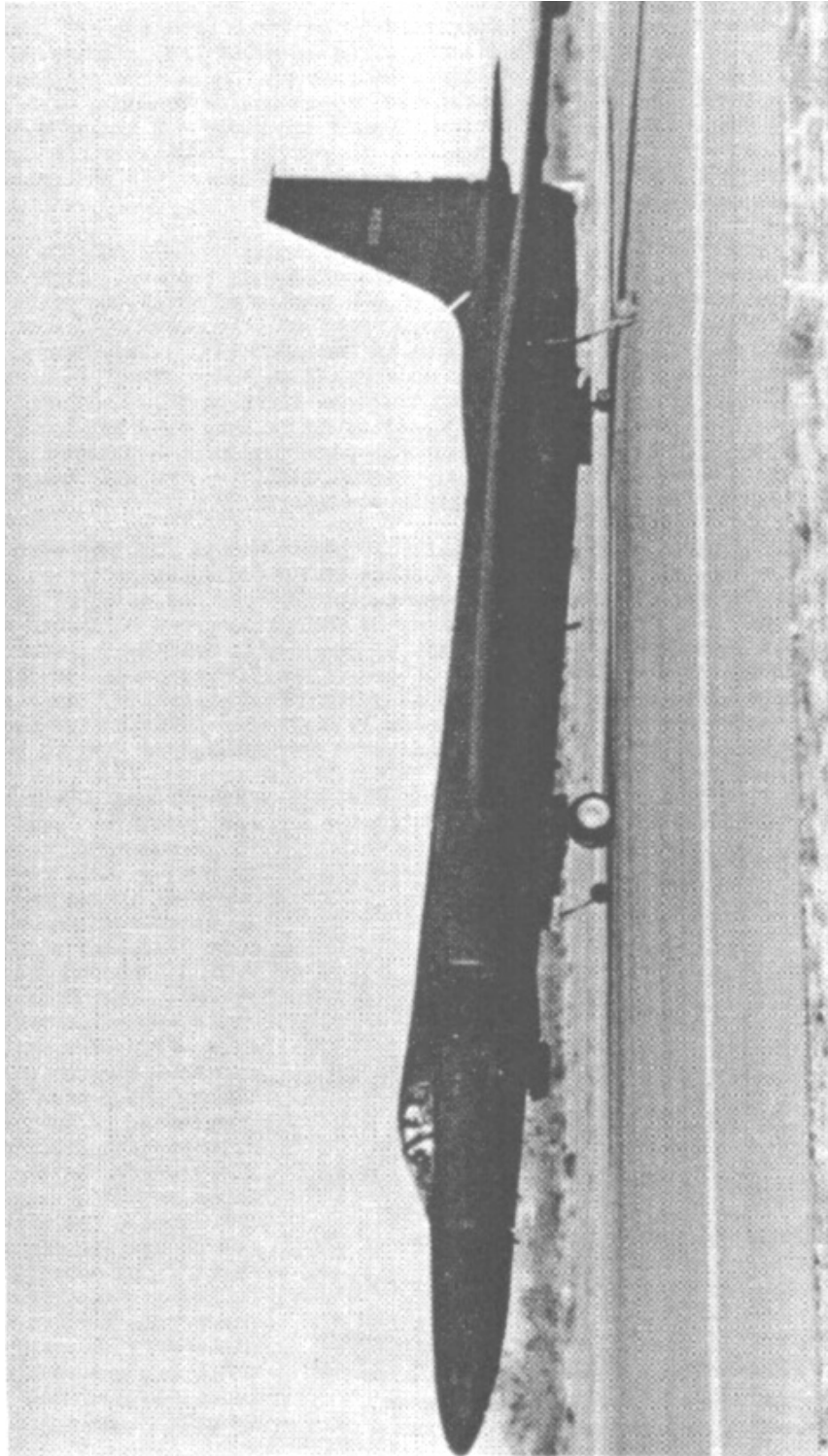


355th Tactical Fighter Wing

FLYING OPERATIONS

As the level of hostilities intensified in Vietnam during the first half of the 1970s, the 100th SRW's tasking to provide reconnaissance support rose dramatically. All of the 100th's operational missions continued to be

*See Appendix VII for a complete list of the 390th's Olympic Arena Awards over the years.

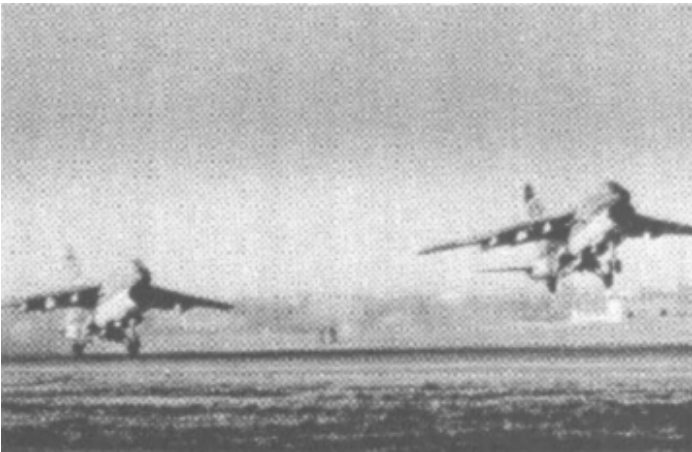


This plane crashed into the Gulf of Thailand while flying a mission on 16 August 1975

flown from forward operating locations. By 1972, the wing was utilizing sites at McCoy AFB, Florida, U-Tapao RTNAF, Thailand, Da Nang AB, South Vietnam, and Osan AB, Korea. On 1 November 1972, the operating location at U-Tapao was replaced by an entire squadron with the activation there of the 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron. On the same date, a new site was opened at Nakom Phanom AB, Thailand, to perform reconnaissance drone recovery operations. The site at McCoy AFB was closed on November 1972 and operations from Da Nang AB ceased soon thereafter on 30 November.⁸⁷

With the resumption of the bombing of North Vietnam in 1972 and the mining of her coastal waters came the need for increased reconnaissance support. From May 1972 through the remainder of the year, the 100th SRW performed a variety of reconnaissance missions in support of the renewed activity. Particularly noteworthy was the wing's involvement with "Linebacker II" operations in December 1972. Previously, in August 1972, the unit's "Olympic Fire" mission was moved from McCoy AFB to Davis-Monthan. These were the first operational missions that the 100th performed directly from its home base. The signing of the Vietnam cease fire in January 1973 had a marked effect on the 100th's taskings. Although operational commitments in Southeast Asia were not ended, they were considerably diminished. Correspondingly, the wing began to realize an increase of requirements for home station operations.⁸⁸

In June 1975, operations from the sites at Nakom Phanom and Osan were discontinued; leaving only the squadron at U-Tapao to perform SAC reconnaissance activities in Southeast Asia. The U-Tapao operations were similarly discontinued in April 1976 after South Vietnam was overrun. Meanwhile, planning was in progress to inactivate the 100th and relocate its personnel and U-2 aircraft to Beale AFB, California. The purpose of that action was to realize the economies of assigning the management of all high-altitude manned reconnaissance operations to a single organization. As a result, the 100th SRW was inactivated at Davis-Monthan on 30 September 1976 and its personnel U-2 aircraft were reassigned to the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Beale AFB.⁸⁹



Two Vought A-7Ds of the 355th TFW depart Davis-Monthan on a routine training flight

The role of the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing and its A-7D single-engined jet aircraft became more apparent in the months following its assignment to Davis-Monthan. While maintaining the capability to deploy combat-ready pilots and aircraft to any part of the world on short notice, the 355th was also responsible for training new A-7D pilots and maintenance personnel. The 355th also controlled a number of aerospace vehicles which were unique for a tactical fighter wing. The Combat Angel Task Force, with its complement of DC-130s, CH-3 helicopters, and assorted drones, was redesignated as the 11th Tactical Drone Squadron and assigned to the 355th. The 11th's

mission was to use its drones in support of tactical operations. The drones were capable of performing electronic support measures, electronic counter-measures, photo reconnaissance, and other missions involving the use of image-forming sensors.⁹⁰

During its assignment at Davis-Monthan, the 355th repeatedly demonstrated its ability to perform its mission. On 8 September 1972, eight A-7D aircraft of the 355th TFW departed Davis-Monthan to participate in Exercise Commando Elite. This marked the first overseas deployment of the wing's A-7Ds. During September 1972, a portion of the wing deployed to Cannon AFB, New Mexico, with 12 aircraft and associated support personnel to provide a firepower demonstration for Army representatives from Fort Sill, Oklahoma. On 15 November 1972, four A-7D aircraft and 41 personnel deployed to the Panama Canal Zone to provide close air support for U.S. Army training in the area. The 355th provided continuous support to the Canal Zone training operations for 15 months.⁹¹

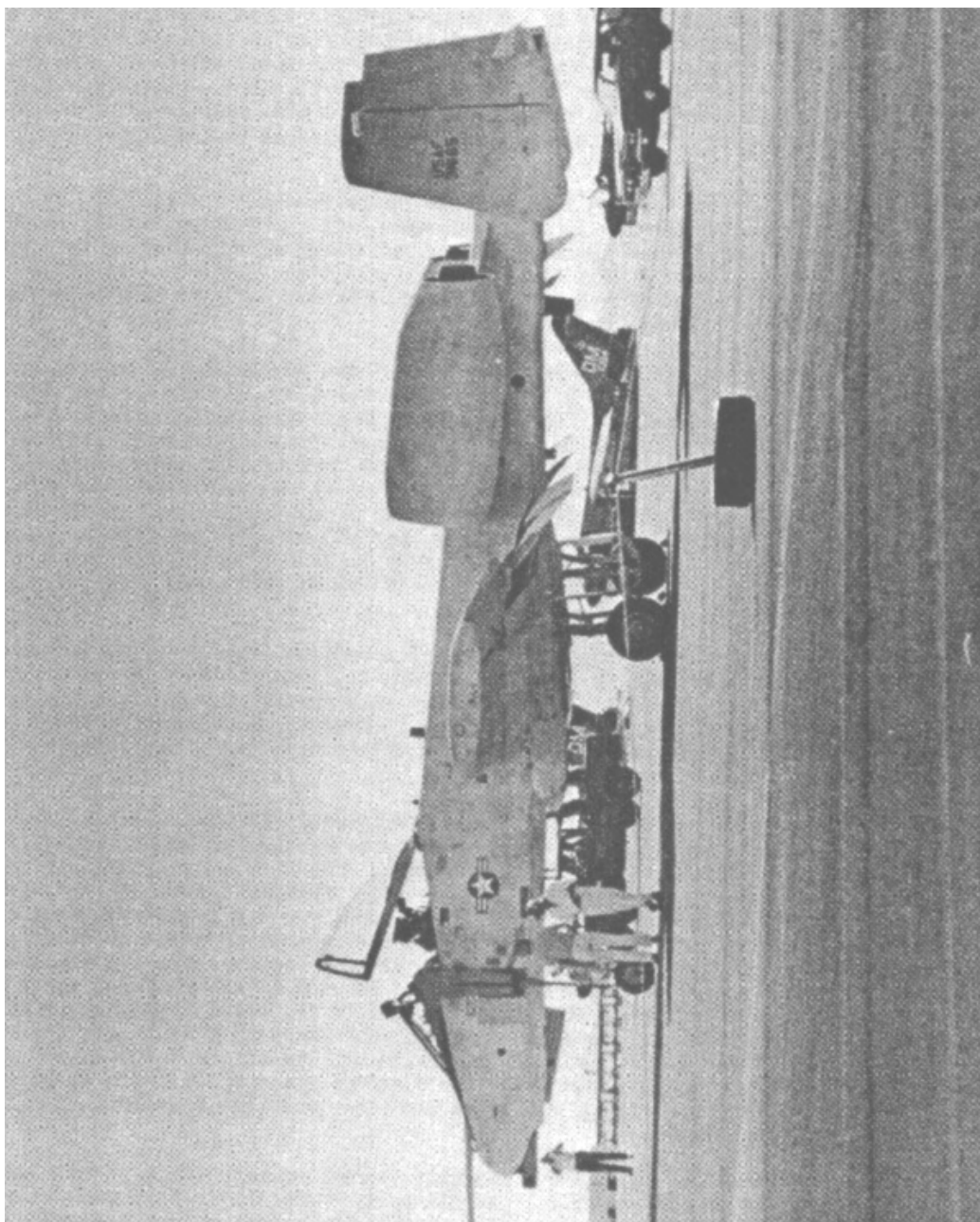
On 11 October 1973, the wing's 11th Tactical Drone Squadron successfully launched four drones from a single aircraft in rapid sequence. In the process, three new USAF records were established. Drone operations from Davis-Monthan achieved another historic first on 22 March 1974 when the 11th TDS conducted its first launch of a Maverick missile from a remotely piloted vehicle. The missile scored a direct hit on the designated target at Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah.⁹²

While the 355th's operations from Davis-Monthan were characterized by repeated successes, the repeated successes, the reputation of the A-7D as a reliable and safe aircraft was not nearly as good. The wing experienced the first of several major accidents involving the A-7D on 7 August 1972. Although the plane was a total loss, the pilot managed to successfully eject and lived to tell about it. Another A-7D crashed 83 miles southeast of Davis-Monthan on 2 October 1974. Two months later, on 19 December, the 355th lost another A-7D when it crashed 85 miles east-southeast of the base. The following year, the wing experienced four more major accidents. An A-7D crashed on 12 May while on a training mission and another A-7D was involved in a major accident on the runway at Davis-Monthan on 31 July. In addition, two AQM-34G drones were destroyed in separate accidents during August.⁹³

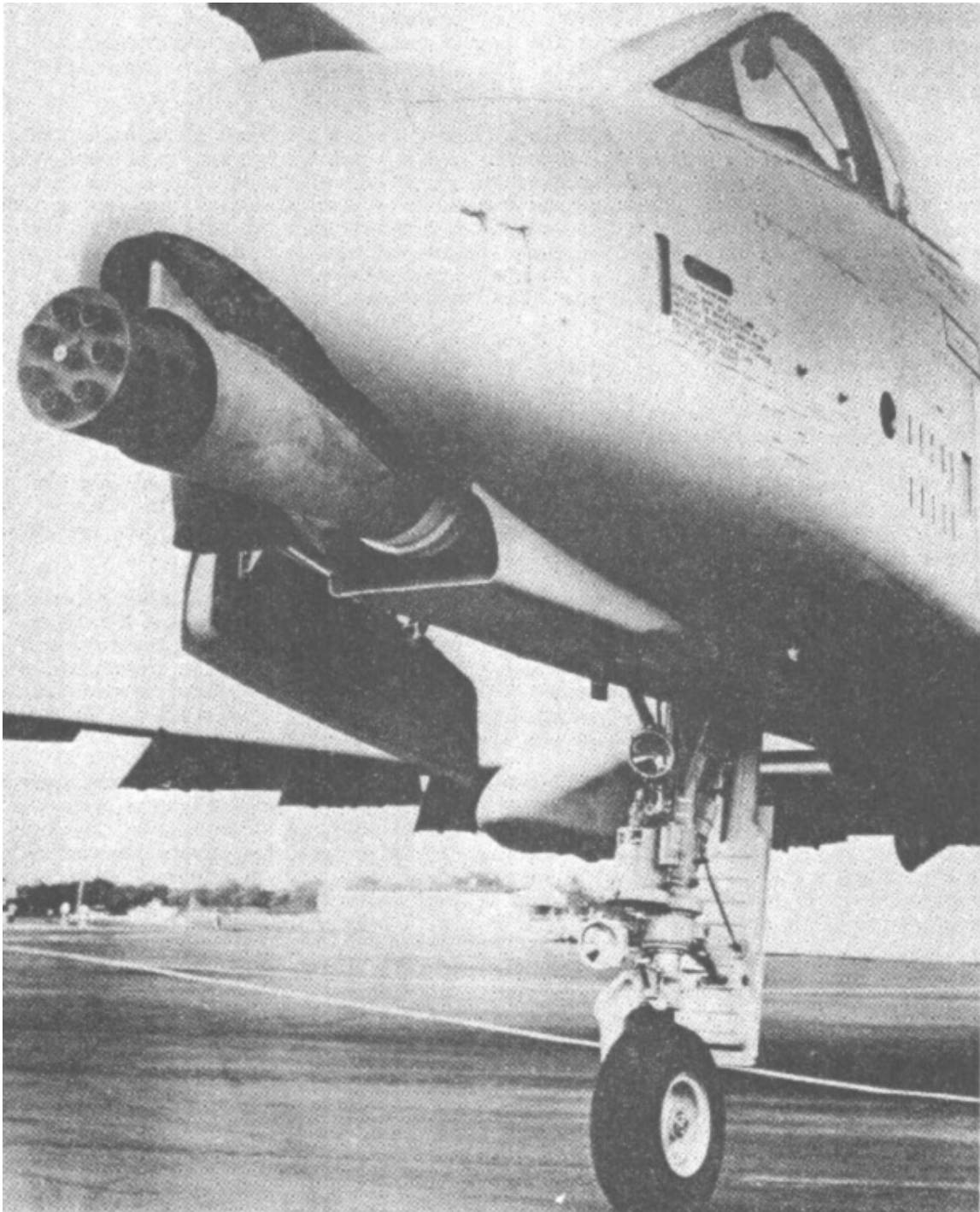
In early 1976, the 355th began transitioning into a new type of close air support aircraft; the Fairchild Republic A-10A "Thunderbolt II." This new style jet was possibly one of the ugliest aircraft ever designed. As a result, the small plane was often referred to by its pilots as the "Wart Hog." However, that appearance was very deceiving because the A-10A was in actuality one of the most lethal, reliable, and survivable aircraft in the world.⁹⁴

The A-10A was the first aircraft designed specifically to provide close air support for Army ground forces; although many other types of aircraft had previously performed that role with varying degrees of success. The main weapon carried by the A-10A was a 30 millimeter, seven-barrel, Gatling-type "Avenger" gun which was capable of cutting through the heaviest known armor; specifically tanks. In addition to its 30 millimeter gun, the A-10A had 11 ordnance stations capable of carrying 16,000 pounds of external weapons such as bombs and Maverick missiles. Another unique feature of the "Thunderbolt II" was that it had been built to be used in the extremely dense anti-aircraft environment of Europe in support of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations. The design of the plane was such that one-third of a main wing, one vertical stabilizer, one engine, half of the horizontal stabilizer, and everything forward of the cockpit could be shot away, the fuselage longerons could be severed, every fuel cell could be punctured, all hydraulics lost and the aircraft could still be flown 200 miles and landed.⁹⁵

The 355th received its first A-10A aircraft (Serial Number 75-00261) on 2 March 1976. This plane was dedicated entirely to maintenance training. Soon thereafter, the wing's first two operational A-10As flew their first ordnance mission from Davis-Monthan.⁹⁶



A-10A "Thunderbolt II"



The main weapon carried by the A-10A was the 10 millimeter "Avenger" gun

MISSILE OPERATIONS

Missile operations at Davis-Monthan from 1971 through 1976 consisted basically of keeping each Titan II operable and on constant alert. The ability of the 390th's missiles to meet those continuing mission requirements was enhanced by a major system change project called "Extended Life." The "Extended Life" modifications involved the relocation of water lines throughout the launch facilities and the replacement of various pumps and ducting at each site. The changes, which began on 1 March 1976, were still in progress at year's end.⁹⁷

The 390th's involvement in operational test launches of Titan II missiles had come to a conclusion in late 1968. However, launch activity resumed on 20 June 1971 when a task force from the 390th successfully fired off another of the wing's Titan IIs from Vandenberg AFB. This operation was the first of four scheduled launches performed by the wing in support of the Army's Safeguard Anti-ballistic Missile (ABM) System Test Target Program. The second safeguard launch was also a success but the third launch on 20 June 1974 failed. The 390th's fourth Safeguard Program launch on 4 December 1975 was a complete success. This event marked the last actual launch of any of the wing's Titan IIs.⁹⁸

KOLB ROAD CONTROVERSY

In the late 1960s, Tucson public officials began to place an increasing emphasis on the need for a north/south highway to connect the residential areas north of the base with the rapidly developing industrial areas along Interstate 10 to the south. The most desired route was Kolb Road which intersected all of the heavily traveled east/west main traffic arteries. Kolb Road halted at the north edge of Davis-Monthan's Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center (MASDC) area, but continued on from the south side of the base to Interstate 10.⁹⁹

The exploding growth of Tucson's entire east side served as the impetus for renewed demands that Kolb Road be extended through the MASDC area. However, the Air Force resisted those requests on the premise that dividing the base in that fashion would interfere with normal operations and would actually be the first step toward the eventual closing and relocation of the base. The Pima County Board of Supervisors countered that argument by noting that the proposed roadway would merely separate base proper from the Poorman Gunnery Range which the Air Force leased from the city.¹⁰⁰

It wasn't until February 1973, however, that the fat really hit the fire when one of the five county supervisors, Joseph Castillo, displayed his frustration with the Air Force stance by publicly stating that the community might be better off if Davis-Monthan AFB was phased out in 10 years. In response, Tucson's Mayor Lew Murphy characterized the statement as ". . . irresponsible and illogical, . . ." The Tucson Trade Bureau quickly chastised Supervisor Castillo and Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater got his two cents worth in by suggesting that Castillo should keep his mouth shut.¹⁰¹

Supervisor Castillo managed to survive the initial explosion and the smoke was just starting to clear when Supervisor E. S. "Bud" Walker jumped into the controversy. He likened the base to a ". . . pigpen in a residential neighborhood. . . ." and suggested that Davis-Monthan be phased out in 10 days rather than 10 years.¹⁰²

The question of Kolb Road and the base's continued existence stirred considerable debate among the city's citizenry. As a result, the Tucson Daily Citizen published a series of articles and editorials on the subject and polled readers to determine the local sentiment. By a ratio of 12 to 1, respondents in the one-day poll

overwhelmingly favored the continued existence of the base in Tucson. Out of a total of 1,847 ballots, 92 percent (1,700) were staunchly behind the base. In the end, the Board of Supervisors tabled its request for the road extension. Over the forthcoming years, renewed efforts were made on several occasions to push Kolb Road through the base. In each instance, however, the Air Force remained firm in its opposition.¹⁰³

TAC TAKES CONTROL

The last half of 1976 was witness to major changes in the operation and control of the base. On 12 July, the 432nd Tactical Drone Group was activated at Davis-Monthan. The new group immediately assigned responsibility for the drone operations previously handled by the 11th Tactical Drone Squadron and the 100th SRW. It was part of an Air Force plan to consolidate all drone assets under one unit. As a result, the requirement for maintaining separate sets of Ground Support Equipment for support aircraft and drone-peculiar operations was eliminated. Additionally, the consolidated operation resulted in decreased overhead and support funding requirements.¹⁰⁴

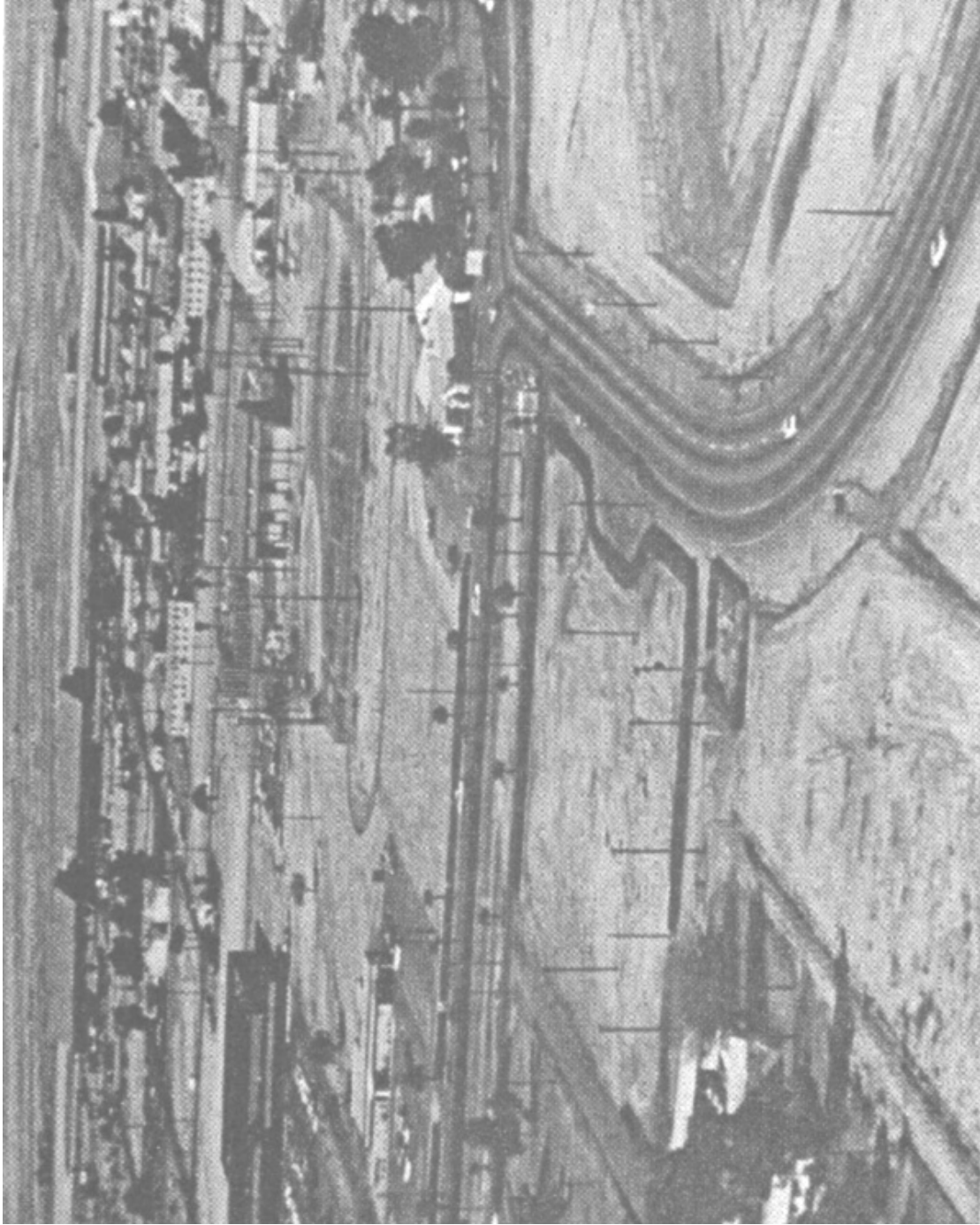
As mentioned previously, the 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was inactivated on 30 September 1976. Because of the substantially reduced SAC flying mission brought about by the inactivation, the 12th Air Division was relocated to Dyess AFB, Texas. The move to the new location was completed on 1 October 1976. In turn, the Tactical Air Command (with the 355th TFW as host unit) assumed control of the base on 30 September. As a result of those changes, the 390th SMW remained the sole representative of the Strategic Air Command at Davis-Monthan. After thirty years of SAC stewardship, the base looked to its future as a member of the Tactical Air Command.¹⁰⁵



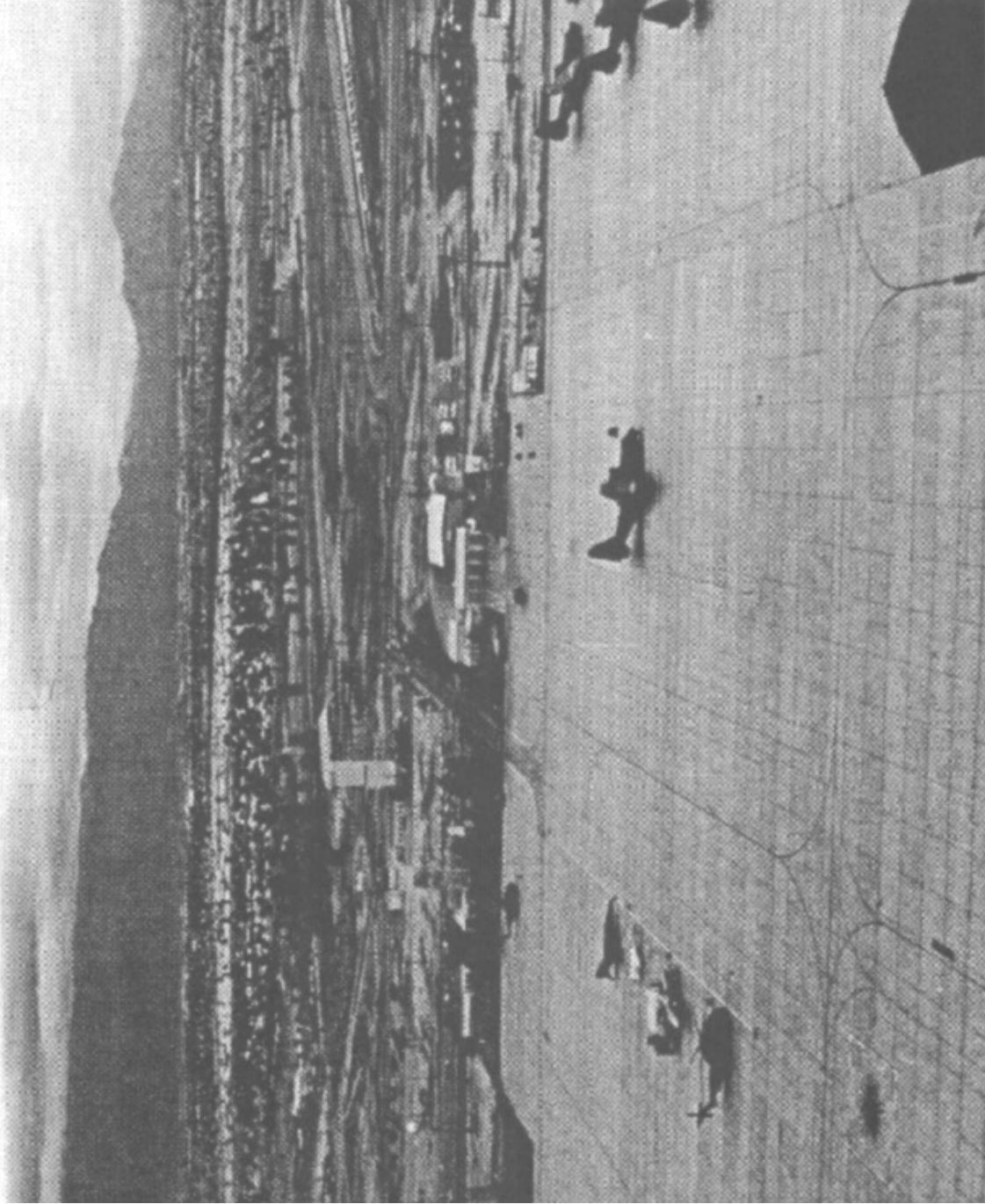
432nd Tactical Drone Group



The Main Gate at Davis-Monthan AFB displays the emblem of the Tactical Air Command as the base enters a new era in its history



Aerial view of Davis-Monthan AFB (looking west) - 1976



Davis-Monthan AFB flight line - 1976

CHAPTER V

THE AIRCRAFT STORAGE MISSION

Any discussion of the history of Davis-Monthan AFB could not even begin to be complete without delving into the mammoth aircraft storage and reclamation mission performed by the Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center (MASDC - pronounced 'Masdic'). In addition to being the oldest continuous operation at Davis-Monthan, the storage function occupied almost one-half of the entire government reservation. Since MASDC was operated by another command and performed a function totally different from the rest of Davis-Monthan's tenant units, it has gradually evolved over the years into almost a separate base within a base.¹

The storage mission began when the conclusion of World War II brought about an immediate need for the storage of surplus aircraft, especially B-29s and C-47s. The low residual acidic content of the soil, meager annual rainfall, and dry climate made Tucson an ideal area for such operations. Additionally, the soil consisted of an extremely hard mineral composition called caliche which made it possible to simply park aircraft in the desert without having to construct steel or concrete parking ramps. The preservative effects of a desert climate were well known. An unexpected confirmation of the ultimate capabilities of desert storage was provided in 1959 when an oil drilling team in Libya came across the B-24 Liberator *LADY BE GOOD* which had been abandoned by its crew of nine after a forced landing in 1943. The bomber had been preserved over the years in an almost unbelievable state. Tests proved that the servo motors and hydraulic pumps still operated, the radio worked, and even the fuel and oil were usable.²

Davis-Monthan became officially involved with aircraft storage on 15 November 1945 with the activation of the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) which was assigned responsibility for operation of the field and extended storage of Army Air Force aircraft. The new unit came under the jurisdiction of the San Antonio Air Technical Service Command (SAATSC). Soon afterwards, the SAATSC was placed under the control of the San Antonio Air Materiel Area (SAAMA). On 21 October 1946, the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) was redesignated as the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Aircraft Storage) with a mission devoted entirely to storage operations.³

Initially, the unit's function included the processing of B-29s and C-47s into storage, and the subsequent maintenance and preparation of aircraft for one-time flight to depots for overhaul and return to service. Approximately 650 B-29s and 245 C-47s were in the storage outfit's active inventory early in 1946. An additional 18 "museum-types" were also being maintained during that same period. By the end of the year, there were 679 B-29s and 241 C-47s in the inventory and the number of museum types had grown to 30. Throughout 1946, the unit's personnel had also prepared 82 B-29s and 71 C-47s for flights to depots for overhaul.⁴

ON-THE-JOB HAZARDS

Although the war in Europe and the Pacific had come to a conclusion in 1945, the early civilian work force assigned to the storage unit was regularly faced with its own special brand of combat. For instance, the Flying Times of 13 December 1946 revealed an insight into the types of battles fought within the confines of the storage area. It stated:⁵

Some of the hazards encountered by personnel of the 4105th in the desert storage area have been rather interesting. For instance, one worker, Richard Polk, sat down on a platform one day to fill in a report form and a bull snake bit his hand as he leaned on the platform. It was a non-poisonous variety, however, and Mr. Polk recovered.

Several days ago, workers in the area chased a lone coyote away from the storage area. One day last week a call came in from the field that there was a bobcat trapped inside the wheel of a B-29 in the storage area.

When the processing crew arrived at this particular B-29, one of the crew started to walk around the airplane and inspect it and almost stepped on the bobcat which was lying under the plane just outside the shadow of the fuselage. The bobcat awoke and bounded up over the tire of the right landing gear back up into the nacelle itself. After carbon dioxide extinguishers were used and the bobcat fell to the ground in front of the tire where pop bottles, rocks and more carbon tetrachloride finally subdued it.

The cat measured approximately 24 inches in length and its weight was estimated at between 15 and 20 pounds.

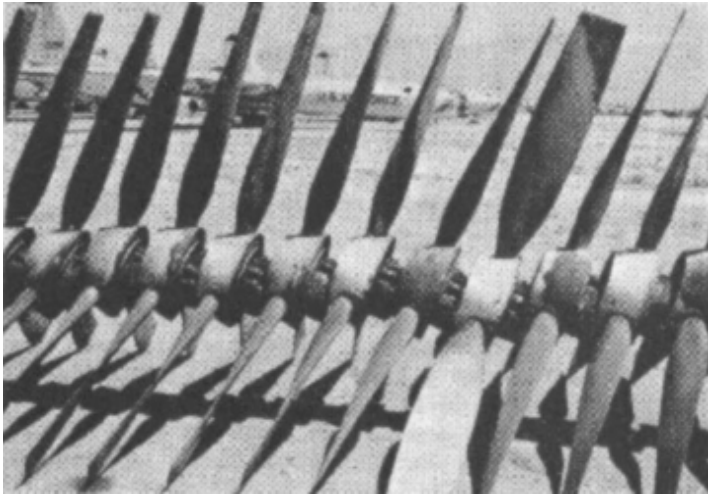
Wildlife hazards were a pretty regular part of the operations in the desert environment. On some occasions, when moving wooden blocks and platforms, there would be a rattler under one end and a prairie dog under the other. Jack rabbits were prevalent with several being known to drink regularly from the overflow of the large evaporative coolers outside the headquarters building. The civilian workers even went so far as to organize a sort of living desert museum consisting of live gila monsters, rattlers, rabbits, black snakes and bull snakes. According to the Flying Times, however, the mini-zoo had to be disbanded “. . . due to the rise in price of chicken eggs to feed the gila monsters.”⁶

STORAGE AS A PROFESSION

As the Cold War hostility intensified during the years following World War II, it became increasingly evident that military aircraft also had to be preserved for future emergency use. As a result, the processes of preservation became a highly specialized operation at Davis-Monthan. By June of 1953, there were 210 aircraft (B-29s and C-47s) in storage, but the total increased drastically to 981 by the end of the year as the unit began to receive its first influx of different types of planes. Specifically, it received 120 T-6s, 29 SA-16s, 13 L-20s, 21 QB-17s, one B-24, and one museum-type JU-88 during the second half of 1953.⁷

The SA-16 Albatross, later designated the HU-16, was a rescue amphibian craft built by Grumman for use by the Air Rescue Service. The QB-17s were radio-controlled planes used for air-to-air and ground-to-air target practice. The L-20 DeHavilland Beaver was a small single-engined monoplane which carried a pilot and several passengers. The T-6 Texas was used extensively by early pilots for training and continued in use at USAF flying schools until mid-1956.⁸

During the early days of aircraft storage at Davis-Monthan, planes destined for long-term retention underwent a process called cocooning. This, however, was a laborious process involving the spraying on of as many as five coats of plastic cocoon material after the removal of engines, radios, and other equipment items. Not only was this time consuming and expensive, but it was also generally ineffective. The hot summer days and the cool desert nights combined to create condensation within the tightly sealed aircraft and created more problems than it solved. As a result, a new procedure was developed. When an aircraft first arrived for preservation and storage, all guns, explosive charges, classified material, and any pilferable items were immediately removed. The fuel was drained from the fuel lines which were then pumped full of lightweight oil and drained again; thus leaving a film of oil to preserve the fuel system. The aircraft hydraulics and tires were serviced to normal standards.⁹



Aircraft parts, such as these propellers, were removed while the aircraft were in storage

The bottom half of the aircraft was not sealed so that circulating air could assist in the prevention of condensation. Engine intakes and exhausts were covered with paper and any gaps or cracks in the upper half of the aircraft skin were tightly taped. Those areas, plus easily damaged surfaces such as fiberglass radomes, fabric control surfaces, and canopies, were then covered with a vinyl plastic compound called "Spraylat." The white Spraylat, applied by spray gun, kept the water and dust out and prevented the occasional desert sand storm from sandblasting the windows and canopies. The main purpose of Spraylat, however, was temperature control. Without Spraylat, the inside temperature of an unprotected aircraft often reached 200 degrees in the hot Arizona sun. With Spraylat, the

inside temperature was only about five degrees hotter than the surrounding air; thus preventing damage to rubber parts and functional components.¹⁰

Parts reclamation was also a major part of the unit's operation. While some aircraft were scheduled for temporary storage, others were regularly sold to eligible foreign countries, tax-supported organizations, state governments, and police departments. The remaining planes were stripped of parts which were subsequently returned to the supply system. Bare shells that were left were chopped into chunks and sent to a furnace to melt the aluminum which was poured into ingots. The remaining metals were also reclaimed or sold as scrap.¹¹

The increased number of aircraft that began to pour in for storage during 1953 placed a very heavy demand on available space. Consequently, a contract was let for the clearing, grading, and fencing of an additional 480 acres of land at a cost of \$24,000. As a result, total available space increased to 1,290 acres. Over years, further increased in the number of planes in storage required continuing expansion and by 1967 a total of 2,822 acres were in use for that purpose.¹²

AIRCRAFT STORAGE AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

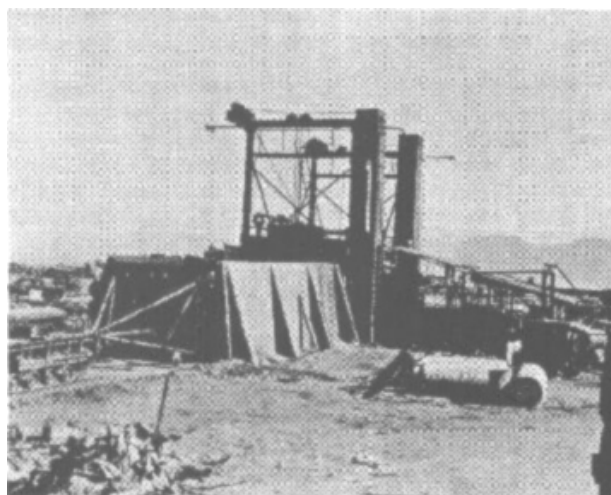
By July of 1960, the storage inventory had increased to more than 4,000 assorted aircraft and plans were in progress for the disposal of a large number of carcasses. However, the appearance of the Cuban Missile Crisis

in July and August of 1961 put an abrupt end to those plans. The phaseout of B-47 bombers and other projects in the reclamation area were either placed in abeyance or cancelled outright. Some planes were diverted back into storage status although they had already been stripped of usable parts. Over the next 12 months, reclamation projects produced 110,038 items with a monetary value of \$60,400,000 which were placed back into the supply system for reuse.¹³

Just prior to the discovery of strategic missiles in Cuba in 1961, the last of 342 B-36 bombers that had rested in the storage area went under the guillotine of the salvage operation. Only two survived. One was flown out to the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB and the other was delivered to Offutt AFB for inclusion in the Strategic Air Command Museum.¹⁴

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

Over the years since the storage operation was first activated, there were several changes in designations and command jurisdiction. Initially, the storage operations were handled by the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base), but on 21 October 1946 the name was changed to the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Aircraft Storage). The designation was later changed to the 3040th Aircraft Storage Depot on 20 August 1948 and reclamation/salvage operations were added to the basic mission. The depot nomenclature was later dropped on 5 October 1949 and the unit was rechristened as the 3040th Aircraft Storage Squadron. Then on 1 June 1951, the 3040th was transferred from under the control of the San Antonio Air Materiel Area to the San Bernardino Air Materiel Area (SBAMA).¹⁵

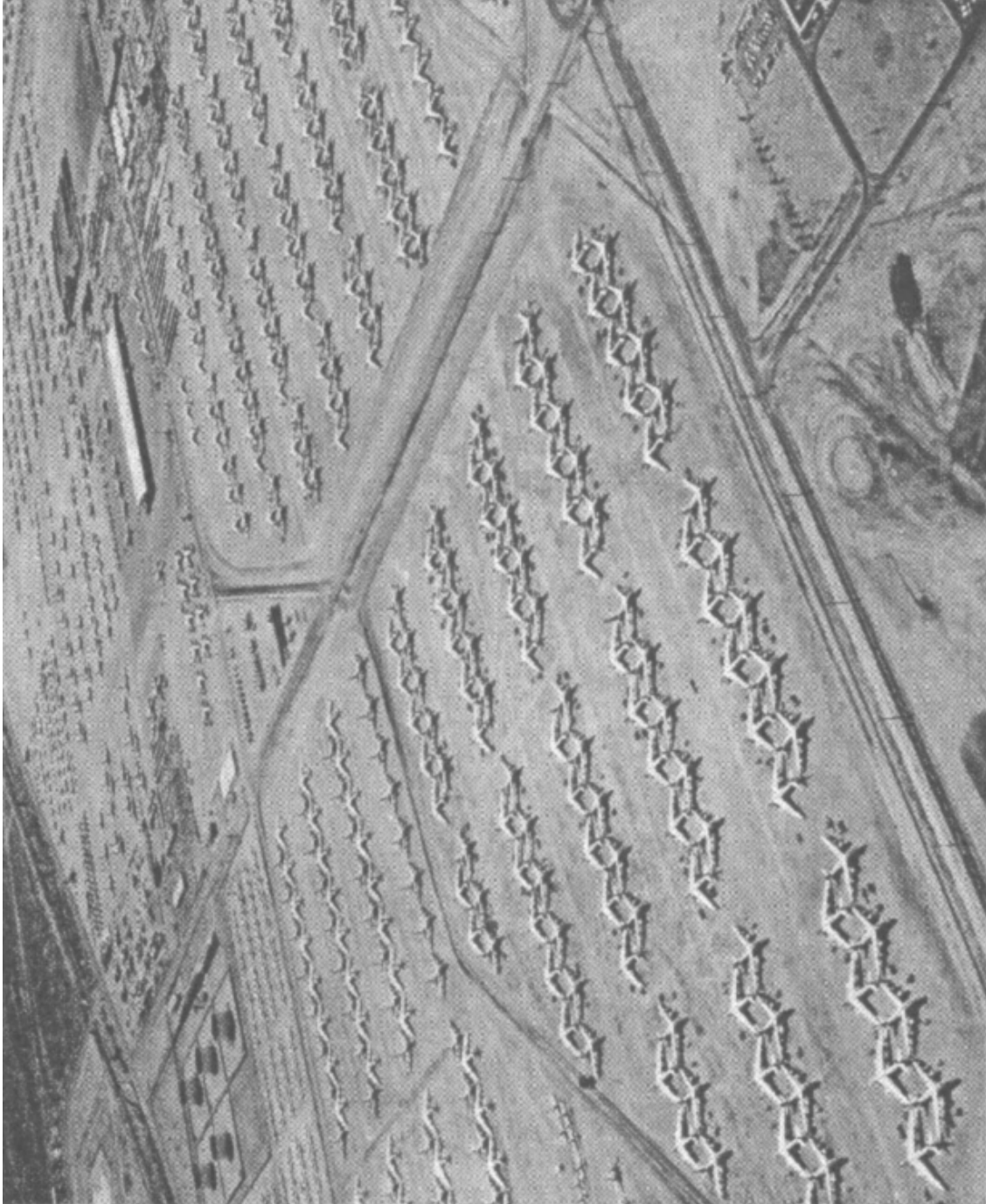


All but 520 of the Air Force's B-36s were chopped up and melted as part of the reclamation program at Davis-Monthan

Exactly five years later, the 3040th designation was discontinued and the unit was renamed the Arizona Aircraft Storage Branch and made a directorate-level component of SBAMA. It continued to operate under that title for a little more than three years until it lost its directorate-level status. On that date, 1 August 1959, it was redesignated as the 2704th Air Force Aircraft Storage and Disposition Group (AFSDG) and was placed under the direct command of the the Air Materiel Command.¹⁶ It was again redesignated on 1 April 1960 as the 2704th Air Force Storage and Disposition Group (AFSDG). When the Air Materiel Command was later split into two commands (Air Force Systems Command and Air Force Logistics Command) in April 1961, the 2704th AFSDG became part of the logistics portion. The most significant change, however, came about on 1 February 1965 when the 2704th was redesignated as the Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center (MASDC). With the change came a new mission as MASDC became the single point agency for the processing, storage, reclamation, and disposal of all aircraft assigned to the Department of Defense; not just the Air Force.¹⁷

EMERGENCY SUPPORT

It was during periods of national emergency that the work of the Center's reclamation and storage activities became most significant. For example, many of the C-47 Skytrains used during the Berlin Airlift had



Aerial view of the B-47 storage area at MASDC

been cocooned in the dry desert air at Davis-Monthan for several years before being recalled to active flying duty. Likewise, the Korean conflict necessitated the resurrection of a number of B-29 Superfortresses and P-51 Mustangs. The need for specialized aircraft suited for counterinsurgency warfare resulted in the reutilization of a number of cocooned B-26s, A-1Es, and T-28s in the skies over Vietnam. Today, the Strategic Air Command must count on MASDC to provide many of the parts required to keep its aging B-52 fleet on alert.¹⁸

HISTORIC AIRCRAFT

The \$6,000,000 Air Force Museum, built entirely with contributions from the public sector, was officially opened by President Richard M. Nixon on 3 September 1971 at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. Many of the famous planes on display there were flown in after having been in storage at Davis-Monthan.¹⁹

Over the years, MASDC served as the custodian for several unique and historically important aircraft. The following special-interest aircraft have spent some time in storage at Davis-Monthan:²⁰

- a. The two B-29s (ENOLA GAY and BOCK'S CAR) which dropped the atomic bombs on Japan during World War II.
- b. A B-32 which was a sister to the B-29 but saw very little combat.
- c. The XA-38 which was an experimental attack aircraft which never saw combat. It carried a 75mm cannon mounted in the nose for "tank busting."
- d. The XCG-15 and XCG-17 which were gliders used during World War II. The XCG-17, capable of carrying 42 troops, was a converted C-47 with the engines removed.
- e. A 707-80 Boeing prototype of the commercial 707 aircraft. It was being stored for the Smithsonian Institute.

FOOTNOTES

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86. Brochure, "Davis-Monthan AFB--The Old Pueblo," undated, c 1980, p 7; and Hist, "Davis-Monthan, Its Place in History," undated, c 1977, p 16.
87. Hist, "History of the 100th Air Refueling Wing," 23 Jan 79, pp 21-22.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Brochure, "Davis-Monthan AFB--The Old Pueblo," undated, c 1980, pp 19-20.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Hist, 390SMW, Oct-Dec 74, pp 30-47.
94. Brochure, "Davis-Monthan AFB--The Old Pueblo," undated, c 1980, pp 43-44.

95. Ibid.
96. Ibid., p 20.
97. Hist, 390SMW, Jan-Mar 76, pp 70-78.
98. Hist, "A Portrait of the 390th," undated, c 1978.
99. Hist, "Profile History--Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center," undated, p 68; and Hist, 12AD, Jan-Mar 73, p 2.
100. See note above.
101. See note above.
102. See note above.
103. See note above.
104. Hist, "History of the 100th Air Refueling Wing," 23 Jan 79, p 22; Brochure, "Davis-Monthan AFB--The Old Pueblo," undated, c 1980, p 7; and Hist, "Davis-Monthan, Its Place in History," undated, c 1977, p 16.
105. See note above.

CHAPTER V

1. Historian's personal observation.
2. Brochure, "Davis-Monthan AFB--The Old Pueblo," undated, c 1980, pp 29-31; and Flying Review International, Vol 24, Mar 69, pp 58-60.
3. Hist, Davis-Monthan Field, 1 Oct-15 Nov 45, p 3.
4. Hist, "Profile History--Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center," undated, p 2; and Hist, 4105AAFBU, Apr-Dec 46, pp 25-31.
5. The Flying Times, 13 Dec 46, no noted pagination.
6. Ibid., p 6.
7. Pamphlet, "The Old Pueblo--Davis-Monthan AFB," undated, c 1979, pp 24-25.
8. Ibid., p 6.
9. Pamphlet, "Davis-Monthan AFB--The Old Pueblo," undated, c 1980, p 30.
10. Ibid.
11. Hist, "Profile History--Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center," undated, p 14.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p 30.

14. Ibid., p 30.
15. HQ AMC G.O. #53, 20 Aug 48; HQ AMC G.O. #82, 28 Aug 59; and HQ AMC G.O. #39, 4 Jun 51.
16. HQ AMC G.O. #18, 30 Apr 56; HQ AMC G.O. #89, 18 Aug 59; and HQ AMC G.O. #82, 28 Jul 59.
17. HQ AFLC S.O. G-75, 22 Oct 64; and Ltr, HQ USAF to AFCC, "AFOMO 302nd," 7 Oct 64.
18. David B. Drachlis, "No Bones to Speak Of," Airman Magazine, Jun 78, p 20.
19. Appendix B, to Hist, "Profile History--Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center," undated.

APPENDIX I

BASE COMMANDERS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE ASSUMED POST</u>
Brigadier General Frank D. Lackland*	1 June 1941
Colonel Hubert V. Hopkins	c September 1941
Colonel Ames S. Albro	c October 1941
Colonel Hubert V. Hopkins	27 December 1941
Colonel Lowell H. Smith	c February 1942
Colonel C. K. Rich	24 November 1943
Colonel Ralph B. Walker	2 October 1944
Lieutenant Colonel C. L. Nothstein	4 November 1944
Colonel M. M. Munn	11 November 1944
Lieutenant Colonel C. L. Nothstein	17 March 1945
Colonel Downs E. Ingram	27 March 1945
Colonel Archibald Y. Smith	23 August 1945
Colonel William A. Hatcher, Jr.	11 January 1946
Colonel Herbert M. West, Jr.	16 January 1946
Colonel Archibald Y. Smith	16 April 1946
Colonel James C. Selser, Jr.	20 August 1946
Colonel William P. Fisher	7 January 1950
Colonel C. E. Marion	1 February 1951
Colonel Thomas G. Netcher	c March 1951
Colonel William J. Wrigglesworth	21 July 1953
Colonel Robert C. Whipple	7 April 1954
Colonel Louis J. Lamm	8 August 1955
Lieutenant Colonel Z. T. Wimberley	15 June 1957
Colonel Leslie J. Westberg	22 August 1957
Colonel William W. Brier	c September 1958
Colonel Landon E. McConnell	30 October 1958
Colonel William T. Lockett, Jr.	9 September 1959
Colonel Herbert T. King	8 October 1959
Lieutenant Colonel Charles F. Byars	1 July 1961
Colonel William F. Wigger	1 September 1961
Lieutenant Colonel Charles F. Byars	1 January 1962
Colonel Jack D. Nole	27 June 1962
Lieutenant Colonel Harold I. Larkin	1 April 1963
Colonel Harry P. Verbeek	28 June 1963
Colonel J. H. Baughn	12 February 1966
Colonel Douglas M. Conlan	24 March 1966
Colonel Richard R. Mitchell	11 September 1967
Colonel Paul D. Copher	1 November 1969
Colonel William H. Montgomery	16 February 1973
Colonel Raymond L. Horvath	13 March 1973
Colonel Richard J. Kiefer	18 March 1974
Colonel Conrad L. Beggs	30 August 1974
Colonel Paul C. Mathis	20 August 1975
Colonel Arthur E. Huhn	12 July 1976

*Tucson Air Base was officially activated on 17 April 1941. Prior to General Lackland's arrival (from 4 February to 30 May 1941), Lt Col Ames S. Albro was the officer in charge of the field. However, he was not officially appointed as Base Commander.

APPENDIX II

MAJOR UNITS ASSIGNED

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>1941 - 1976</u>	<u>DATE ASSIGNED</u>
1 st Bombardment Wing		1 May 1941
39 th Bombardment Group		c February 1942
444 th Bombardment Group		1 March 1943
Headquarters, 16 th Bombardment Wing		1 June 1943
39 th Combat Crew Training School		1 December 1943
233 rd Army Air Force Base Unit		c March 1944
4105 th Army Air Force Base Unit (Air Base)		15 November 1945
4270 th Army Air Force Base Unit (Separation Base)		15 November 1945
248 th Army Air Force Base Unit		31 March 1946
40 th Bombardment Group		4 May 1946
444 th Bombardment Group		9 May 1946
43 rd Bombardment Group		1 October 1946
2 nd Bombardment Group		24 September 1947
2 nd Bombardment Wing		5 November 1947
43 rd Bombardment Wing		1 August 1948
3040 th Aircraft Storage Depot		20 August 1948
3040 th Aircraft Storage Squadron		5 October 1949
303 rd Bombardment Wing		4 September 1951
Headquarters, 36 th Air Division		4 September 1951
Arizona Aircraft Storage Branch		1 June 1956
2704 th Air Force Aircraft Storage and Disposition Group		1 August 1959
2704 th Air Force Storage and Disposition Group		1 April 1960
Headquarters, 12 th Air Division		1 January 1962
390 th Strategic Missile Wing		1 January 1962
Headquarters, 12 th Strategic Aerospace Division		1 June 1962
4080 th Strategic Wing		1 July 1963
4453 rd Combat Crew Training Wing		1 July 1964
Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center		1 February 1965
100 th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing		25 June 1966
Headquarters, 12 th Strategic Missile Division		30 June 1971
355 th Tactical Fighter Wing		1 July 1971
Headquarters, 12 th Air Division		1 March 1973
432 nd Tactical Drone Group		12 July 1976

APPENDIX III

WEAPONS SYSTEMS/AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED

1941 - 1944

Douglas Biplane
Douglas B-18 Bolo
Stearman PT-17 (*Trainer*)
L-5/L-5E
LB-30
Lockheed A-29

AT-6/AT-6C/AT-6D/AT-6F
B-17 Flying Fortress/B-17C/B-17G
B-24 Liberator/B-24D/B-24H/B-24J
RB-24E
B-25 Mitchell/TB-25J
B-26 Marauder

1945 - 1962

B-29 Superfortress/B-29A/TB-29
B-47 Stratojet
B-50 Superfortress/B-50D
C-45/C-45F
C-47/C-47A
KB-29 Tanker

KC-97 Tanker
F-86 Sabre Jet/F-86A/F-86D/F-86L
F-89 Scorpion Interceptor
F-101B Voodoo
T-33 Jet Trainer

1963 - 1976

F-101B Voodoo
T-33 Jet Trainer
F-102 Delta Dagger
F-106 Dart
F-4 Phantom II/F-4C/F-4D
A-7D Corsair II
A-10A Thunderbolt II
DC-130/DC-130A/DC-130E/RC-130A
T-29
U-2/U-2C/U-2CT

U-3 (*U-2 Chase Plane*)
Titan II ICBM
O-2A Super Skymaster
OV-1 Mohawk (*Customs*)
Cessna Citation (*Customs*)
Drones
 AQM-034M/AQM-034L/AQM-034V
Helicopters
 HH-1F/HH-1H/HH-43/CH-3/CH-3C

APPENDIX IV

MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSIGNED

<i>DATE</i>	<i>ENLISTED</i>	<i>OFFICER</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
7 Dec 1941	2,012	163	2,179
8 Dec 1941	471	61	532
31 Dec 1941	1,447	178	1,625
31 Dec 1942	8,438	1,204	9,642
31 Dec 1943	6,997	1,567	8,564
31 Dec 1944	3,461	788	4,249
31 Dec 1945	1,369	312	1,681
31 Dec 1946	1,447	178	1,625
1947-1954 (not available)	-----	-----	-----
31 Jan 1955	6,283	1,121	7,404
1956 (not available)	-----	-----	-----
31 Oct 1957	5,560	1,047	6,607
1958 (not available)	-----	-----	-----
31 Dec 1959	5,540	1,112	6,652
31 Dec 1960	3,467	657	4,124
1961 (not available)	-----	-----	-----
31 Dec 1962	4,608	867	5,475
31 Dec 1963	5,985	1,016	7,001
31 Dec 1964	6,466	869	7,335
31 Dec 1965	5,563	768	6,331
31 Dec 1966	6,768	1,187	7,955
31 Dec 1967	7,985	1,140	9,125
31 Dec 1968	7,236	1,264	8,500
31 Dec 1969	6,817	1,288	8,105
31 Dec 1970	6,696	1,289	7,985
31 Dec 1971	7,500	1,153	8,653
1972 (not available)	-----	-----	-----
31 Dec 1973	4,546	816	5,362
31 Dec 1974	4,371	775	5,146
31 Dec 1975	6,904	1,068	7,972

APPENDIX V

ECONOMIC IMPACT COMPARISON*¹

	<u>1947</u>	<u>1977</u> **
Military Payroll	\$11,394,000	\$68,158,905
Civilian/Non-Appropriated Payroll	\$900,000	\$28,504,251
Total Payroll	\$12,294,000	\$96,663,156
Value of Base Resources	\$14,000,000 - \$16,000,000	\$5,468,080,037

**All figures are approximate. Yearly economic impact figures could not be located for inclusion.*

***Covers Fiscal Year period 1 Oct 76 - 30 Sep 77.*

1. Tucson Daily Citizen, 1 Aug 47, no noted pagination; and Rpt, "Davis-Monthan AFB Statement of Resources and Economic Impact," 30 Sep 77.

APPENDIX VI

WING COMMANDERS

<u>UNIT/COMMANDER</u>	<u>DATE*</u>
<u>1ST BOMBARDMENT WING</u> Brigadier General Frank D. Lackland	31 May 1941
<u>2ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP/WING</u> Colonel Dalene E. Bailey	1 July 1947
<u>12TH AIR DIVISION/STRATEGIC AEROSPACE DIVISION/ STRATEGIC MISSILE DIVISION</u> Colonel William C. Bacon Colonel William C. Garland Brigadier General Everett W. Holstrom Colonel George P. Cole Brigadier General Jack C. Ledford Brigadier General John A. Des Portes Brigadier General Harry M. Darmstandler Brigadier General James S. Murphy Brigadier General Raymond L. Haupt Colonel Christopher S. Adams, Jr.	1 January 1962 2 March 1964 1 July 1965 3 September 1966 8 July 1968 30 September 1970 29 February 1972 2 February 1973 9 October 1973 1 December 1975
<u>36TH AIR DIVISION</u> Brigadier General W. P. Fisher Colonel John Spencer Hardy Brigadier General Niles O. Ohman Brigadier General James V. Edmundson Colonel Delmar E. Wilson	4 September 1951 3 September 1952 6 November 1953 1 February 1955 7 February 1957
<u>100TH STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE WING</u> Colonel William D. Kyle, Jr. Colonel Marion C. Mixon Colonel Raymond L. Haupt Colonel Donald S. White Colonel Charles B. Stratton	25 June 1966 15 August 1966 31 July 1970 29 June 1972 7 May 1974
<u>303RD BOMBARDMENT WING</u> Colonel John K. Hester Colonel William J. Wigglesworth Colonel Donald W. Saunders Colonel Lloyd H. Dalton Colonel William W. Jones Colonel William C. Bacon Colonel Max W. Rogers	c September 1951 12 June 1954 27 November 1954 25 August 1956 8 December 1956 1 November 1958 1 January 1962

**Date shows only when the commander assumed the position at Davis-Monthan AFB. In some instances, the individual could have been assigned as wing commander prior to the unit's transfer to Davis-Monthan.*

355TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING

Colonel John F. Barnes	1 July 1971
Colonel Fred A. Haeffner	23 August 1972
Colonel William J. Hosmer	19 July 1974
Colonel Alonzo L. Ferguson	30 June 1976
Brigadier General William D. Curry, Jr.	16 August 1976

390TH STRATEGIC MISSILE WING

Colonel Raymond D. Sampson	1 January 1962
Colonel Robert J. Hill	15 December 1965
Colonel Robert R. Scott	1 August 1966
Colonel Charles R. Hammack	25 July 1968
Colonel Edward P. Denton	6 January 1969
Colonel Edgar A. Northrup	7 December 1971
Colonel Eugene D. Scott	27 January 1973
Colonel Joseph P. Cerny	10 February 1975
Colonel George Holt, Jr.	c July 1976

4080TH STRATEGIC WING

Colonel John A. Des Portes	1 July 1963
Colonel Julius H. Baughn	10 June 1965
Colonel William D. Kyle, Jr.	12 February 1966

MILITARY AIRCRAFT STORAGE AND DISPOSITION CENTER

Major Walter L. Harwell	1 April 1946
Lieutenant Colonel Robert R. Shaefer	1 July 1946
Lieutenant Colonel Robert F. Schirmer	1 September 1946
Colonel Newman R. Laughinghouse	21 October 1947
Major Victor R. Myers	1 June 1951
Major George V. Newman	18 March 1952
Captain Wallace R. Starwalt	1 September 1952
Lieutenant Colonel William D. Hombach	29 April 1953
Colonel Allen W. Reed	31 March 1955
Colonel Albert J. Shower	1 August 1958
Lieutenant Colonel Boyd F. Herman	1 November 1960
Colonel Wirt D. Corrie	28 November 1960
Colonel Charles L. Stafford	1 August 1962
Colonel I. R. Perkin	28 June 1966
Colonel Andrew A. Juhasz	11 September 1967
Colonel Rupert P. Collins	11 October 1967
Colonel Jack K. Massie	10 September 1971
Colonel Harry L. Gronewald	15 March 1974
Bertrand E. Stewart, Jr. (civilian)	18 May 1975

APPENDIX VII

OLYMPIC ARENA AWARDS

390th Strategic Missile Wing

<u>DATE</u>	<u>COMPETITION</u>	<u>AWARD</u>
3 - 7 Apr 67	Curtain Raiser	Best Titan II Combat Crew
17 - 24 Apr 69	Olympic Arena '69	Best Titan Wing, Best Titan Crew, Best Titan Maintenance
28 Apr - 5 May 70	Olympic Arena '70	Best Titan Wing, Best Re-entry Vehicle Team
20 - 28 Apr 71	Olympic Arena '71	Best Ordnance Team
6 - 14 Apr 72	Olympic Arena '72	Best Operations, Best Ordnance Team, Best Guidance Team
24 Apr - 4 May 73	Olympic Arena '73	Best Guidance Team, Air Force Logistics Command Logistics Trophy-Titan (for best Titan maintenance overall)
25 Apr - 3 May 74	Olympic Arena '74	Best Titan Wing, Best Maintenance Team, Best Guidance Team, Best Electronics Team, Best Re-entry Vehicle Team, AFLC Best Logistics (Titan)
24 Apr - 2 May 75	Olympic Arena '75	Best Re-entry Vehicle Team, Best Guidance Team
22 - 30 Apr 76	Olympic Arena '76	Best Security Police Team

APPENDIX VIII

CHRONOLOGY

- 10,000-13,000 B.C. Nomads of Asiatic extraction ventured into the area now known as Arizona.
- 300 B.C. The Hohokam people began to build an intricate system of irrigation canals to carry river water deep into the arid desert.
- 700-900 A.D. Ruins later discovered in Tucson verified the existence of the Hohokam people in the area during this period.
- 1000-1400 The Hohokam system of irrigation canals reached its peak.
- 1400 The Hohokam people began to decline and then disappeared for some unknown reason.
- 1539 Fray Marcos de Niza ventured northward from New Spain (Mexico) into the area now known as Arizona in search of the legendary Seven Cities of Gold.
- 1629 The first Franciscan missionaries began work in the Hopi pueblos of Arizona.
- 1680 The Indians of New Mexico and Arizona revolted against the missionaries, killed them all, and effectively put an end to the initial missionary effort.
- 1691 Father Eusebio Francisco Kino began his successful Jesuit missionary effort in Arizona.
- 1711 Father Kino died in Sonora, Mexico.
- 1751 The first Spanish military contingent found its way into Arizona and established a presidio at Tubac which became the first Spanish colony in Arizona.
- 20 Aug 1775 The boundaries were laid out for a new presidio at Tucson. This date is considered the official birthdate of the city.
- 1776 Construction actually began on the presidio at Tucson.
- 1846-1848 The Mexican War was in full swing between the United States and Mexico.
- 17 Dec 1846 Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke and his famed Mormon Battalion marched into Tucson and raised the American flag over the town for the first time.
- 1848 The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, ending the Mexican War.
- 1853 The \$10,000,000 Gadsden Purchase agreement was signed. The Gadsden Purchase made all of what is now Arizona a part of the United States under the jurisdiction of the Territory of New Mexico.

- 14 Nov 1856 The first regular U.S. military unit to be stationed in Tucson arrived under the command of Major Enoch Steen.
- 1861 Cochise and the Chiricahua Apaches declared a total war on every American man, woman, and child in Arizona. The bitter war lasted for 12 years.
- 14 Feb 1862 Arizona was declared a Confederate territory.
- 28 Feb 1862 Captain Sherod Hunter led a force of Texans into Tucson to occupy the town for the South.
- Apr 1862 Captain Hunter's forces retreated from Tucson after learning of an advancing army of 1,800 Union soldiers moving from the west.
- 20 May 1862 Colonel James H. Carleton's "California Column" arrived in Tucson and established a Union Army supply depot called Camp Tucson (later Camp Lowell).
- Feb 1863 President Lincoln signed a bill that recognized Arizona a separate territory with no connection with New Mexico.
- Aug 1866 Camp Tucson was renamed Camp Lowell.
- 30 Apr 1871 A vigilante group from Tucson massacred eight Apache men and 77 Apache women and children in Aravaipa Canyon. The incident came to be known as the Camp Grant Massacre.
- 1873 Lieutenant Colonel George Crook and his forces hunted down 2,300 Indians who had previously refused to accept reservation life. This marked the end of the Indian Wars.
- 1879 Camp Lowell was redesignated as Fort Lowell.
- 1891 Fort Lowell was abandoned and turned over to the Interior Department.
- 19 Feb 1910 George Hamilton took off from the Elysian Grove Amusement Park in a Curtis 'Pusher' biplane to perform the first aerial flight ever in the skies over Tucson.
- 29 Oct 1911 Robert G. Fowler landed in Tucson while attempting a West to East transcontinental flight record.
- 1 Nov 1911 Calbraith Perry Rodgers landed in Tucson while attempting an East to West transcontinental flight record.
- 14 Feb 1912 President Taft signed a proclamation which admitted Arizona into the Union as the 48th state.
- 9 May 1919 The Mayor of Tucson received a letter from the Air Service requesting that the city construct a permanent airfield.
- 21 Jul 1919 The Tucson Common Council agreed to have the city finance and build an aerial field.

- 20 Nov 1919 The new airfield was opened on an 82.64 acre plot of land where the Rodeo Grounds exist today. The first plane to land was piloted by "Swede" Myerhoff with Councilman Randolph Fishburn as a passenger. The new airport was initially called New Macauley Field.
- 1920 New Macauley Field was renamed Fishburn Field.
- 1923 Fishburn Field was renamed Tucson Municipal Flying Field.
- 21 Sep 1924 Lowell H. Smith landed his Douglas World Cruiser Chicago at the airfield during the final legs of his record-setting Around-the-World Flight.
- 1925 Staff Sergeant Dewey Simpson established a refueling and service operation at the airfield to service transiting Army aircraft.
- 23 Sep 1927 A new municipal airport, constructed on a different site southeast of the city was formally dedicated by Charles Lindbergh as "Davis-Monthan Field." The new airport served as the nucleus for the Army air base that would be established there in the future.
- 1929 The Tucson Chamber of Commerce was unsuccessful in its attempt to get the War Department to establish a military air base at Tucson.
- 1934-1937 The Works Progress Administration (WPA) further upgraded the field by adding modern paved roads and taxi strips. It was during this period that the field's name was changed to Tucson Municipal Airport.
- Jun 1940 The Tucson Chamber of Commerce again requested that the War Department establish a military airfield at Tucson.
- 29 Sep 1940 The War Department announced its decision to build an air base at Tucson.
- 4 Jan 1941 Contracts for the construction of housing units for the new air base were let to M.M. Sundt Construction Company of Tucson.
- 15 Jan 1941 The Army announced to City of Tucson officials that the 88th Reconnaissance Squadron, a bombing unit, would pitch tents at the Tucson Air Base site and begin 60-90 days of bombing practice on a two-mile strip of land that had been set aside for aerial target purposes.
- 4 Feb 1941 Lieutenant Colonel Ames S. Albro arrived at Tucson Municipal Airport to begin transforming it into an air base. Colonel Albro, along with two noncommissioned officers and 20 boys from a nearby Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp, began building warehouses and preparing the field for occupation.
- 4 Mar 1941 Six B-17s, the first Flying Fortresses ever to land at Tucson Air Base, arrived from March Field, California. The planes ferried members of the 38th Reconnaissance Squadron had been assigned to the base temporarily for bomb practice.
- 28 Mar 1941 Grading and leveling of the Tucson Air Base was completed.

- 17 Apr 1941 Tucson Air Base was officially activated.
- 1 May 1941 The 1st Bombardment Wing accepted formal occupancy of Tucson Air Base.
- 27 May 1941 The first echelon convoy of the 1st Bombardment Wing arrived in Tucson from March Field, California, with one officer and 42 enlisted members.
- 29 May 1941 Members of the 41st Signal Platoon and the 31st Air Base Group arrived at Tucson along with other members of the 1st Bombardment Wing.
- 30 May 1941 Brigadier General Frank O. Lackland, Commander of the 1st Bombardment Wing, arrived in Tucson.
- 1 Jun 1941 General Lackland assumed his position as the first Base Commander.
- Sep 1941 Colonel Hubert V. Hopkins assumed the position of Base Commander
- Oct 1941 Colonel Ames S. Albro assumed the position of Base Commander.
- 1 Dec 1941 The designation "Air Base, Tucson, Arizona" was officially changed to "Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona."
- 7 Dec 1941 Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, base personnel were placed on 24-hour duty status and other precautions were ordered at Davis-Monthan Field. There were 163 officers and 2,012 enlisted men assigned to the base at the time.
- 8 Dec 1941 With the immediate measures taken to strengthen the national defense in other areas, many of the base's personnel were immediately shipped out. As a result, Davis-Monthan Field was left with only 61 officers and 471 enlisted members the day after the Japanese attack.
- 10 Dec 1941 The 1st Bombardment Wing headed for the Pacific, taking its B-18 Bolo medium bombers with it.
- 22 Dec 1941 Company I, 25th Infantry was attached to the air base for the purpose of providing interior guard and security.
- 23 Dec 1941 An LB-30 crashed into a residence in Tucson; destroying the plane and the dwelling. No civilians were injured, but four of the fifteen military personnel aboard the plane were hurt.
- 27 Dec 1941 Colonel Hubert V. Hopkins assumed the position of Base Commander.
- 26 Jan 1942 The base was transferred from the jurisdiction of the Fourth Air Force to that of the Second Air Force.
- Feb 1942 The 39th Bombardment Group arrived at Davis-Monthan Field and immediately began training heavy bombardment units and crews; first as an operational training unit (OTU) and later as a replacement training unit (RTU).
- Feb 1942 Colonel Lowell H. Smith assumed the position of Base Commander.

- 24 Feb 1942 A section of the base called "1,000 Man Camp," located east of the present Base Library, was completed.
- 2 Mar 1942 A 40-square mile area known as Willcox Dry Lake was established as a bombing range.
- 20 Mar 1942 Captain Edward V. Rickenbacker, the famed World War I ace, visited the base.
- 23 Mar 1942 A supplemental contract for the construction of a "500 Man camp" west of the present Base Library was completed.
- 1 Apr 1942 The Sahuarita Bombing Range, five and one-half miles southeast of Sahuarita, Arizona, was opened.
- 6 Apr 1942 Five men were killed in the crash of a B-17 Flying Fortress two miles east of Vail, Arizona. Only two members of the crew were successful in their attempts to bail out.
- 8 Apr 1942 An ambitious construction project was launched with an initial contract figure of \$900,652, plus three supplemental contracts totaling an additional \$453,085.50 for the building of additional barracks, hospital, school, navigation, and boiler room facilities.
- 4 May 1942 A \$107,640.00 contract was completed for the construction of a Base Engineering Shop building and the relocation of the parachute facility.
- 16 May 1942 The base was visited by Major General Hubert Harmon, Commanding General of the Gulf Coast Training Center.
- 20 May 1942 Brigadier General Robert Olds, new commanding officer of Second Air Force, paid an official visit to the base.
- 30 Jun 1942 Brigadier General Frank D. Lackland, former commanding officer of the base, retired after 31 years of service.
- 8 Jul 1942 One member of the crew of a B-24D (Serial Number 41-11824) was killed when the plane crashed six miles southeast of the field.
- 26 Mar 1943 A new dining hall, built to replace the one destroyed in the 1 February aircraft accident, was turned over to the base. Construction of the replacement facility cost \$55,716.11.
- 1 Apr 1943 The Post Engineer accepted custody of a new hospital ward, covered walk, and an addition to the hospital sprinkler system at a total cost of \$20,835.00.
- 12 Apr 1943 A B-24D, assigned to the 39th Bombardment Group, crashed in the desert six miles east of the field, killing all 11 members aboard.
- 20 Apr 1943 Contract 4688 (\$5,616) was completed. It provided for the construction of a Quartermaster reclamation shed/yard and a paint warehouse.

22 Apr 1943 A B-24D, assigned to the 39th Bombardment Group, crashed in the desert four miles northwest of the base. All six crew members escaped injury.

29 Apr 1943 Major General Robert Olds died at the Desert Sanitarium near Tucson.

1 May 1943 General Olds' ashes were scattered over the western mountains from a B-17 Flying Fortress.

4 May 1943 The Post Engineer accepted a new hospital recreation building and associated facilities constructed at a cost of \$19,596.00.

4 May 1943 Construction was completed on a new service apron and taxiway at a cost of \$111,018.90.

20 May 1943 Forty-nine WAACS and two officers arrived at Davis-Monthan Field to form the 757th WAAC Detachment.

22 May 1943 Construction was completed on two hospital clinics costing a total of \$41,274.00.

1 Jun 1943 Headquarters, 16th Bombardment Wing was transferred from El Paso, Texas, to Davis-Monthan Field.

14 Jun 1943 A new Post Engineer administrative building, a warehouse, two shops, and an addition to one shed were completed at a cost of \$11,821.00.

28 Jun 1943 Three Chilean Air Force officers, Commandante de Grupo R. G. Bisquert, Commandante de Esquadrilla T. L. Sarasua, and Commandante de Esquadrilla J. Edouard Latorre, visited Davis-Monthan to study methods employed in the assembling and training of four-engine bomber crews.

1 Jul 1943 Construction was completed on a barracks and latrine for range operating personnel at the Palo Alto Bombing Range at a cost of \$9,975.00

1 Jul 1943 Construction was completed on a civilian infirmary for use by civilian employees and dependents at a cost of \$8,097.30.

5 Jul 1943 Construction of a service hangar and concrete pavement were completed at a cost of \$192,700.00.

7 Jul 1943 Four E-shaped technical buildings were completed at a cost of \$7,374.00.

10 Jul 1943 A new bombardier training facility was constructed at a cost of \$11,245.00.

15 Jul 1943 An addition to the Resident Officers' Mess was completed at a cost of \$5,710.00.

15 Jul 1943 An addition to the guardhouse was completed at a cost of \$8,600.00.

29 Jul 1943 The 444th Bombardment Group was transferred from Davis-Monthan Field to Great Bend AAB, Kansas.

- 30 Jul 1943 A B-24D, assigned to the 39th Bombardment Group, crashed into the Tanque Verde Mountains, killing all nine crew members aboard.
- 1 Aug 1943 An addition to the base water supply system was completed by equipping Well #3 for pumping. The contract was completed at an expenditure of \$16,135.00.
- 26 Aug 1943 A B-24E was being ferried to Davis-Monthan Field from El Paso, Texas by a crew from the 39th Bombardment Group when it crashed near Lordsburg, New Mexico. All four men aboard were killed.
- Oct 1943 The 16th Bombardment Wing, which had maintained Headquarters at Davis-Monthan, Field was transferred to El Paso, Texas, upon the dissolution of the XX Bomber Command.
- 8 Nov 1943 The 486th Bombardment Group arrived at Davis-Monthan Field.
- 8 Nov 1943 The 493rd Bombardment Group arrived at Davis-Monthan Field.
- 10 Nov 1943 The 491st Bombardment Group left for El Paso, Texas.
- 18 Nov 1943 Construction was completed on a \$39,945.00 gymnasium.
- 18 Nov 1943 The 940th Engineers Aviation Camouflage Battalion transferred from Davis-Monthan Field to Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- 20 Nov 1943 The 860th, 861st, 862nd, and 863rd Bombardment Squadrons arrived at Davis-Monthan Field.
- 24 Nov 1943 Colonel Lowell H. Smith was relieved of duty as the Base Commander and assigned to the 18th Replacement Wing Detachment while awaiting further orders.
- 24 Nov 1943 Colonel C. K. Smith assumed duties as the Base Commander.
- 1 Dec 1943 Personnel of Davis-Monthan Field were organized under the Combat Crew Training School Plan. Accordingly, the 39th Bombardment Group was redesignated as the 39th Combat Crew Training School.
- 1 Dec 1943 Contract W-509 Engineering 4710 was completed in November and officially accepted on 1 December 1943. The work, which cost \$697,738, provided landing field expansion and runway marking and striping.
- Dec 1943 The 944th Engineer Aviation Regiment was disbanded and its personnel were absorbed into other base units.
- 14 Dec 1943 The \$39,945 gymnasium was officially accepted.
- 14 Dec 1943 A P-51 assigned to the Air Transport Command's 6th Ferrying Group crashed 12 miles east of the Consolidated-Vultee Modification Center (present day Tucson International Airport). The plane exploded and the pilot was killed.
- 19 Dec 1943 The 499th Bombardment Group was transferred.

- 25 Dec 1943 The 307th Airdrome Squadron was transferred.
- 31 Dec 1943 Base strength - 1,567 officers and 6,997 enlisted personnel.
- 17 Jan 1944 A B-24D, assigned to the 39th CCTS, crashed while attempting an emergency landing without landing lights. The plane struck the top of a residence near the end of the landing strip, continued low to the ground for several hundred yards, and then crashed near the end of the runway. The aircraft was almost a total loss and two crew members were killed instantly.
- 2 Feb 1944 A B-24J, assigned to the First Air Force, crashed and burned one and one-half miles northeast of Davis-Monthan Field while attempting an emergency landing. Two crew members were killed but the remaining eight escaped with only minor injuries.
- 18 Feb 1944 Two B-24s, assigned to the 486th Bombardment Group, collided in mid-air 20 miles northeast of Phoenix, Arizona. All crew members of both planes were killed.
- Mar 1944 A change in the command function occurred when the Base Commander was placed under the direct supervision of the Second Air Force Commander. The wings, greatly reduced in strength, became supervisory and inspection units.
- Mar 1944 The 39th Combat Crew Training School was redesignated as the 233rd Army Air Force Base Unit.
- 15 Mar 1944 The base hospital was redesignated as an Army Air Force Regional Station Hospital.
- 18 Mar 1944 A B-24H, assigned to the 399th Bombardment Group (Hamilton Field, California) crashed into the mountains approximately 20 miles northeast of Davis-Monthan Field. All 10 crew members were killed.
- 20 Mar 1944 An RB-24E, assigned to the 233rd AAF Base Unit Combat Crew Training Squadron, attempted a forced landing after the #1 engine failed. Four crew members were killed and five received minor injuries.
- 1 Apr 1944 The 39th Bombardment Group was inactivated.
- 31 May 1944 The 502nd Bombardment Group and the 29th Photography Laboratory Bombardment Group were activated without personnel and assigned to Davis-Monthan Field.
- 5 Jun 1944 The 502nd Bombardment Group and the 29th Photography Laboratory Bombardment Group were reassigned to the Army Air Base at Dalhart, Texas.
- 14 Jul 1944 A B-24J from Davis-Monthan Field crashed in an open plain near Palm Springs, California. Three crew members were killed, but nine others managed to parachute to safety.

- 17 Aug 1944 Chief Warrant Officer Franz G. Nierlich composed an original "Davis-Monthan Field March" in celebration of the anniversary of the Army's air arm.
- 5 Sep 1944 Davis-Monthan Field was made directly responsible to Headquarters, Second Air Force, Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- 7 Sep 1944 Colonel Ralph B. Walker assumed temporary command of Davis-Monthan Field while Colonel C. K. Rich was away from the base for several weeks on official business.
- 2 Oct 1944 Colonel Ralph B. Walker assumed the regular position of Base Commander.
- 4 Nov 1944 Lieutenant Colonel C. L. Nothstein assumed the position of Base Commander. At 28 years of age, he was the youngest person to ever serve as a Base Commander at Davis-Monthan.
- 11 Nov 1944 Colonel M. M. Munn assumed the position of Base Commander.
- 2 Dec 1944 Twelve P-63s arrived at Davis-Monthan Field for a period of eight days to perform fighter-bomber intercept missions. The group was composed of 12 officers and 33 enlisted personnel.
- 20 Dec 1944 The U.S. Corps of Engineers began a \$1,559,397 construction program in support of the forthcoming B-29 conversion at Davis-Monthan Field. An additional \$341,581 worth of government supplied material and overhead were provided for the program.
- 29 Dec 1944 Davis-Monthan Field received its first B-29 Superfortress.
- 31 Dec 1944 Base strength - 788 officers and 3,461 enlisted personnel.
- 8 Jan 1945 Class TU-1-18 graduated, bringing an end to B-24 Liberator combat crew training at Davis-Monthan Field.
- 20 Jan 1945 The 844th, 845th, 846th, and 847th Bombardment Squadrons of the 489th Bombardment Group were assigned to Davis-Monthan Field.
- 8 Feb 1945 Command control over Davis-Monthan Field was returned to the 16th Bombardment Wing in line with a general reorganization of Combat crew training wings in Second Air Force.
- 17 Mar 1945 Lieutenant Colonel C. L. Nothstein assumed the position of Base Commander.
- 27 Mar 1945 Colonel Downs E. Ingram assumed the position of Base Commander.
- 31 Mar 1945 Work was completed on the relocation of 13 buildings north of Hangar #1 to make way for a new hangar. The work was accomplished by a contractor at a cost of \$28,000.
- 4 Apr 1945 The civilian dining facility was almost totally destroyed by a fire. Most of the \$12,000 loss, however, was covered by a civilian insurance company.

- Apr 1945 Major Dewey Simpson retired at Davis-Monthan Field after serving in the Army since 1916.
- 28 Apr 1943 The station lost its first B-29 bomber in a crash landing soon after takeoff. Although the aircraft was not reparable, no personnel were hurt in the accident.
- 30 Apr 1945 The base had 44 B-29s on hand with only 11 of those in commission.
- May 1945 A total of \$10,024.15 was approved for the construction of a prisoner-of-war camp on Davis-Monthan Field. Construction labor was provided by 36 German naval prisoners from the Papago Park POW camp. The new POW facility was located between Eighth and Ninth Streets and extended from "L" Street to "N" Street.
- 10 May 1945 A TB-29A suffered major damage when it crash landed 15 miles southeast of Davis-Monthan Field. The crew was not injured.
- 26 May 1945 An AT-6, assigned to Davis-Monthan Field, crash landed during a night-navigator mission. The plane went down near Santa Ana, Mexico; 152 miles south of Red Rock, Arizona. The pilot was not injured.
- 19 Jun 1945 A total of 135 German prisoners-of-war arrived from Papago Park, Arizona, to be held in the newly constructed POW camp at Davis-Monthan Field.
- 23 Jun 1945 1Lt Morgan G. Higham brought a blazing B-29 in for an emergency landing at Davis-Monthan Field. Alone in the cockpit at the time, it was claimed that he was possibly the first person to ever solo in a Superfortress.
- 30 Jun 1945 A Davis-Monthan based B-29 crashed 20 miles east of Salt Flat, Texas, killing all 12 crew members.
- 25 Jul 1945 Another B-29 from Davis-Monthan Field crashed and burned; killing six of the crew members.
- 2 Aug 1945 Squadron "B (N)" (Negro WAACs) was organized at Davis-Monthan Field with a strength of 118 enlisted women.
- 9 Aug 1943 An A-20H from Wright Field, Ohio, crashed into the Rincon Mountains 25 miles east southwest of Davis-Monthan Field. Both the pilot and his passenger were killed.
- 14 Aug 1945 The 466th Bombardment Group and the 374th Air Service Group were transferred from the Pueblo Army Air Base, Colorado, to Davis-Monthan Field. The tactical unit movements involved approximately eight officers and 522 enlisted personnel.
- 23 Aug 1945 Colonel Archibald Y. Smith assumed the position of Base Commander.
- 10 Sep 1945 Squadrons "K" and "L" were organized. Those units were comprised of personnel sent to Davis-Monthan Field from Alamogordo AB when that station experienced a severe water shortage.

30 Sep 1945 The 466th Bombardment Group and the 374th Air Service Group were still in existence at Davis-Monthan Field, but the majority of their personnel had been relieved of assignment to the units.

1 Oct 1945 The 585th Army Air Force Band, consisting of one warrant officer and nine enlisted men, was transferred from Fairmont AAF, Nebraska, to Davis-Monthan Field for special duty at the Separation Center.

17 Oct 1945 The 466th Bombardment Group and the 374th Air Service Group were inactivated.

15 Nov 1945 Davis-Monthan Field, no longer charged with the primary mission of training B-29 combat crews, passed from the jurisdiction of the Second Air Force to that of the San Antonio Air Technical Service Command (SAATSC).

15 Nov 1945 The 233rd AAF Base Unit was discontinued.

15 Nov 1945 The 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) and the 4270th AAF Base Unit--(Separation Base) were organized at Davis-Monthan Field.

20 Nov 1945 Command jurisdiction of the Tucson Municipal Airport was assigned by the San Antonio Air Technical Service Command.

30 Nov 1945 The 4270th AAF Base Unit ceased functioning. During its short two-week existence, the unit managed to process 9,435 personnel for separation.

3 Dec 1945 The Tucson Municipal Airport was designated as a sub-base of Davis-Monthan Field.

31 Dec 1945 Base strength - 312 officers and 1,369 enlisted personnel.

11 Jan 1946 Colonel William A. Hatcher, Jr., assumed the position of Base Commander.

16 Jan 1946 Colonel Herbert W. West, Jr., assumed the position of Base Commander.

14 Feb 1946 Squadron "C" (White WAACs) was discontinued.

26 Feb 1946 The Consolidated-Vultee Modification Center, a Davis-Monthan Field subordinate unit, was transferred to the control of Second Air Force.

31 Mar 1946 The newly formed Strategic Air Command (SAC) assumed jurisdiction over Davis-Monthan Field.

31 Mar 1946 The 248th AAF Base Unit was activated at Davis-Monthan Field.

31 Mar 1946 Davis-Monthan Field was transferred to the control of Fifteenth Air Force; thus it reestablished its flying mission.

31 Mar 1946 The German POW camp at Davis-Monthan was discontinued.

≤ 31 Mar 1946 Squadron "CH" (Negro WAACs) was disbanded when its personnel were transferred to Kelly Field, Texas.

- 16 Apr 1946 Colonel Archibald Y. Smith assumed the position of Base Commander.
- 6 May 1946 The first elements of the 444th Bombardment Group, the 40th Bombardment Group, the 25th Air Service Group, and the 28th Air Service Group arrived at Davis-Monthan Field.
- May 1946 The arrival of the 444th and 40th Bombardment Groups created an immediate housing problem. As an interim measure, an emergency housing program was established to convert old barracks into one/two room apartments. This area soon came to be known as "Jackson City."
- 29 May 1946 The 444th Bombardment Group and the 248th AAF Base Unit were combined under the control of the Base Commander. Each unit retained its own respective identity but worked together on a co-equal basis to accomplish the overall station mission.
- Jun 1946 The 409th Bombardment Squadron was transferred to Davis-Monthan Field from Clovis AAF, New Mexico. Strength was one officer and one enlisted man.
- 1 Jul 1946 Squadron "C" of the 248th AAF Base Unit was organized at Davis-Monthan Field. The unit consisted of several hundred black airmen from various stations throughout the United States.
- 30 Jul 1946 The 1st and 2nd Photo Laboratories were activated at Davis-Monthan Field. The 1st Photo Lab was assigned to the 40th Bombardment Group and the 2nd Photo Lab was assigned to the 444th Bombardment Group.
- Aug 1946 The 475th Aviation Squadron was transferred from Pope Field, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Davis-Monthan Field for training preparatory to an overseas movement. The unit consisted of 94 black enlisted men and three officers.
- 20 Aug 1946 Colonel James C. Selser, Jr., assumed the position of Base Commander.
- 28 Aug 1946 The Consolidated-Vultee Modification Center was transferred to the control of the War Assets Administration.
- 11 Sep 1946 Colonel John I. Moore assumed the position of Base Commander.
- Sep 1946 The 40th Bombardment and 25th Air Service Groups were reduced to one officer and one enlisted man assigned. The remaining personnel were transferred to the 444th Bombardment Group and the 28th Air Service Group.
- 1 Oct 1946 The 43rd Bombardment Group was activated and assigned to Davis-Monthan Field. The new group received the equipment and personnel of the 40th and 444th Bombardment Groups and the 25th and 28th Air Service Groups.
- 1 Oct 1946 The 40th and 444th Bombardment Groups were inactivated.
- 1 Oct 1946 The assignment of the 43rd Bombardment Group resulted in a reorganization of the existing Group-Base Unit policy; in turn, making the Base Unit subordinate to the Group.

- 4 Oct 1946 The "Pacusan Dreamboat" completed a 10,000 mile non-stop mission from Oahu, Hawaii to Cairo, Egypt in 39 Hours and 35 minutes.
- 5 Oct 1946 Colonel James C. Selser, Jr., assumed the position of Base Commander.
- 17 Oct 1946 The 475th Aviation Squadron departed for the Fort Lawton Staging Area prior to overseas shipment.
- 21 Oct 1946 The 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) was redesignated as the 410th AAF Base Unit (Aircraft Storage).
- 1 Nov 1946 Operational control of Davis-Monthan Field was transferred from Fifteenth Air Force to Eighth Air Force.
- 13 Nov 1946 Colonel James C. Selser, Jr., Base Commander and Commander of the 43rd Bombardment Group, led a flight of six B-29s to Rhein-Main Air Field, Germany. They remained in Europe for almost two weeks, during which time they visited several European capitols, reviewed numerous airfields for possible B-29 use and, most importantly, flew several missions along the borders of Soviet-occupied territory. This trans-Atlantic mission was executed in response to the destruction of two C-47s over Yugoslavia. The mission served as the first instance in which SAC bombers were used as an instrument of international diplomacy.
- 19 Nov 1946 Command jurisdiction over Davis-Monthan Field was transferred from the Fifteenth Air Force to the Eighth Air Force.
- 31 Dec 1946 Base strength - 178 officers and 1,447 enlisted personnel assigned.
- 8-13 Jan 1947 The 43rd Bombardment Group sent twelve B-29s to participate in the All-American Air Maneuvers at Miami, Florida.
- 8 Apr 1947 The 43rd Bombardment Group flew a round-robin route around Arizona in conjunction with a celebration of Army Week.
- 11 Apr 1947 Thirty 43rd Bombardment Group aircraft participated in an Eighth Air Force formation flight over Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California in celebration of Army Week.
- Apr 1947 Davis-Monthan Field received six more B-29s during April. That brought the total up to 33 or 11 for each of the three bomb squadrons in the 43rd Bombardment Group.
- 1-12 May 1947 Planes and crews of the 43rd Bombardment Group performed 12 days of maneuvers at Wendover Field, Utah. That was considered an outstanding training accomplishment and it constituted the first major undertaking of the group since its activation.
- 16 May 1947 The 43rd Bombardment Group participated in the Strategic Air Command's first "Maximum Effort" mission over several eastern United States cities.

- 25 May 1947 Nine B-29s of the 43rd Bombardment Group departed Davis-Monthan Field for Yakota, Japan, where they underwent 30 days of training with the Far East Air Force.
- 1 Jul 1947 The 2nd Bombardment Group was activated and assigned to Davis-Monthan Field, but it was immediately attached for duty to Headquarters SAC, Andrews AFB, Maryland.
- 31 Jul 1947 A 43rd Bombardment Group B-29, the "Pacusan Dreamboat" set a new International Closed Course Speed Record of 6,214 miles in 22 hours and 27 minutes.
- 1-2 Aug 1947 The "Pacusan Dreamboat" established a new International Closed Course Distance Record of 8,854.3 miles in 39 hours.
- 1 Sep 1947 The 43rd Bombardment Group flew a 14-plane formation at the Cleveland Air Races.
- 24 Sep 1947 The 2nd Bombardment Group arrived at Davis-Monthan Field.
- 10 Oct 1947 The 43rd Bombardment Group participated in the Eighth Air Force Group Competition at Roswell, New Mexico. The competition was won by three crews assigned to the group.
- 13 Jan 1948 Davis-Monthan Field was redesignated as Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (AFB).
- 20 Feb 1948 The first B-50 in the SAC inventory (Serial Number 46-017) was delivered to the 43rd Bombardment Wing.
- 18 Jun 1948 The 43rd Air Refueling Squadron (ARS) was assigned to Davis-Monthan AFB. Along with the 509th ARS at Roswell AFB, New Mexico, the unit shared the honor of being the first air refueling squadron in the United States Air Force. Those first refueling tankers were modified B-29s designated KB-29Ms.
- 20-27 Jun 1948 The 43rd Bombardment Group took first place away from nine other B-29 groups during SAC's first bombing competition at Castle AFB, California.
- 22 Jul 1948 Three B-29s of the 43rd Bombardment Group left Davis-Monthan AFB to attempt an around-the-world flight record. One crashed in the Arabian Sea, but the other two completed the trip on 6 August after eight intermediate stops and 103 hours, 50 minutes of actual flying time. Lieutenant Colonel R. W. Kline commended the "Gas Gobbler" and 1Lt A. M. Neil commanded the "Lucky Lady."
- 20 Aug 1948 The designation of the 4105th Base Unit (Aircraft Storage) was changed to the 3040th Aircraft Storage Depot. Reclamation and salvage operations were added to the storage mission.
- 26 Feb 1949 Captain James G. Gallagher and the crew of the 43rd Bombardment Group's "Lucky Lady II" departed Carswell AFB, Texas, in an around-the-world non-stop flight record attempt.

2 Mar 1949 The crew of "Lucky Lady II" completed the first non-stop around the world flight.

1 Apr 1949 The 2nd Bombardment Wing was transferred from Davis-Monthan AFB to Chatham AFB, Georgia.

3-7 Oct 1949 Davis-Monthan AFB served as the host for the second SAC bombing competition.

5 Oct 1949 The 3040th Aircraft Storage Depot was redesignated as the 3040th Aircraft Storage Squadron.

7 Jan 1950 Colonel William P. Fisher assumed the position of Base Commander.

1 Apr 1950 Jurisdiction over Davis-Monthan AFB was transferred from Eighth Air Force back to Fifteenth Air Force.

1 Feb 1951 Colonel C. E. Marion assumed the position of Base Commander.

Mar 1951 Colonel Thomas G. Netcher assumed the position of Base Commander.

1 Jun 1951 Jurisdiction over the 3040th Aircraft Storage Squadron was transferred from the San Antonio Air Materiel Area (SAAMA) to the San Bernardino Air Materiel Area (SBAMA).

4 Sep 1951 The 36th Air Division was activated at Davis-Monthan AFB.

4 Sep 1951 The 303rd Bombardment Wing was assigned to Davis-Monthan AFB.

Jun 1952 The 803rd Air Base Group was activated at Davis-Monthan AFB.

3 Sep 1952 Colonel John Spencer Hardy assumed command of the 36th Air Division.

13-18 Oct 1952 Davis-Monthan AFB served as the staging base for medium bombers during the fourth SAC bombing competition.

Dec 1952 An additional 1,600 acres were acquired for base expansion.

17 Jan 1953 Davis-Monthan AFB officially opened a new runway. The runway, which was stressed for the largest aircraft then under construction, was 200 feet wide and 11,500 feet long.

Feb 1953 The 303rd Bombardment Wing received four T-33 jet trainers; the first jet aircraft ever assigned to Davis-Monthan AFB.

27 Mar 1953 The first three Boeing B-47 Stratojet medium bombers arrived at Davis-Monthan and were immediately assigned to the 303rd Bombardment Wing.

20 Apr 1953 The 15th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron was activated at Davis-Monthan AFB.

21 Jul 1953 Colonel William J. Wigglesworth assumed the position of Base Commander.

- 17 Sep 1953 The Secretary of the Air Force, Harold E. Talbot, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Charles S. Thomas, made a tour of Davis-Monthan AFB.
- Oct 1953 Four hundred and eighty (480) acres of land adjoining Davis-Monthan AFB's eastern boundary was procured for aircraft storage and \$125,000 was allocated by the Air Materiel Command for the construction of facilities in that area. With that new land, the storage operation occupied 1,290 acres.
- 25-31 Oct 1953 Davis-Monthan AFB hosted all of the B-47s which participated in the 1953 edition of SAC's Bombing and Navigation Competition. The 303rd's Crew R-14 won the award for the Best B-47 Crew in SAC.
- 6 Nov 1953 Brigadier General Niles O. Ohman assumed the command of the 36th Air Division.
- 3 Dec 1953 A B-47, assigned to the 303rd Bombardment Wing, crashed and burned. All four crew members were killed. This incident marked the first major aircraft accident for the 303rd in which there were fatalities.
- Dec 1953 The last four remaining KB-29 tankers of the 43rd Bombardment Wing were transferred to Forbes AFB, Kansas.
- Jan 1954 The 43rd Bombardment Wing received its final two KC-97 tankers.
- Feb 1954 The first F-86 Sabre Jet interceptor to be assigned to the 15th Fighter Interceptor Squadron arrived at Davis-Monthan AFB.
- 15 Feb 1954 Forty-five B-47 bombers and 20 KC-97 tankers of the 303rd Bombardment Wing departed Davis-Monthan AFB for 90 days of training in England.
- 15 Mar 1954 The 775th Air Force Band was inactivated at Davis-Monthan AFB.
- 7 Apr 1954 Colonel Robert C. Whipple assumed command of the 36th Air Division while Brigadier General Ohman was TDY on official business.
- 4 Sep 1954 The 43rd Bombardment Wing deployed to the United Kingdom for 90 days of temporary duty.
- 17-19 Nov 1954 Colonel David A. Burchinal, Commander of the 43rd Bombardment Wing set a new record for distance and endurance when he flew a B-47 for 47 hours, 35 minutes, and covered a distance of 21,163 miles.
- 9 Dec 1954 The 43rd Bombardment Wing began returning from its 90-day deployment to the United Kingdom.
- 31 Jan 1953 Base strength - 1,121 officers and 6,283 enlisted personnel assigned.
- 1 Feb 1955 Brigadier General V. E. Edmundson assumed command of the 36th Air Division.
- May 1955 A KC-97 crew from the 43rd Air Refueling Squadron participated in the filming of the motion picture "Strategic Air Command."

11 Jul 1955 Eighteen B-47s from Davis-Monthan AFB participated in a fly-over of Denver, Colorado, in connection with the dedication ceremony for the Air Force Academy.

8 Aug 1955 Colonel Louis J. Lamm assumed the position of Base Commander.

11-17 Oct 1955 The runway at Davis-Monthan AFB was closed for seal-coating and remarking. While closed, flight operations were continued from the Tucson Municipal Airport.

Mar 1955 The base furnished personnel and aircraft to Universal Studios on location to assist in the filming of the motion picture "Battle Hymn."

29 Apr 1956 An on-base drag strip for racing was officially opened on a portion of unused runway. The runway had been made available to the Tucson Junior Chamber of Commerce.

1 Jun 1956 The 3040th Aircraft Storage Squadron was discontinued and the storage activity was redesignated as the Arizona Aircraft Storage Branch (AASB) and made a directorate of the San Bernardino Air Materiel Area.

3-5 Jul 1956 Forty-five B-47 aircraft of the 303rd Bombardment Wing and 20 KC-97 tankers of the 43rd Air Refueling Squadron deployed to Guam for 90 days of temporary duty.

14 Jan 1957 The President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, arrived at Davis-Monthan AFB to make an inspection of drought condition in Arizona. He departed the base the next day.

7 Feb 1957 Colonel Delmar E. Wilson assumed command of the 36th Air Division.

15 Jun 1957 Lieutenant Colonel Z. T. Wimberley assumed the position of Base Commander.

22 Aug 1957 Colonel Leslie J. Westberg assumed the position of Base Commander.

31 Oct 1957 Base strength - 1,047 officers and 5,560 enlisted personnel assigned.

1 Apr 1958 Units of the 303rd Bombardment Wing departed Davis-Monthan AFB for their forward base at Anderson AFB, Guam, for an extended period of temporary duty.

24 Jun 1958 Personnel of the 303rd Bombardment Wing began to return from Guam.

Sep 1958 Colonel William W. Brier assumed the position of Base Commander.

30 Oct 1958 Colonel Landon E. McConnell assumed the position of Base Commander.

2 Apr 1959 A B-47, assigned to the 43rd Bombardment Wing, crashed near Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, killing all four crew members; including Colonel Herbert I. Shingler, Jr., Wing Commander.

4 April 1959 A B-47, assigned to the 43rd Bombardment Wing, crashed near Davis-Monthan AFB killing all three crew members.

13 Apr 1959 Colonel Jean B. Miller assumed command of the 43rd Bombardment Wing.

15 May 1959 The Directorates of Personnel of the 43rd and 303rd Bombardment Wings and the 803rd Combat Support Group were consolidated.

1 Aug 1959 The Arizona Aircraft Storage Branch was discontinued as a directorate-level component of the San Bernardino Air Materiel Area. Accordingly, it was redesignated as the 2704th Air Force Aircraft Storage and Disposition Group (AFASDG) under the jurisdiction of the Air Materiel Command.

9 Sep 1959 Colonel William T. Lockett, Jr., assumed the position of Base Commander.

8 Oct 1959 Colonel Herbert T. King assumed the position of Base Commander.

31 Dec 1959 Base strength - 1,112 officers and 5,540 enlisted personnel assigned.

18 Jan 1960 The 303rd Bombardment Wing began participation in exercise "Big Sickle."

15 Mar 1960 Headquarters SAC published General Order #1 inactivating the 36th Air Division. The same order transferred the 43rd Bombardment Wing out of Davis-Monthan and inactivated the 803rd Combat Support Group while concurrently activating the 303rd Combat Support Group.

27 Mar 1960 Davis-Monthan AFB's "Alert City" was completed at an approximate cost of \$2,000,000.

1 Apr 1960 The 2704th AF Aircraft Storage and Disposition Group was redesignated as the 2704th Air Force Storage and Disposition Group.

20 Apr 1960 Fifteenth Air Force announced that Davis-Monthan AFB had been selected as the site for a future Titan II missile wing.

3 Oct 1960 The Davis-Monthan AFB Corps of Engineers Ballistic Missile Construction Office was formally opened.

18 Oct 1960 Davis-Monthan AFB Wherry Housing was accepted by the Air Force at a total cost of \$4,733,539.

9 Nov 1960 The "Fellowship for Reconciliation," a pacifist group, advised the base that they would picket the installation as a protest against the construction of Titan II missile sites in the area.

29 Nov 1960 The bids for the first phase of the Titan II missile site construction project were won by three companies (Jones-Teer-Winkelman Construction Combine) for a total bid of \$27,700,000.

1 Dec 1960 The Corps of Engineers officially awarded the Phase I Titan II construction contract to Jones-Teer-Winkelman.

7 Dec 1960 The ground breaking ceremony at the future site of Complex 570-2 marked the beginning of the Titan II construction program.

31 Dec 1960 Base strength - 657 officers and 3,467 enlisted personnel assigned.

19 Jan 1961 Mr. Jerry M. Wheeler, a member of the "Committee for Nonviolent Action," was arrested for trespassing on the base while protesting the construction of Titan II complexes.

17 Feb 1961 Construction of Davis-Monthan AFB's new Base Hospital was completed at a cost of \$2,200,000.

31 Mar-2 Apr 1961 Several members of the "Committee Against Ringing Tucson With Titans" maintained a vigil outside the base's Main Gate.

23 May 1961 The Fluor Corporation of Los Angeles, California, submitted a low bid of \$35,643,500 for Phase II missile site construction.

1 Jul 1963 Colonel Charles E. Byars assumed the position of Base Commander.

26 Aug 1961 A pacifist demonstration was conducted outside the base's Main Gate.

19 Aug 1961 The 303rd Bombardment Wing's first aircraft accident occurred after more than six years of operational flying.

1 Sep 1961 Colonel William F. Wigger assumed the position of Base Commander

25 Sep 1961 A huge \$590,000 reclamation shelter construction project began in the aircraft storage area.

26 Sep 1961 The famous B-29 bomber "Bock's Car," which dropped the atomic bomb on Japan in World War II, was taken out of storage and flown to the Air Force Museum at Dayton, Ohio.

2 Dec 1961 Peace marchers demonstrated outside the Main Gate.

15 Dec 1961 The huge 180,072 square foot reclamation shelter in the aircraft storage area was completed.

18 Dec 1961 All Phase II construction at the 18 Titan II sites was completed.

1 Jan 1962 Colonel Charles F. Byars assumed the position of Base Commander.

1 Jan 1962 The 12th Air Division was transferred from March AFB to Davis-Monthan AFB.

1 Jan 1962 The 390th Strategic Missile Wing was activated. Concurrently, the 570th Strategic Missile Squadron and the 390th Missile Maintenance squadron were also activated.

4 Jan 1962 Mr. Harold R. Snead, Jr., a Fluor Company construction worker, was killed when a 200-pound steel ball broke loose from a crane at complex #7 (571-6).

19 Jan 1962 Davis-Monthan AFB tied with Hunter AFB for the "Best Base in SAC" award for the best B-47 and B-58 wings.

6 Feb 1962 A Titan II subcontractor, Idaho Maryland Industries, Inc., filed for bankruptcy.

16 Feb 1962 Electrical workers at the Titan II construction sites went out on strike.

21 Mar 1962 A Federal mediator arrived in Tucson to settle the work stoppages at the missile complexes.

1 May 1962 The 571st Strategic Missile Squadron was activated at Davis-Monthan AFB.

4 May 1962 The 303rd Bombardment Wing's B-47 "City of Tucson" participated in a Presidential firepower display at Eglin AFB, Florida.

1 Jun 1962 The 12th Air Division was redesignated as the 12th Strategic Aerospace Division (SAD).

27 Jun 1962 Colonel Jack D. Nole assumed the position of Base Commander.

23 Jul 1962 A fire at Complex #15 (570-6) resulted in five workers being hospitalized for smoke inhalation.

1-4 Aug 1962 Three professional investigators of the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee conducted a congressional inquiry at Davis-Monthan AFB to investigate reports of waste and inefficiency in the construction of the Titan II sites. The subcommittee later concluded that the cost increases were comparable to those experienced at the other two Titan II wings.

22 Aug 1962 The 303rd Bombardment Wing lost a B-47 and its crew of three in a major aircraft accident.

22 Oct 1962 President John F. Kennedy announced the Soviet buildup in Cuba and the 390th SMW was placed on alert. However, the wing's missiles were not operational. Therefore, the alert for the 390th consisted basically of placing 16 of the unit's rated officers on alert to support the 303rd Bombardment Wing.

27 Nov 1962 The first Titan II missile arrived at Davis-Monthan AFB aboard a C-133 transport aircraft. The personnel of the 390th Missile Maintenance Squadron who unloaded the missile were the first all-military crew to perform a Titan II off-loading operation.

3 Dec 1962 Forty-one construction workers were overcome by smoke when a fire broke out at Complex 571-4. None were seriously injured.

7 Dec 1962 The 390th Strategic Missile Wing's first Titan II missile was transported to Complex 570-2 for subsequent installation.

8 Dec 1962 The missile at Complex 570-2 was installed in its launch silo in only 12 hours; a new record.

8 Dec 1962 Demonstrators protested across the road from Complex 570-2 for approximately one hour while the missile installation was in progress.

31 Dec 1962 Base strength - 867 officers and 4,608 enlisted personnel assigned.

28 Mar 1963 Lieutenant General Archie J. Old, Jr., Commander of Fifteenth Air Force, presented the 303rd Bombardment Wing with the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period 1 January 1961 through 31 March 1962.

31 Mar 1963 Complex 570-2 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

1 Apr 1963 Lieutenant Colonel Harold I. Larkin assumed the position of Base Commander.

6 Apr 1963 Complex 571-9 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

15 Apr 1963 Complex 571-8 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

22 Apr 1963 Complex 570-6 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

3 May 1963 Complex 570-5 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

6 May 1963 A 25-ton tanker truck carrying 3,500 gallons of dangerous nitrogen-tetroxide missile propellant flipped over while rounding a curve in northwest Tucson. There were no leaks involved, but the incident did cause considerable concern among the city's citizenry.

22 May 1963 Complex 570-3 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

24 May 1963 Complex 570-7 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

1 Jun 1963 Complex 570-4 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

8 Jun 1963 Complex 570-1 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

13 Jun 1963 The 570th Strategic Missile Squadron was declared operational; thus becoming the first operational Titan II squadron in the United States Air Force.

14 Jun 1963 Complex 570-9 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

28 Jun 1963 Colonel Harry P. Verbeek assumed the position of Base Commander.

1 Jul 1963 The 4080th Strategic Wing moved from Laughlin AFB, Texas, to Davis-Monthan AFB. With this move, Davis-Monthan became a three-wing station.

2 Jul 1963 Complex 571-6 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

15 Jul 1963 Complex 571-7 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

22 Jul 1963 The 390th took the first of 13 missile complexes off alert because of wide-spread propellant leaks.

24 Jul 1963 Complex 571-5 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

17 Sep 1963 Complex 571-2 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

25 Sep 1963 Complex 570-8 was turned over to the Strategic Air Command.

2-3 Oct 1963 Two staff members of the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee visited Davis-Monthan AFB to look into the question of Titan II reliability.

30 Nov 1963 The 18th and final Titan II missile went on alert.

1 Dec 1963 The 571st Strategic Missile Squadron was declared fully operational.

1 Dec 1963 The 390th Strategic Missile Wing was declared fully operational; thus making it the first operational Titan II wing in the United States Air Force.

19 Dec 1963 The 570th Strategic Missile Squadron was declared combat ready.

31 Dec 1963 The 571st Strategic Missile Squadron was declared combat ready.

2 Mar 1964 Colonel William C. Garland assumed command of the 12th Strategic Aerospace Division.

15 Jun 1964 The 303rd Bombardment Wing was inactivated.

1 Jul 1964 The 4453rd Combat Crew Training Wing (CCTW), a unit of the Tactical Air Command, moved from MacDill AFB, Florida, to Davis-Monthan. The mission of the 4453rd CCTW was to train TAC crews for operations with F-4C "Phantom II" aircraft.

12 Aug 1964 The 390th SMW won the John R. McNeil trophy for outstanding maintenance performance.

24 Dec 1964 The 15th Fighter Interceptor Squadron was inactivated.

31 Dec 1964 Base strength - 869 officers and 6,466 enlisted personnel assigned.

25 Jan 1965 Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey visited Davis-Monthan AFB and toured Complex 571-1.

1 Feb 1965 The 2704th AFSDG was discontinued and replaced by the Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center (MASDC).

25 Feb 1965 Personnel from the 390th SMW launched the "Arctic Sun" operational test Titan II missile from Vandenberg AFB, California. This marked the first time that any of the 390th's missiles had ever been launched.

16 Apr 1965 Personnel of the 390th SMW launched the "Bear Hug" operational test Titan II missile from Vandenberg AFB.

30 Apr 1965 Personnel of the 390th SMW launched the "Card Deck" operational test Titan II missile from Vandenberg AFB.

1 Jul 1965 The 4080th Strategic Wing was assigned DC-130A aircraft and 2 CH-3 helicopters for its drone reconnaissance operations.

1 Jul 1965 Brigadier General E. W. Holstrom assumed command of the 12th Strategic Aerospace Division.

21 Jul 1965 Personnel of the 390th SMW launched the "Long Ball" operational test Titan II missile from Vandenberg AFB, California.

10 Nov 1965 Princess Margaret of England and the Earl of Snowden visited Davis-Monthan AFB.

12 Dec 1965 Department of Defense cutbacks halted \$3.9 million worth of scheduled construction projects at Davis-Monthan AFB.

31 Dec 1965 Base strength - 768 officers and 5,563 enlisted personnel assigned.

3 Feb 1966 Personnel of the 390th SMW launched the "Winter Ice" operational test Titan II missile from Vandenberg AFB.

12 Feb 1966 Colonel J. H. Baughn assumed the position of Base Commander.

23 Mar 1966 A major oxidizer leak accident occurred at Complex 570-8.

24 Mar 1966 Colonel Douglas M. Conlan assumed the position of Base Commander.

25 Mar 1966 Personnel of the 390th SMW launched the "Close Touch" operational test Titan II from Vandenberg AFB.

29 Apr 1966 The Davis-Monthan AFB Base Exchange was picked as the "Best in SAC."

25 Jun 1966 The 4080th Strategic Wing was inactivated. Concurrently, the 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was activated and the personnel and equipment of the 4080th were transferred to the 100th.

30 Jun 1966 The 390th SMW won the John R. McNeil award for superior maintenance performance.

16 Sep 1966 Personnel of the 390th SMW launched the "Black River" follow-on operational test Titan II missile from Vandenberg AFB.

28 Oct 1966 The Davis-Monthan AFB Fire Department was picked as the "Best in SAC," and placed third Air Force-wide.

24 Nov 1966 Personnel of the 390th SMW launched the "Bubble Girl" follow-on operational test Titan II missile from Vandenberg AFB.

9 Dec 1966 The Davis-Monthan AFB Officers' Open Mess was selected as the "Best in SAC."

31 Dec 1966 Base strength - 1,187 officers and 6,768 enlisted personnel assigned.

23 Jan 1967 The Desert Airmen base newspaper was named the "Best in SAC" in its category.

3-7 Apr 1967 The first SAC missile competition called "Project Curtain Raiser" was held at Vandenberg AFB. The 390th SMW won the "Best Titan II Combat Crew" award.

11 Sep 1967 Colonel Richard R. Mitchell assumed the position of Base Commander.

18 Dec 1967 An F-4D aircraft crashed into a Tucson supermarket, killing four people and injuring 14 others. The two crew members ejected successfully.

20-23 Dec 1967 Personnel from Davis-Monthan AFB participated in operation "Tempest Rapid" which provided rescue efforts to 191 stranded people following unusually heavy rains and flooding in Sonora, Mexico.

31 Dec 1967 Base strength, - 1,140 officers and 7,985 enlisted personnel assigned.

29 Jan 1968 The 390th SMW was awarded the John R. McNeil award for outstanding maintenance operations.

12 Jun 1968 Personnel of the 390th SMW launched the "Glory Trip 08T" follow-on operational test Titan II missile from Vandenberg AFB.

17 Jun 1968 Colonel Marion C. Mixson assumed the position of Acting 12 SAD Commander during Brigadier General George P. Cole's absence.

8 Jul 1968 Brigadier General Jack C. Ledford assumed command of the 12th Strategic Aerospace Division.

19 Nov 1968 Personnel of the 390th SMW launched the "Glory Trip 26T" follow-on operational test Titan II missile from Vandenberg AFB.

9 Dec 1968 Flying activities based at Davis-Monthan AFB deployed to Tucson International Airport and nearby Libby Field for four weeks while \$422,563 worth of construction and refinishing was accomplished on runway 12/30.

31 Dec 1968 Base strength - 1,264 officers and 7,236 enlisted personnel assigned.

17-24 Apr 1969 Members of the 390th SMW competed in the second SAC missile competition called "Olympic Arena." The 390th won the following awards: Best Titan Wing, Best Titan Crew, Best Titan Maintenance.

31 Oct 1969 Colonel Paul D. Copher assumed the position of Base Commander.

31 Dec 1969 Base strength - 1,288 officers and 6,817 enlisted personnel assigned.

11 Feb 1970 The 390th Strategic Missile Wing won the John R. McNeil award for superior maintenance performance.

28 Apr-5 May 1970 Members of the 390th SMW competed in Olympic Arena '70 and walked away with the awards for Best Titan Wing and Best Re-entry Vehicle Team.

30 Sep 1970	Brigadier General John Des Portes assumed command of the 12 th Strategic Aerospace Division.
3 Nov 1970	The 390 th Strategic Missile Wing was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.
13-14 Dec 1970	General Bruce K. Holloway, CINCSAC, visited Davis-Monthan AFB.
31 Dec 1970	Base strength - 1,289 officers and 6,696 enlisted personnel assigned.
11 Feb 1971	The 390 th SMW was awarded the John R. McNeil award for superior maintenance performance.
20-28 Apr 1971	Members of the 390 th SMW competed in Olympic Arena '71 and won the award for Best Ordnance Team.
20 Apr 1971	Personnel of the 390 th SMW launched one of the unit's Titan II from Vandenberg AFB in support of the Army's Safeguard ABM System Test Target Program.
30 Jun 1971	The 12 th Strategic Aerospace Division was redesignated as the 12 th Strategic Missile Division and the 390 th SMW was designated as the host wing at Davis-Monthan AFB.
1 Jul 1971	The 355 th Tactical Fighter Wing was activated and assigned to Davis-Monthan AFB. The unit was equipped with Vought A-7 jet aircraft.
30 Sep 1971	The 4453 rd Combat Crew Training Wing was inactivated.
29 Oct 1971	The last F-4C (Serial Number 63-7411) was flown out of Davis-Monthan AFB. It was the oldest F-4C in the USAF inventory at that time.
18 Nov 1971	A. U-2C aircraft, assigned to the 100 th SRW, crashed while attempting a touch-and-go landing on a Davis-Monthan AFB runway. The pilot was killed on impact and the plane was destroyed by the crash and the resulting fire.
31 Dec 1971	Base strength - 1,153 officers and 7,500 enlisted personnel assigned.
1 Mar 1972	Construction was completed on the new Base Exchange self-service gasoline station.
1 Apr 1972	The 12 th Strategic Missile Division (SMD) resumed host unit responsibilities at Davis-Monthan.
6-14 Apr 1972	The 390 th SMW competed in Olympic Arena '72 and won the following awards: Best Operations, Best Ordnance Team, and Best Guidance Team.
11-12 Jul 1972	Dr. John L. McLucas, Under Secretary of the Air Force, visited Davis-Monthan AFB.
7 Aug 1972	The 355 th Tactical Fighter Wing experienced its first major aircraft accident. An A-7D aircraft was lost, but the pilot ejected successfully and lived.

8 Sep 1972 Eight A-7D aircraft of the 355th TFW deployed on Exercise Commando Elite. That marked the first overseas deployment for the 355th's A-7D aircraft.

22-29 Sep 1972 The 355th Tactical Fighter Wing deployed to Cannon AFB, New Mexico, with 12 aircraft and support personnel to provide a firepower demonstration for Army personnel from Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

11 Oct 1972 The 390th SMW launched another of its missiles from Vandenberg AFB in support of the Army's Safeguard ABM system.

15 Nov 1972 The 355th SMW deployed four A-7D aircraft and 41 support personnel to the Panama Canal Zone to support Army training. This was the beginning of a 15-month commitment to provide such support.

29 - 31 Jan 1973 Eighteen A-7D aircraft from the 355th TFW were transferred to the 354th TFW, Myrtle Beach AFB, South Carolina. The transfer was made to adjust the ratio of aircraft at each A-7D base in the United States.

2 Feb 1973 Brigadier General James S. Murphy assumed command of the 12th Strategic Missile Division.

1 Mar 1973 The 12th Strategic Missile Division was redesignated as the 12th Air Division.

13 Mar 1973 Colonel Raymond L. Horvath assumed the position of Base Commander.

24 Apr-4 May 1973 The 390th competed in Olympic Arena '73 and won the following: Best Guidance Team and the Air Force Logistics Command Best Logistics (Titan) trophy.

18 May 1973 Construction began on the new Base Exchange facility at Davis-Monthan AFB.

9 Oct 1973 Brigadier General Raymond L. Haupt assumed command of the 12th Air Division.

11 Oct 1973 The 11th Tactical Drone Squadron of the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing successfully launched four drones in rapid sequence from a single aircraft and set three USAF records in the process.

14 Nov 1973 The 355th TFW was awarded its fourth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

31 Dec 1973 Base strength - 816 officers and 4,546 enlisted personnel assigned.

1 Feb 1974 Four A-7Ds of the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing redeployed from the Panama Canal Zone back to Davis-Monthan AFB. This marked the end of the 355th support of Army training in that area.

18 Mar 1974 Colonel Richard J. Kiefer assumed the position of Base Commander.

22 Mar 1974 The 11th Tactical Drone Squadron conducted its first launch of a live Maverick missile from a remotely piloted vehicle and scored a direct hit on the designated target at Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah.

25 Apr-3 May 1974 The 390th SMW competed in Olympic Arena '74 and won the following: Best Titan Wing, Best Maintenance Team, Best Guidance Team, Best Electronics Team, Best Re-entry Vehicle Team, and the AFLC Best Logistics (Titan) trophy.

23 May 1974 The new Base Exchange facility was opened for business.

20 May 1974 Safeguard Mission M2-36 Titan II launch was attempted at Vandenberg AFB by personnel of the 390th Strategic Missile Wing. The launch, however, proved unsuccessful.

30 Aug 1974 Colonel Conrad L. Beggs assumed the position of Base Commander.

2 Oct 1974 An A-7D aircraft (Serial Number 68-8227) of the 355th TFW crashed 83 miles southeast of Davis-Monthan AFB.

21 Oct 1974 President Gerald R. Ford, accompanied by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and several other government officials arrived at Davis-Monthan enroute to a meeting with Mexico's President Luis Echeverria.

19 Dec 1974 An A-7D aircraft (Serial Number 69-6189), assigned to the 355th TFW, crashed 85 miles east-southeast of Davis -Monthan

31 Dec 1974 Base strength - 775 officers and 4,371 enlisted personnel assigned.

21 Apr 1974 The first 100 units of the 400-unit enlisted base housing project were opened.

24 Apr-2 May 1975 The 390th SMW competed in Olympic Arena '75 and won the following: Best Re-entry Vehicle Team and Best Guidance Team.

12 May 1975 An A-7D (Serial Number 73-0993) from Davis-Monthan AFB crashed while on a training mission.

31 Jul 1975 An A-7D major aircraft accident occurred on the runway at Davis-Monthan AFB.

12 Aug 1975 An AQM-34G drone was lost in a major aircraft accident.

20 Aug 1975 Colonel Paul C. Mathis assumed the position of Base Commander.

28 Aug 1975 An operational restriction was placed on A-7D aircraft due to engine problems.

29 Aug 1975 An AQM-34G was lost in a major aircraft accident.

21 Nov 1975 Davis-Monthan AFB was visited by Air Marshall Zulfigar Ali Khan, Chief of Staff, Pakistan Air Force.

2 Dec 1975 Colonel Christopher S. Adams, Jr., assumed command of the 12th Air Division.

4 Dec 1975 Personnel of the 390th SMW performed the last launch of a 390th Titan II from Vandenberg AFB. This launch was in support of the Safeguard ABM Test Target Program.

31 Dec 1975	Base strength - 1,068 officers and 6,904 enlisted personnel assigned.
2 Mar 1976	The first A-10A aircraft (Serial Number 75-00261) was received by the 355 th TFW. The first A-10A was dedicated to maintenance training.
22-30 Apr 1976	The 390 th SMW competed in Olympic Arena '76 and won the award for the Best Security Police Team.
4 May 1976	The 355 th Tactical Fighter Wing's first two operational A-10A aircraft flew their first ordnance missions.
12 Jul 1976	Colonel Arthur E. Huhn assumed the position of Base Commander.
12 Jul 1976	Control of the 355 th TFW was shifted from the Twelfth Air Force to the Ninth Air Force.
12 Jul 1976	The 432 nd Tactical Drone Group was activated and assumed responsibility for drone operations that had previously been handled by the 11 th Tactical Drone Squadron.
16 Aug 1976	Brigadier General William D. Curry, Jr., assumed command of the 355 th Tactical Fighter Wing.
24 Aug 1976	A T-38 aircraft crashed 1,000 feet south of Runway #12. Both crew members were rescued, but they sustained multiple injuries.
30 Sep 1976	The 390 th Security Police Squadron was activated on paper, but never became operational. It was inactivated on 15 October 1976 without ever having been manned.
30 Sep 1976	The 100 th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was inactivated at Davis-Monthan AFB and its personnel and equipment were reassigned to the 9 th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Beale AFB, California.
30 Sep 1976	The 12 th Air Division was transferred to Dyess AFB, Texas.
30 Sep 1976	The 803 rd Combat Support Group (SAC) was inactivated and replaced by the 355 th Combat Support Group (TAC).
30 Sep 1976	Control of Davis-Monthan AFB was transferred from the Strategic Air Command to the Tactical Air Command, and the 355 th Tactical Fighter Wing was designated as the host unit. The only remaining SAC unit, the 390 th SMW, became a tenant unit as a result.