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The Air National Guard Past, Present, and Future Prospects

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SMSGT ROBERT MYCO crawls under the A-10 at the end of the foreign runway, carefully performing a last-minute inspection. He looks for cuts in the tires, gas or oil leaks, and exterior panels that have not been properly secured. Weapons personnel remove safety devices from the aircraft's missiles, and the pilot is ready to launch. Myco signals thumbs-up and salutes as the A-10 taxis to the runway.

A very long day later and 6,000 miles to the west, Myco wanders through the familiar base hangar where he has worked for 40 years. Glancing at his watch it is 3:30 A.M. local time-Myco realizes that he only has a few hours before he has to be ready for work. The Westfield, Massachusetts, school system is introducing its new superintendent. As a high school guidance counselor, Myco cannot afford to be late.

Like other members of the 104th Fighter Wing of the Massachusetts Air National Guard (ANG), Bob Myco had just spent part of his summer vacation launching aircraft from Aviano Air Base, Italy, on peacekeeping and combat missions over Bosnia during Operations Deny Flight and Deliberate Force. His unit had deployed to Italy between 8 August and 14 October 1995. Myco's experience is becoming increasingly common for the men and women of the ANG. Throughout most of its history, America has relied on its citizen-soldiers. Due to large military cutbacks following the cold war's end and continuing responsibilities as a global superpower, the US is once again placing greater reliance on citizen-soldiers like Myco. His recent experience provides an opportunity to examine the Guard's current roles, history, and future plans as the Air Force and the ANG celebrate their 50th anniversary together.¹

Guardsmen have a unique dual state-federal status grounded in the Constitution and America's system of divided political power between the states and the federal government. In peacetime, their commander in chief is the governor of their state or territory. The primary state missions of Guard members are to help deal with natural disasters and to restore law and order when civil authorities are unable to do so. If they volunteer or are mobilized for federal service, the president becomes their commander in chief. Air Guard members provide the federal government with a large, well-trained force equipped with modern weapons held in a high state of readiness for global military operations. Guard members can be maintained at a substantially reduced cost when not on active duty for several reasons. Historically, 75 percent are part-time airmen. Their units are mainly supplied with surplus Air Force weapons systems and are usually based at civilian airports and other relatively austere locations outside active-force bases. ANG units normally operate at a lower tempo than USAF units.

During peacetime, governors delegate the day-to-day responsibilities of operating Guard organizations to their adjutants general. The majority of them are Army National Guard major generals appointed by the governors. The federal role of the Guard is administered by the National Guard Bureau (NGB) in the Pentagon, a joint organization of the Departments of the Army and Air Force. The NGB formulates and administers programs for the maintenance of Army and Air Guard units. It also serves as a channel of

communications for the 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia and the Army and the Air Force. The chief of the NGB is a lieutenant general appointed by the president. He supervises the ANG director, an Air Guard major general, who is also a member of the Air Staff and works directly with the Air Force chief of staff. Although the ANG director does not have command authority over ANG units, he controls Air Guard programs and funding through the governors and adjutants general.

The ANG is a large, community-based organization. In June 1996, it had over 108,600 military personnel assigned to 91 flying organizations and 1,550 mission support units. Air Guard units belong to every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. The Air Guard operated approximately 1,180 primary authorized aircraft (PAA) as of 30 September 1996—a significant reduction from the 1,505 PAA in its inventory five years earlier. During that same period, the ANG's force structure changed dramatically, shifting from a predominantly fighter-attack-reconnaissance (FAR) force to one that was almost evenly balanced between FAR and large aircraft units. From 1991 to 1996, the Air Guard's tanker force grew from 128 to 204. Tactical air support aircraft dropped from 54 to 28. Heavy bombers entered the inventory for the first time in 1994, with 12 B-1Bs programmed by the end of fiscal year (FY) 1996. Air defense interceptors dropped from 234 to 166. General-purpose fighters declined from 730 to 487, while dedicated reconnaissance aircraft left the inventory altogether. Rescue aircraft increased from 24 to 25, while special operations aircraft remained unchanged at six. Strategic airlifters grew from 19 to 29, while tactical airlifters increased from 184 to 204.²

The ANG contributes a growing portion of the Air Force's total flying capabilities in 1996 as the active duty establishment continues to shrink. It has 32.6 percent of the fighters, 100 percent of the interceptors, 22.6 percent of the tactical air support, 43.9 percent of tactical airlift, 43.2 percent of the KC-135 air refueling, 27.5 percent of the rescue, and 8.3 percent of the strategic airlift—as measured by PAA. In nonflying mission support, Air Guard contributions include 100 percent of the aircraft control and warning and 49 percent of the civil engineering capabilities.³

Americans have relied primarily on citizen-soldiers of the militia (later National Guard), wartime volunteers, and, in the twentieth century, the reserve components of the active forces to defend them during most of their history. Prior to the twentieth century, active duty military forces have been very small except during major conflicts such as the American Revolution and the Civil War. Citizen-soldiers did most of the nation's fighting and dying. With that basic military system intact, America won its independence, acquired a vast continental domain, survived the horrible Civil War, and acquired an overseas empire. Although this military arrangement was hardly characterized by military effectiveness at the onset of this nation's military conflicts, Americans believed the arrangement was cost-effective, supportive of their political institutions, and consistent with their cultural values. Large standing forces were considered unnecessary, overly expensive, and a threat to liberty by most Americans before World War II. It took a global crusade against the Axis powers and the cold war to change public opinion about the necessity of relying on large peacetime standing forces.

The ANG celebrates 18 September 1947 as its birthday. On that date, the National Security Act of 1947 created it as a separate reserve component of the new US Air Force. But National Guard aviation was already well established. It began informally in April 1908 when a group of aeronautical enthusiasts in the New York National Guard organized an "aeronautical corps" to learn ballooning. On 1 November 1915, Capt Raynal Cawthorne Bolling organized what became the First Aero Company. It was the Guard's first real aviation unit. It was called into federal service on 13 July 1916 during the Mexican border crisis. Instead of active service in the southwest, it stayed at Mineola, N.Y., to train.⁴

Little was accomplished at Mineola, convincing Bolling that aviation would never be practical in the National Guard.⁵ The War Department agreed and decided Guard aviation units would not be mobilized

during World War I. Instead, individual guardsmen were encouraged to volunteer as individuals for aviation duty.⁶ During the war, many guardsmen served as aviators. At least four of them became aces, and one, 2d Lt Erwin R. Bleckley, a Kansas guardsman, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously.⁷

Initially, the War Department and the Army Air Service did not plan to organize National Guard aviation units after World War I. However, the Guard had developed an intense interest in flying.

Political lobbying on its behalf in Washington, D.C., plus the availability of large stocks of surplus World War I aircraft caused the War Department to change its position. Early in 1920, the Militia Bureau and the Air Service agreed on a plan for organizing National Guard air units. That action placed Guard aviation on a permanent footing.

During the interwar period, 29 observation squadrons were established. Those units were either integral elements of National Guard infantry divisions or assigned to corps aviation. They attracted skilled pilots like Charles A. Lindbergh of Missouri's 110th Observation Squadron. But the observation mission was relegated to the margins of Air Corps thinking and resource allocations in the 1930s as the latter's emphasis shifted toward independent air missions, especially strategic bombing.

In 1940, National Guard observation squadrons were mobilized as nondivisional formations and absorbed into the Army Air Forces (AAF). Approximately 4,800 trained National Guard aviation personnel were mobilized. While those units retained their numerical designations, all but a few that deployed overseas in 1942 lost their character as Guard organizations. Units exchanged their obsolete equipment for modern fighters, bombers, and reconnaissance planes. The rapidly expanding AAF used most of its key people to help organize and train new units. Guard units and individual Guard aviators served in combat in every major combat theater during the war. Their operational leadership role was epitomized by Lt Col Addison E. Baker, an Ohio guardsman. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for leading his B-24 unit during the ill-fated attack upon Ploesti, Rumania, on 1 August 1943.⁸

The ANG as we know it today-as a separate reserve component of the USAF-was primarily a product of politics during World War II. The men who fought for an independent postwar Air Force during that conflict did not place much faith in the Reserves, especially the state-dominated National Guard. They were determined to build the largest and most modern standing force possible. AAF leaders were convinced that citizen-airmen could not operate complex modern weapons without extensive postmobilization training. But domestic politics forced them to change their plans. Determined not to be excluded from the postwar US military establishment, the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) flexed its considerable political influence during World War II. It compelled the War Department to retain it as the nation's primary reserve force once the war was over. Gen George C. Marshall, the Army chief of staff, believed that citizen-soldiers, not a large professional force, would be the basis of the postwar military establishment. To support Marshall and avoid a political fight with the NGAUS that might weaken their case for a separate postwar Air Force, AAF leaders agreed to the creation of the ANG largely as a matter of political expediency.⁹

Consequently, despite its professional judgment, the Air Force found itself responsible for a dual-component reserve system that included the ANG and the Air Force Reserve (AFRES). The ANG would be manned by some 58,000 personnel. Its primary units would be 84 flying units (72 fighter and 12 light bomber squadrons). There was little trust and understanding between the active duty USAF and the ANG. Although the ANG looked good on paper, one Air Force general referred to it as "flyable storage." The USAF and the NGB spent the late 1940s fighting over who was in charge when units were not mobilized for federal service.¹⁰

The Korean War was a turning point for the Air Guard. Some 45,000 air guardsmen, 80 percent of the force, were mobilized. That call-up exposed the glaring weaknesses of the ANG. Before the war, it had been a glorified flying club for World War II combat veterans. Once mobilized, they proved to be almost totally unprepared for combat. Guard units were assigned almost at random to active duty, regardless of their previous training and equipment. Many key air guardsmen were stripped away from their units and used as fillers elsewhere in the Air Force. It took months for them to become combat-ready. Eventually, the recalled guardsmen contributed substantially to the air war in Korea and to the USAF's global buildup for the expected military confrontation with the Soviet Union. Four air guardsmen became jet aces and six ANG fighter squadrons flew combat missions in the Far East. However, the initial fiasco forced the Air Force to achieve an accommodation with the Air Guard and to thoroughly revamp its entire reserve system.¹¹

Congress also played a key role in placing reserve programs on a sound footing. Capitol Hill was much more willing than either the Department of Defense or the military services to fund the reserves properly. Moreover, beginning with the passage of the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952, a series of key laws eliminated most of the old inequities and fostered the development of more effective reserve components. An obscure provision of the 1952 legislation permitted guardsmen and reservists to volunteer for active service. "Volunteerism" enabled individuals and segments of units to integrate into active Air Force peacetime missions such as air defense runway alert and airlift. It also enabled the Air Force to employ a "silent call-up option" without forcing the president to resort to a politically risky mobilization.¹²

The ANG led the way in developing new approaches to reserve training and management. Blessed with innovative leaders like Maj Gen Winston P. ("Wimpy") Wilson and with a strong political base in the states, the ANG traded some of its autonomy as a state-federal force for closer integration with the active duty Air Force. Wilson was the single most important officer in the ANG's history. Mobilized from Arkansas in 1950 for the Korean War, he expected to be in Washington, D.C., for 21 months. Instead, he remained for 21 years. Wilson headed the ANG from 1954 to 1962 and then became the first air guardsman to be NGB chief on a permanent basis from 1963 to 1971. He recognized that the Air Guard faced a dim future unless it acquired definite wartime missions, was integrated into Air Force missions on a daily basis, and met the same tough training standards as the active force. The Air Guard also needed more full-time manning. It had to be ready for combat the moment it was called into federal service. Finally, Wilson fought hard to acquire modern aircraft and facilities.¹³

During Wilson's watch, the Air Guard also began to change from a predominantly fighter-oriented organization to one that included some airlifters and tankers. In the mid-1950s, the Guard began lobbying to enter the strategic airlift arena because it feared that the days of some of its fighter interceptor units were numbered. Starting in 1955, it obtained several units equipped for special operations and then aeromedical airlift. In the early 1960s, strategic airlifters and tankers replaced additional fighters despite Air Force skepticism that air guardsmen could not properly operate large aircraft.¹⁴

Pushed by its reserve components and their political supporters, the Air Force adopted several management and training innovations after the Korean War that promoted the evolution of combat-ready reserve forces. The four most significant policy innovations were (1) including the air reserve components in war plans, (2) the ANG's participation in the air defense runway alert program, (3) the gaining command concept of reserve forces management, and (4) the selected reserve force program.

Beginning in 1951, the Air Force established specific mobilization requirements for the Air Guard in its war plans for the first time. The ANG would train against those requirements and plans for the first time.

ANG leaders proposed the air defense runway alert program as a way to combine realistic training and support of a significant combat mission in peacetime. Beginning on an experimental basis in 1953, it involved two fighter squadrons standing alert during daylight hours only. Despite initial Air Staff resistance, the experiment was successful. The runway alert program was the first broad effort to integrate Reserve units into the regular peacetime operating structure of the American armed forces on a continuing basis. It established a firm precedent for the total force policy by integrating the ANG into the daily operations of the active force.

The third major innovation—the gaining-command concept of reserve forces management—meant that the major air command responsible for using a Guard or Reserve unit in wartime would actually train it during peacetime. ANG leaders had pressed for that arrangement for years. However, the active duty Air Force had strongly resisted the change. The concept was grudgingly adopted in 1960 because of budget cuts and public criticism of the air reserve programs by Gen Curtis E. LeMay. It improved the effectiveness of ANG units by giving Air Force commanders direct personal incentives for improving the performance of those organizations.

The fourth major policy innovation—the selected reserve force program—reflected Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's determination to build an elite force of highly capable Reserve units ready for rapid global deployment to replace the existing massive World War II-style mobilization force that required additional equipment, manpower, and training before becoming combat-ready. McNamara attempted to shrink America's large reserve establishment and merge the National Guard with the purely federal reserve components. An effort to merge them after World War II had been blocked by the Congress. It failed again in the early 1960s. McNamara then created a selected reserve force in each of the military services. They had priority access to equipment, could recruit to full wartime strength, and were allowed to conduct additional training each year.

During the 1960s, the air reserve components began to demonstrate the fruits of those policy innovations. In 1961, President Kennedy activated a limited number of Reserve and Guard units during the Berlin crisis. In a show of American resolve, the president dispatched 11 ANG fighter squadrons to Europe. Although they required significant additional training after they were called into federal service, all of those Guard units were in place overseas within one month of mobilization. By contrast, mobilization and overseas deployment during the Korean War had taken ANG units at least seven months. Some 21,000 air guardsmen were mobilized during the Berlin crisis. During the Berlin call-ups, reliance on second-rate equipment continued to plague the ANG, and, privately, senior Air Force officers doubted whether it had been worth the effort to prepare the mobilized ANG units for combat.

In January 1968, President Lyndon Johnson mobilized naval and air reservists following the North Korean seizure of the USS Pueblo. More reservists were called into federal service following the February 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam. Although most of the reservists were used to strengthen America's depleted strategic reserve force, five ANG fighter squadrons were dispatched to Vietnam and performed extremely well. They had benefited from Secretary McNamara's selected reserve force program. But two ANG units deployed to South Korea in 1968 had a spotty record. Their own support organizations had been stripped from them in the US, and there was no logistical structure in place to support their F-100s when they arrived in South Korea. Approximately 10,600 air guardsmen were called into federal service in 1968. Meanwhile, unnoticed by the public and the media, Air Guard volunteers had flown airlift missions to Southeast Asia from 1965 until 1972. Between July 1970 and January 1971, Guard volunteers from Pennsylvania's 193d Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron flew airborne warning and control missions from Thailand.

Vietnam also revealed a negative aspect of relying on reservists. For largely domestic political reasons, President Johnson chose not to mobilize most of the nation's reserve forces. The 1968 call-ups were only

token affairs. Johnson's decision to avoid a major reserve mobilization had been opposed by the senior leadership of both the active duty military establishment and the reserve forces. The Reserves and the Guard acquired reputations as draft havens for relatively affluent young white men. Military leaders questioned the wisdom of depending on reserve forces that might not be available except in dire emergencies.

Today, reserve forces planning and policymaking within the Defense Department is governed by the total force policy. Based largely on the Air Force's experience with its own reserve components, the total force concept was adopted by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird in 1970. It sought to strengthen and rebuild public confidence in the Reserves while saving money by reducing the size of the active force. Those objectives emerged from America's disenchantment with the Vietnam War. In practical terms, the total force policy sought to ensure that all policy-making, planning, programming, and budgetary activities within the DOD considered active and reserve forces concurrently. Its ambitious objective was to determine the most efficient mix of those forces in terms of costs versus contributions to national security. The policy also committed the nation to use reservists and guardsmen as the first and primary source of manpower to augment the active duty forces in any future crisis. The total force concept was developed by Dr Theodore Marrs, an avid former air guardsman and reservist, who served as a high-ranking civilian official in the Air Force and the Defense Department in the early 1970s.

During the 1980s, changes in the Air Guard were driven by President Ronald Reagan's military buildup and the need to prepare for a possible war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in central Europe. The ANG focused on modernization, increased readiness, and personnel growth primarily in nonflying, mission-support units.

The Air Guard showed the benefits of the total force policy and the generous defense budgets of the Reagan era during Operation Just Cause, the invasion of Panama in December 1989. Air guardsmen were ready for immediate duty when called upon. They flew close-air-support, airlift, and special operations missions. Avoiding formal partial mobilizations, the ANG relied on volunteers and members already on active duty to support the Air Force during that contingency.

At the outset of Operation Desert Shield, the US military response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, the Air Force was swamped when it turned to its reserve components for volunteers. Before President George Bush mobilized reservists and guardsmen on 22 August 1990, nearly 1,300 air guardsmen had actually entered active duty as volunteers. Initially, most of them concentrated on airlift and tanker operations. The early surge of volunteers helped the Air Force meet its operational commitments without forcing President Bush to announce a premature reserve mobilization.

Approximately 10,300 air guardsmen were mobilized with their units during the Persian Gulf crisis.

They were rapidly integrated into most of the Air Force's operational missions. They flew airlift and aerial refueling sorties and manned aerial ports. Guardsmen flew attack, aerial reconnaissance, and tactical airlift missions. But the mobilization process also revealed some problems. Volunteerism stripped some units of badly needed personnel when those units were mobilized later. Relatively few outfits were mobilized as units. Instead, the gaining commands called up either individuals or tailored packages. The latter generally stripped away critical support personnel. It disrupted the mobilization and deployment process, causing units to complain that many people who had trained together in peacetime were now being left behind when the crunch came.¹⁵

The ANG's historic day-to-day federal mission has been to train for contingencies or war. Beginning with the runway alert program in 1953, expanding to airlift later in that decade, and then with Operation Creek Party (the tanker rotation in Germany from 1967 to 1977), it provided operational support to the

Air Force as a by-product of training. But the downsizing of the active force along with its increased peacetime operational requirements since the cold war's end is "de-facto altering the peacetime mission of the Air Guard, and training is becoming a by-product of operations."¹⁶ According to Maj Gen Donald W. Shepperd, ANG director, the lives of Guard members have changed dramatically. He emphasizes that

we used to stay home and train. We still do, but we have taken on new roles. In addition to homestation training, we deploy overseas for training. In the old days, five overseas training deployments was a heavy year. This year we did twenty. In addition we take regular rotations to hot spots all over the world in support of our Active duty Air Force. In the old days our Active Air Force was big enough to handle all but the largest of contingencies. Now, we are immediately called upon to supply major portions of our strategic airlift and tankers for even small contingencies. Our average aircrew participates 110-120 days per year with the Guard, our average support personnel 60-80.¹⁷

Since the Gulf War, the Air Guard has been heavily involved in "real world" operations overseas. ANG volunteers have provided continuing theater airlift for US Southern Command; helped protect Kurds in northern Iraq and Shiites in the southern part of that nation; participated in humanitarian relief for Rwanda, Somalia, and Bosnia; helped to restore a democratically elected president in Haiti; enforced the Bosnia no-fly zone; and participated in NATO's Bosnian peacekeeping operations. In addition, air guardsmen are playing a major role in the US drug interdiction program in the Caribbean, manning several ground radar sites in the region and conducting airborne intercepts of suspected drug-smuggling aircraft. The essential organizing pattern for these operations has been for the ANG to respond to active force requests for assistance by tailoring packages of personnel and equipment that provide the required capabilities. The Guard organized and managed its own resources. The NGB and the Air National Guard Readiness Center (ANGRC), working with the states and units, designated which ones would develop packages for an operation and how they rotated their people on deployments. For example, during its stint at Aviano Air Base from 8 August to 14 October 1995, SMSgt Myco's 104th Fighter Wing deployed a total of 509 guardsmen and 12 A-10 aircraft. But only approximately 200 personnel were there at any given time. By rotating personnel every 15 to 18 days, traditional guardsmen were able to get time off from their civilian employers.

In the early 1990s, the ANG's senior Pentagon leadership began reshaping their reserve component for the post-cold-war era. In a series of give-and-take discussions with senior Air Force leaders, ANG long-range planners, and the states, they developed a strategic vision for the future. While reducing active-force flying units, the Air Force wanted to retain as many combat-ready ANG and AFRES flying squadrons as possible as a cost-effective way to maintain force structure. The ANG's core fighter force was bound to shrink dramatically as the USAF reduced to 22 or less tactical fighter wing equivalents. To preserve its flying units, the ANG would aggressively seek alternative missions for some, reduce their number of assigned aircraft, combine similar units at the same location, and, as a last resort, close down units. Airlift, tankers, and bombers appeared to offer some opportunities for growth in the Air Guard. Furthermore, the senior leadership would aggressively seek out new missions like space for some of the Air Guard's nonflying units. During this process, the Air Guard expected to maintain a high level of readiness.

The decision to maintain the ANG's flying units had an especially dramatic impact on their size, especially in the fighter community. Fighter unit PAA declined dramatically, first from 24 and 18 to 15 PAA. The Clinton administration's FY 1996 budget would have reduced it to 12 PAA, but Congress added enough funds to keep it at 15 and save the jobs tied to the proposed cuts. In the spring of 1997, General Shepperd told Congress that he planned to reduce fighter units to 12 aircraft each because there

was not enough money in the administration's FY 1997 budget to support 15. He decided to reduce the size of each squadron rather than eliminate some squadrons to save money. According to a press account, General Shepperd was "betting that a major review of U.S. military force structure and budgets next year will prompt the Defense Department to shift planes and dollars from the active-duty Air Force to the Air Guard."¹⁸

The sweeping political, military, and technological changes of the post-cold-war era have produced their share of problems for the Air Guard. It has become more difficult for ANG units to maintain their programmed end strengths. Unit commanders worry that the increased demands placed on their predominately part-time force will discourage potential recruits and undermine retention. Some smaller employers were increasingly reluctant to release Guard members for active duty beyond their normal annual training requirements. As the active force grew smaller, there were fewer and fewer trained personnel available for ANG units to recruit. General Shepperd stressed that

recruiting and retaining people is increasingly difficult. Although we have an adequate recruiting population, uncertainty about future military cuts, coupled with the effects of previously announced force structure initiatives, have combined to produce a conservative, cautious recruiting environment in many Guard communities.¹⁹

Diversity is another challenge. Women and minorities have made impressive statistical gains in the ANG since the end of active US military involvement in the Vietnam War in 1973. Prior to that, the organization had been basically a white males' club. By 30 September 1994, 13.8 percent of the Air Guard's assigned personnel were females. At the same time, about 17 percent of the force were minorities. Demographers project that by the year 2025 some 40 percent of the US civilian workforce will be women and minorities. The ANG will have to recruit heavily from that workforce to remain viable. Except for significant numbers of enlisted females in aircraft maintenance, women and minorities continued to enjoy limited representation in key operational and engineering specialties that provide the greatest opportunities for promotion and assignment to senior Air Guard leadership positions.

The Air Guard's continued ability to provide properly equipped units depends heavily on equipment modernization. Congressional support through the separately funded Guard and Reserve equipment account and equipment transfers from the active force help maintain interoperability with modern Air Force systems. With its airlift fleet increasingly called upon to operate regularly in dangerous areas around the world, the ANG supports Air Force efforts to equip those aircraft with defensive systems. Congressional initiatives have also allowed the ANG to complete the replacement of 1950s-vintage C-130B models with modern C-130H aircraft. For night operations, the ANG is working with Air Combat Command to test low-cost, off-the-shelf equipment that will allow its A-10s, F-15s, and F-16s to be more effective night fighters. The first step was to upgrade its A-10 fleet. In 1995, Sergeant Myco's 104th Fighter Wing became the first ANG unit to use night-vision goggles in combat. In March 1995, the Air Guard also began developing a manned tactical reconnaissance capability to replace RF-4Cs that were being retired from its aircraft inventory. The 192d Fighter Wing at Richmond, Virginia, developed the concept and established an initial operational capability. In May 1996, the unit deployed aircraft, pods, and personnel to Italy to support NATO troops in Bosnia.²⁰

With the twenty-first century fast approaching, the ANG is also acquiring new missions. B-1B bombers equipped for conventional missions have entered the ANG inventory in Kansas and Georgia. After several years of struggle to obtain a toehold in the increasingly critical space mission, the ANG activated a mobile ground station at Greeley, Colorado, in January 1996.

By the end of FY 1997, the ANG will assume total responsibility for all of First Air Force including its regional operational control centers and its sector operations control center. First Air Force is responsible for maintaining the air sovereignty of the continental United States and providing for its air defense. Since FY 1991, all of First Air Force's manned interceptor aircraft have been provided by ANG units. Over recent decades, that force has been dramatically reduced. It now consists of 20 ANG fighters at 10 alert locations. But dedicated air sovereignty/air defense interceptor units have been attacked as unnecessary and too expensive because of the absence of a highly visible threat to US security with the demise of the Soviet Union. Critics suggest that the mission could be performed by elements of general-purpose fighter units of the active duty services and the ANG. Defenders counter that every nation must maintain air sovereignty, controlling who enters its airspace. They maintain that dedicated units are the most cost-effective way to do that.²¹

Peering 15 to 20 years ahead, the ANG's long-range planners suggest that it "must move away from cold war posturing and paradigms if it is to continue to play a major role in national defense. . . . [And] funds available for defense will remain low as compared to the cold war era. Consequently, it is likely that the US will have a small active military force and a comparatively large but reduced reserve force."²² They assume that the Air Guard of the next century will be involved in most, if not all, Air Force mission areas. Only the smallest contingencies will be executed without reserve forces. Both active and reserve forces will be high tech, well equipped, well trained, and ready to meet threats to our interests wherever they occur. The planners have concluded that such current mission areas as continental air defense, general-purpose fighters, and combat communications may decline. On the other hand, they are convinced that the requirement for aerial tankers and airlift will increase. Such emerging missions as space operations, information warfare, and unmanned aerial vehicles will present significant new opportunities for the Air Guard. They also predict that the state missions of the Air Guard will probably increase in importance.

The planners are aware of the potential pitfalls that the Air Guard faces in the long term. They caution that "participation in nontraditional missions, such as counterdrug and youth opportunity programs will likely continue to demand a significant portion of members' time and units' resources, thus challenging their ability to balance readiness requirements with community concerns."²³ Demographic changes in the US population will pose a major recruiting challenge. Consequently, training requirements will increase. A smaller active force will provide a reduced pool of prior-service personnel, further intensifying the ANG's training burden. As the number of active duty military installations in the US declines, citizens may lose touch with the armed forces and have less appreciation of the need to maintain a strong defense posture. The Guard also expects that "increased environmental concern is likely to complicate this issue by restricting airspace and inhibiting basing of Air Guard flying units in urban and other environmentally sensitive areas."²⁴

Cyberguard is the term General Shepperd coined to embrace all actions that the Air Guard is taking to prepare for the twenty-first century. It means more than just greater reliance on computers. He has stressed that "almost everything that we have learned to do for the 20th century will require us to change about 180 degrees for the 21st century. For instance, we are a functional organization. . . . That will be gone in the 21st century. We will have flat organizations made up mainly of teams. . . . So it is mainly changing from a functional to a teaming organization."²⁵ It includes the way the ANG is organized, the way it functions, the people it recruits, the equipment it uses, a fiber-optic network linking units, and distance learning. The ANG's headquarters organization was reorganized and streamlined beginning in 1995 by combining the NGB's Air Directorate and the ANGRC into one organization. In addition, the process of streamlining state headquarters' organizations was begun. General Shepperd also plans to cut 14,000 positions, about 12 percent of the Air Guard, between 1993 and 2001.²⁶ He stressed that those

organizational and technological changes would position us for "rapid decision-making, communication, training, and education [in the twenty-first century]."27

As the Air Force and the ANG celebrate their 50th anniversary together, the relationship has changed fundamentally. It is no longer a shotgun marriage of political expediency. The ANG has evolved from a poorly prepared and unwanted "flying club" after World War II into a valued reserve component of the active force. Today, its volunteers are heavily involved in "real world" operations around the globe virtually every day of the year. During July 1996 alone, nearly 8,000 air guardsmen and 426 ANG aircraft were deployed away from their home stations. Driven by the need to achieve substantial additional cuts in defense spending because of the necessity to balance the federal budget while supporting a strong post-cold-war global role for the US, the Air Force will probably place greater responsibility for its missions in the Air Guard. To accomplish that, the ANG must continue to receive modern equipment, significant peacetime missions, and realistic training as well as integration in active force plans and budgets. The ANG is posturing itself for the twenty-first century through Cyberguard and long-range planning initiatives.

Just as militiamen answered the call to duty at Lexington and Concord, so did Sgt Bob Myco in 1995.

Since the beginnings of the English colonies in North America in the seventeenth century, we have relied on patriotic citizen-soldiers like him. With the cold war's end and military downsizing, it appears that the US will be placing much more responsibility on the shoulders of its part-time warriors. As Myco prepared to meet the Westfield, Massachusetts, school superintendent, he had to change gears. "Instead of dealing with maintenance inspections and watching pilots fly off into combat, he must prepare himself for counseling students. . . . This is the life [of] a typical citizen-soldier."28

Notes

1. SSgt Charles R. Cangemi, Jr., "Part-Time Warriors Working for Peace," *National Guard*, January 1996, 22.
2. The assigned ANG personnel strength as of 7 June 1996 was 108,689. NGB/XO "ANG Director's Weekly Update Briefing," 12 June 1996, 5; NGB/XO, "Air National Guard Facts and Figures," report, January 1996, 3-4, 10-11, 22-23; history, Air National Guard, 1992-1994, 43-44; Maj Gen Donald W. Shepperd, ANG director, briefing, subj.: "The Air National Guard Story," c. 1996, passim.
3. "ANG Facts and Figures," January 1996, 9-10; "Air National Guard," *Air Force Magazine*, May 1996, 107.
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