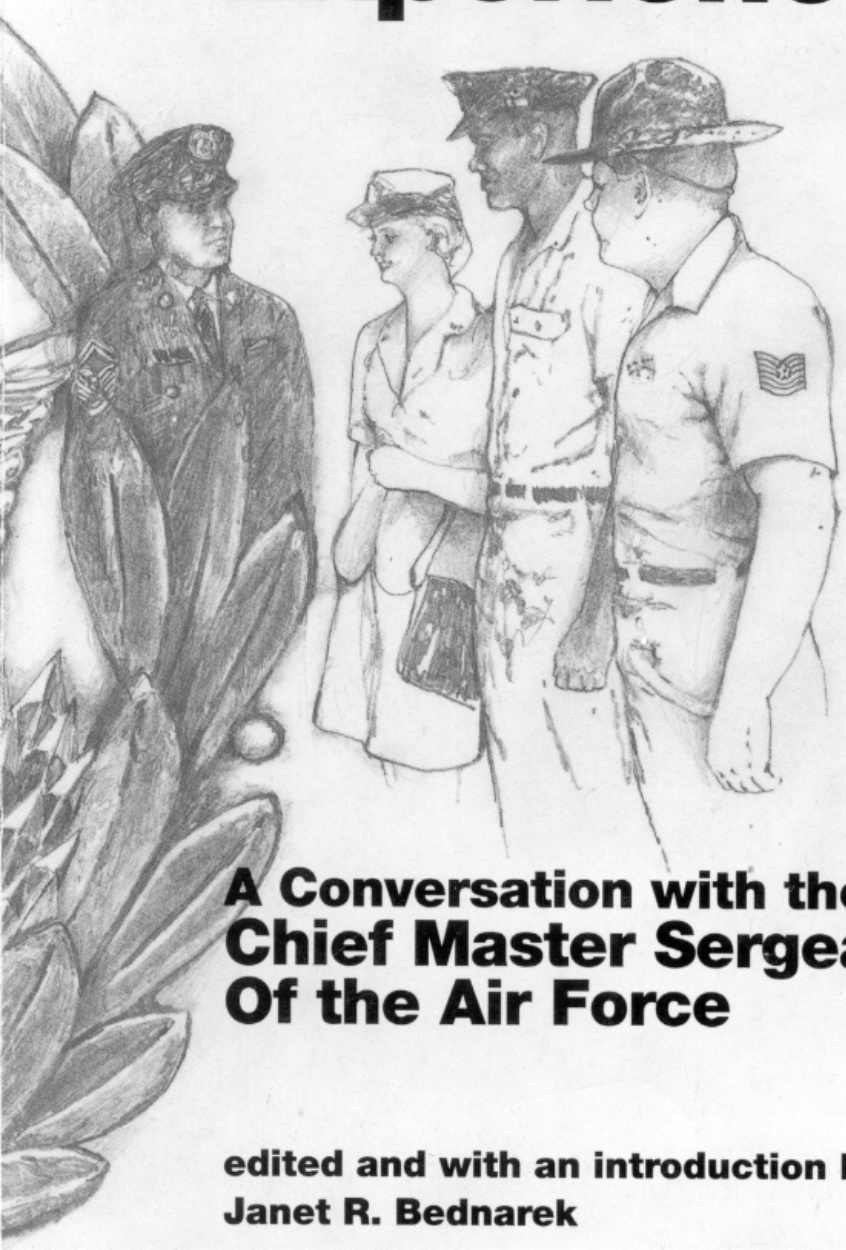
# The Enlisted Experience



## A Conversation with the Chief Master Sergeants Of the Air Force

edited and with an introduction by
Janet R. Bednarek

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Air Force History and Museums Program

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# Foreword

*The Enlisted Experience: A Conversation with the Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force* offers a vivid, candid, and highly personal account of military life by four of the first five Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force. Their recollections, captured in a 1989 interview at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C., cover a period of over thirty years—from the early 1940s to the late 1970s. The position of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, held by only ten individuals since its establishment in 1966, has given all enlisted service members a representative with direct access to and the ability to advise the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force. It has also imparted to each of the interviewees broad and insightful perspectives on the issues discussed.

Their careers and the experiences that shaped them reveal that throughout its brief but eventful history the U.S. Air Force has been able to rely completely on the competence, dedication, and absolute professionalism of its enlisted force. This force has proved again and again up to the host of challenges that have confronted it at home and around the globe—tirelessly maintaining the aircraft and supporting the air crews in War II, Korea, and Vietnam, integrating the ranks and welcoming women as equals into the workplace, obtaining a better quality of life for themselves and their families, and pursuing increasingly demanding education and training programs in fast-changing social and technological service milieus.

The stories of the Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force point to an essential fact—that the service would be unable to carry out its missions successfully in a dangerous world without the genuine cooperation of a motivated enlisted corps. That the Air Force almost flawlessly achieved its objectives in Operation DESERT STORM is in no small meaure the result of that corps' tradition of striving and excellence.

RICHARD P. HALLION
Air Force Historian

# Acknowledgments

Many people helped bring this work to completion. When I was first assigned it, I was new to the Air Force history program. Fortunately, I shared an office with Lt. Col. Vance Mitchell, USAF (Ret.). He generously acquainted me with the culture of the Air Force and an understanding of the world in which the Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force have served. Mr. Bernard C. Nalty introduced me to the Marine Corps' archives and considerable holdings on the Korean War. Maj. William S. Borgiasz, USAF (Ret.), provided thorough explanations of Strategic Air Command's historic missions. Mr. Mark A. Grandstaff offered many critical reviews, and Mr. William C. Heimdahl and Mr. Sheldon A. Goldberg helped me find my way into the voluminous files and microfiched documents at the Office of Air Force History, since redesignated the Air Force History and Museums Program.

Dr. Richard H. Kohn, then Chief, Office of Air Force History, conducted the interview and provided me with wonderful material. Once I completed my part of this work, I left it in the very capable hands of Ms. Mary Lee Jefferson, writer, editor, and researcher with the Air Force History Support Office. She further edited and ably shepherded it through the publication process. Mr. David Chenoweth helped acquire photographs. Mr. Nick Mosura of Headquarters Air Force Graphics then designed and executed the cover, portraits, and photographic layouts.

Finally, Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force Paul W. Airey, Donald L. Harlow, Thomas N. Barnes, and Robert D. Gaylor made this work possible. Not only did they give of their time for the initial interview, they also graciously offered, despite their busy schedules, any help I might need. As I read their stories and talked with them and found out what they had been doing since their retirements from the service, I was truly impressed by their dedication and professionalism. Their careers within and outside the Air Force are inspiring examples for today's enlisted force.

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# NCOs: Pride and Professionalism

The following interview with four of the first five Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force (CMSAF)—Paul W. Airey, CMSAF from 1967 to 1969; Donald L. Harlow, CMSAF from 1969 to 1971; Thomas N. Barnes, CMSAF from 1973 to 1977; and Robert D. Gaylor, CMSAF from 1977 to 1979—highlights clearly that, first, professionalism within the enlisted force, especially among non-commissioned officers (NCOs), has grown over the decades, and, second, that the environment in which the enlisted force serves has been and continues to be marked by dramatic technological, social, and Air Force policy changes.

Because the four subjects of this interview rose to serve in the highest position available to an enlisted member, a position which to-date only ten men have held, their careers were not typical of those of most Air Force non-commissioned officers.[1] Their experiences with the Air Force began in the 1940s and stretched into the 1970s. Chiefs Airey and Harlow both served with the Army Air Forces (AAF) during World War II. Chief Airey spent time in a German prisoner of war (POW) camp during the war; Chief Barnes participated in one of the last segregated basic training flights in 1949.[2] Although their stories may not reflect life within the Air Force's enlisted ranks at the dawn of the 1990s, they do illuminate much of the history and heritage surrounding the ranks since 1940.

"Profession" and "professionalism" have been controversial words when applied to the military context. Over the years sociologists, political scientists, and historians, among others, have interpreted them quite

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[1]The five others who have served as Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force are Richard D. Kisling, 1971–1973; James M. McCoy, 1979–1981; Arthur Andrews, 1981–1983; Sam E. Parish, 1983–1986; James C. Binnicker, 1986–1990; Gary R. Pfingston, 1990 to 1994; and David J. Campanale, 1994 to the present.

[2]Jacob Neufeld and James C. Hasdorff, "The View From The Top: Histories of Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force," in David R. Segal and H. Wallace Sinaiko, *Life in the Rank and File: Enlisted Men and Women in the Armed Forces of the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassy's, 1986), pp. 116–117.

differently. Political scientist Samuel Huntington and sociologist Morris Janowitz, for example, have defined them rather narrowly; to them military professionals are primarily "managers of violence."[3] They failed, however, to take into account changes over time in technology, in military education, and in the roles and responsibilities of officers and enlisted personnel.[4] Historian Allan Millett, by contrast, has allowed for these changes, defining his terms more broadly.[5] To him, a profession involves specialized education, self-regulation, life-long commitment, and a great deal of autonomy. All three scholars agreed, though, that a profession exhibits, in general, three characteristics—expertise, responsibility, and corporateness.

Professionalism, in Millett's terms, clearly has been a significant trend among America's working people, military as well as civilian, during the past century. Doctors and lawyers professionalized to an extremely high degree very early, but specialists in other areas—education, health care, financial management—have raised their level of professionalism over the last generation.

The NCO corps of the Air Force has done likewise over the last thirty to forty years, although perhaps not as much as has the officer corps. Certainly the careers of the four men interviewed, weighed according to Millett's criteria, demonstrate strongly that non-commissioned officers (especially in the top three grades) have become increasingly professionalized since World War II.

A career in the Air Force is "a full-time and stable job, serving continuing societal needs" and those who serve for twenty to thirty years regard it as a life-long calling. During the interview it was obvious that the retired Chief Master Sergeants were proud of their achievements and identified themselves strongly as NCOs whose roles differed decidedly from those of officers. Since the advent of the All-Volunteer Force in 1974, it can be argued that enlisted members who have chosen a career in the Air Force have done so, at least in part, out of a desire to serve.

NCOs' jobs reflect their ranks. What holds true for officers holds true for NCOs, that "rank inheres in the individual and reflects his professional

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[3]See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1957), pp. 7–18; see Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: The Free Press, 1960).

[4]Huntington and Janowitz wrote their seminal works over thirty years ago. Although Huntington mentioned land, sea, and air officers, he drew his examples in stressing his points from only the Army and the Navy.

[5]Allan R. Millett, *The General: Robert L. Bullard and Officership in the United States Army, 1881–1925* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975), pp. 3–6.

achievement measured in terms of experience, seniority, education, and ability."[6] Although NCOs, unlike officers, are not required to hold a college degree, they are better educated than in the past and are expected to complete several levels of military education, acquiring both technical and managerial skills as prerequisites to advancement.

Although complete statistics for the period since World War II were not available, the trend has been toward a more highly educated enlisted force. From the 1940s on, the AAF and the Air Force received a large proportion of the most highly qualified young men and women available for service. The percentage of the enlisted force holding a high school diploma grew and generally stood significantly higher than that of the Army and the Navy. Senior NCOs, especially, witnessed a growing percentage of individuals among their ranks who had attended college. In the mid-1950s, 4.4 percent of all enlisted personnel had completed two years or more of college and 9 percent had graduated. By 1980, 5.2 percent had completed two years or more of college and 2.1 percent had graduated.[7]

Beyond these more traditional measures, the continuing professional military education offered enlisted personnel has also grown. Recognizing that NCOs needed more than just their stripes to serve as effective leaders, the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) and then the Strategic Air Command (SAC) opened the first NCO Academies to prepare their sergeants for greater responsibility. The first NCO Academy on record opened in 1950 in Wiesbaden, Germany. General John K. Cannon, Commander-in-Chief, USAFE, ordered it established to improve NCO leadership and management skills. The school closed in March 1951. SAC began a more sustained educational effort and in November 1952 opened its first academy in West Drayton, England. Other commands soon followed SAC's example.[8]

NCO Academy curricula have changed over the years. In 1955 the Second Air Force's NCO Academy offered "ten hours of Military Management (Organization Phase), twelve hours of Military Instructor Training, twenty-two hours of Speech, and ten hours of Problem Solving" out of a

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[6]Huntington, pp. 16–17.

[7]The Department of Defense has published a series of *Selected Manpower Statistics*. These annual volumes contain information concerning, among other things, the educational levels of the enlisted force. Information dates back only to the mid-1950s. For a sense of change over time see volumes for 1958, 1969, and 1980.

[8]MSgt Frank J. Clifford, "School for Zebras," *Air Force*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (April 1955), pp. 28–29; TSgt Harold L. Craven, "Schools for Air Force Sergeants," *The Airman* (October 1958), pp. 12–13; Ted R. Sturm, "They Make Military Managers," *Airman* (February 1976), pp. 17–18.

total of 265 hours. In 1958 its major subjects were World Affairs, Air Force History, Communicative Skills; Supervision and Management; Human Relations and Leadership; Drill and Ceremonies; Military Customs, Courtesy, and Protocol; Physical Training and Conditioning; Training; and Military Justice. By 1976 the academy's curriculum was being built around four major areas: communicative skills, the military environment, military management, and electives. In the 1990s the academy had expanded its course of study to include the Code of Conduct, National Security, the Role of the NCO Manager, Leadership and Management for the Manager, and Substance Abuse and Human Relations Issues.[9]

As those serving in the "top three" enlisted ranks (master sergeant, senior master sergeant, and chief master sergeant) began to take on more duties in leadership and management, the Air Force responded with the opening of a Senior NCO Academy at Gunter Air Force Station in Montgomery, Alabama.[10] The academy's current curriculum includes instruction in Military Professionalism, Leadership Planning, Civil Service Personnel Management, Executive Decision Making, and Organizational Management.[11]

The Air Force also offers its enlisted members other opportunities for professional development. The Extension Course Institute, established in 1950, provides correspondence programs. Its nearly 400 listings include professional military education courses that closely parallel those offered at the NCO Academies. The Air Force founded the Community College of the Air Force in 1972. It offers two-year degree programs to "broaden the non-commissioned officer as a technician, manager and citizen." Its graduates must complete not only technical course requirements but general education and management course requirements as well.[12]

A better educated enlisted force has emerged to fill the Air Force's need for greater skills and leadership throughout its organization. NCOs perform tasks in more than forty career fields as widely varied as aircrew operations and protection; visual information; logistics planning; paralegal services; personnel; morale, welfare, and recreation; and education and

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[9]Air Force Regulation (AFR) 53-39, "Noncommissioned Officer Professional Military Education," March 17, 1990, pp. 50-59.

[10]Sturm, "They Make Military Managers," pp. 16-17.

[11]AFR 53-19, pp. 61-66.

[12]Fact Sheet, United States Air Force, Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Public Affairs, subj: Extension Course Institute, No. 87-42; Fact Sheet, United States Air Force, Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Public Affairs, subj: Community College of the Air Force, No. 86-1.

training.[13] The many missions performed by NCOs demand both technical and "people" skills, essential in the day-to-day operations of the service.

The Air Force's recognition of the importance of human relations skills sharpened gradually over the decades, becoming vital during the turbulent 1960s and 1970s when "people" and "quality of life" issues first came dramatically to the forefront. Beginning in 1971, for example, Chief Robert Gaylor spent six years teaching management and leadership to NCOs throughout the service.

## Growing Expertise

Computers and increasingly sophisticated aircraft and other weapon systems necessarily pushed the enlisted force to develop ever more complex technical skills. The days of the legendary World War II-vintage crew chief who kept his bombers and fighters in the air with a measure of skill, intuition, and a healthy dose of elbow grease, and who often improvised when needed parts failed to materialize, have for the most part long since passed (although Air Force NCOs during Operation DESERT STORM proved themselves just as able to innovate as their predecessors of the 1940s). Today's hardware demands highly skilled, highly specialized technicians. They, in turn, depend on the support of a host of individuals who know how to manage information and keep supplies and personnel flowing.

Although it is difficult to determine which came first—growing expertise or increased responsibility—both have shaped the evolution of the NCO corps over the last decades. The Air Force's usually higher percentage of officers in comparison with the other services sparked complaints early on that officers were doing work that could and should have been done by NCOs. Over the last two decades, however, many more challenging new positions have opened up to enlisted members. In these positions NCOs have been more than the traditional "top kick" or First Sergeant or the Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge (NCOIC).

In 1970 the Air Force established Senior Enlisted Advisors within the various commands.[14] An NCO now serves as commandant of the Senior NCO Academy and all eighteen Major Command (MAJCOM) NCO Academies. In 1966 the Air Force, under pressure from Congress, followed

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[13]For a complete list of career fields see AFR 39-1, "Airman Classification," effective April 30, 1991.

[14]Senior Enlisted Advisors are generally senior NCOs chosen as advisors to commanders primarily on enlisted matters.

the Marine Corps' example and created a new billet whose occupant was responsible for advising the Chief of Staff on all matters affecting the enlisted force.[15] In the Marine Corps this individual is known as the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps; in the Army, the Sergeant Major of the Army; in the Navy, the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy; and in the Air Force, the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force.

In 1961, in the spirit of corporateness and with pride as the holders of special and highly developed skills, the Air Force's NCOs founded their own professional organization, known as the Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA). The AFSA is open to all active duty and retired enlisted members of the Air Force, Air National Guard, and the Air Force Reserve. Over the years this organization has become a strong and vocal advocate for the rights and entitlements of Air Force enlisted personnel, especially in the halls of Congress. In addition, the organization publishes its own magazine, administers a scholarship program, conducts seminars to aid individuals in making the transition from military to civilian life, and works to develop a museum dedicated to the heritage of the Air Force enlisted force.[16]

Along with growing professionalism, an environment of significant, often turbulent, change influenced the experiences of everyone who served in the Air Force over the past four decades. In the decades of technological revolution, jets replaced propellers, computers and hand-held calculators replaced typewriters and slide rules, and advances in telecommunications made instantaneous worldwide communications a reality. Society, as well, went through a series of near revolutionary changes—the civil rights movement, the antiwar, antimilitary sentiments of the Vietnam era, and the women's movement. All of these made their marks on the armed services.

When Chief Paul Airey entered the Army Air Corps, the most sophisticated air weapon was the four-engine, propeller-driven heavy bomber, the B–17, and its most technologically innovative component was the Norden bombsight. Over the course of his career the Air Force acquired an all-jet force, missiles capable of delivering their payload half a world away, and a mission in space. Within a decade of his retirement in 1970, the Air Force began experimenting with new stealth technology that promised to enhance survivability and mission accomplishment in a way that those who flew the B–17s could scarcely have imagined.

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[15]The Air Force created the position of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force on October 24, 1966. Chief Airey assumed office in April 1967.

[16]Air Force Sergeants Association, "Fact Sheet, September 1989" (International Headquarters, P.O. Box 50, Temple Hills, Maryland).

As generation after generation of weapon systems came on the scene, the Air Force technicians responsible for maintenance and repair were compelled to augment their skills through constant training and retraining. They proved willing and able to adapt to new technologies. Chief Thomas Barnes flew as a flight engineer on aircraft as varied as the B-25, C-47, and B-52. He also served on the maintenance crew of an F-4. The computer touched virtually every job and everyone in the Air Force during the past two decades. Old methods of writing and record keeping had to be adjusted by new specialists to the new tool. Computer literacy became a must.

Spectacular technological changes were more than matched in scope by dramatic social changes sweeping through America. The civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the women's movement particularly affected the armed services, each of which was forced to reflect on and reform many long-standing policies.

The armed forces were formally integrated during the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Air Force had already started to break down racial barriers when President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981 in 1948, and signaled the end of segregation within the military establishment. By most accounts, despite some unpleasant incidents, integration by the Air Force proceeded fairly smoothly. Many officers and enlisted personnel employed tactics later adopted by civil rights advocates when they insisted that local businesses serve blacks stationed at nearby bases.[17]

The advent of integration, however, did not mean immediate full equality. The young black men and women who entered the services in the 1960s and 1970s often brought with them the anger and frustration that were so much a part of the communities in which they were reared. As blacks continued to press their demands, the services had to respond. The Air Force did so by introducing, for example, its Social Actions programs in 1969 and the Defense Race Relations Institute in 1971.[18] In the final analysis, the NCOs who had the most direct day-to-day contact with these

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[17]On occasion during the 1950s, black and white servicemen would enter segregated local businesses and insist on being served. Chiefs Barnes and Harlow both recall incidents arising from this practice which foreshadowed the sit-in strategy popular after 1960. Gropman, pp. 86-142.

[18]The Air Force's Social Actions programs, established in 1969, came about largely in response to growing problems with race relations within the military. These problems ranged from overt racial hostility to misunderstandings caused by a lack of cultural awareness. Chief Barnes recalled difficulties caused by misinterpretations of black slang. See Sgts Craig Pugh and Robert K. Ruhl, "Up Front—Where the Action Is," *The Airman* (February 1981), pp. 37-42.

young black service members were challenged to provide the special leadership needed to see the Air Force through that period of transition.

Throughout this era of profound social upheaval, the services also struggled with the tensions and frustrations arising out of U.S. participation in the war in Vietnam. On the home front, an undercurrent of antimilitarism became widespread, particularly on college campuses, and those in uniform often bore the brunt of public anger and disgust over U.S. policy on the conflict.[19] The armed forces, especially during the last four years of U.S. involvement, from 1968 to 1972, were confronted by rebellious young servicemen who resented being sent off to fight that most unpopular of American wars. Morale continued to decline during the 1970s as a post-Vietnam backlash set in and questions about the proper role of U.S. armed services in the world surfaced. The anti-military feelings born of the war were slow to subside. Again, as the most immediate supervisors of the enlisted force, the NCOs were challenged over and over, their leadership tested to the utmost.

## More Opportunities for Women

As blacks agitated and pushed the services to provide equal treatment, so did women. After the initiation of the All-Volunteer Force and the entrance of women into the services in greater numbers, all military departments attempted to integrate women more fully into their force structures. During most of the 1960s, the Air Force limited women, both officers and enlisted, to a narrow range of specializations, predominately in the clerical, administrative, personnel, information, and medical fields. Women were no longer allowed to perform intelligence, weather, flight attendance, equipment maintenance, and control tower duties, even though they had done so during World War II and into the 1950s.[20] The proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution in 1972 represented the beginning of a concerted effort by members of the feminist movement in the United States to tear down the obstacles that prevented women from

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[19]The most recent work on the antiwar movement is Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1990). See also Maj Joseph W. Kastl, "Antimilitarism in the Age of Aquarius," *Air University Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1 (November–December 1971), pp. 32–38; Herman S. Wolk, "Antimilitarism in America," *Air University Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4 (May–June 1972), pp. 20–25.

[20]Maj Gen Jeanne Holm, *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution* (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1986), pp. 175–185, 246–288, 313–346.

advancing socially and economically. Here again, the services had to respond. The Air Force opened many hard-to-fill technical fields, even those involving work on the flight line, to enlisted women. Once again, as each of the Chiefs recalled, the Air Force called upon its NCOs to apply their special talents to meeting this responsibility.

Long-term Air Force members were often throughout their careers affected by significant changes in personnel policies. The changes over forty years were, of course, legion, and encompassed many areas—housing, health care, promotions, pay, retention, and drug and alcohol abuse. Several personnel policy changes stand out—the introduction of the E–8 and E–9 ranks, the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS), the Total Objective Plan for Career Airmen Personnel (TOPCAP), the appointment of Senior Enlisted Advisors, and the creation of the position of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force.

By the late 1950s the Air Force had to contend with two related personnel problems—promotion stagnation and the sometimes less-than-clear status of its warrant officers. The first problem, which burdened the Army and the Navy as well, was caused by the massive influx of personnel during the Korean War build-up (known later as the Korean Hump). It touched most career fields and had a severely detrimental effect on morale. The second problem was the result of the Air Force's inability to categorize its significant number of warrant officers. Were they to be treated as officers or as enlisted personnel? To address both problems, the Air Force in 1958 supported the creation of two new enlisted ranks, the senior master sergeant (E–8) and the chief master sergeant (E–9). Promotions into the new ranks opened up positions below. From then on senior supervisory NCOs were not warrant officers but senior and chief master sergeants. Heavier responsibilities did not come immediately with the new ranks but were incorporated gradually over the following decades.[21]

The creation of E–8s and E–9s helped alleviate some, but not all, promotion stagnation. By the late 1960s the Korean Hump was again causing problems. In addition, the Air Force's promotion system had proved neither systematic nor well understood by enlisted personnel.[22] Despite efforts to explain the system and improve it, complaints mounted and finally captured the attention of Congressman L. Mendel Rivers,

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[21]Bruce D. Callendar, "The Evolution of the Air Force NCO," *Air Force Magazine* (September 1986), p. 173.

[22]Several articles appeared in *The Airman* during the 1960s attempting to explain the Air Force's promotion policy. Among them were two by TSgt John K. O'Doherty, "The 55/45 Air Force" (March 1960), pp. 10–13, and "Prospects for Promotion: What's the Picture?" (March 1961), pp. 44–48; and one by MSgt Ken Allen, "The Whole Man Concept" (July 1966), pp. 8–13.

Congressman Rivers introduced a bill which mandated the appointment by each of the services of a senior NCO. Although the Rivers bill never became law, the Air Force realized that tremendous enthusiasm for the proposal existed throughout its ranks. On October 24, 1966, Chief of Staff General John P. McConnell announced the creation of the position of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. In April 1967, Chief Airey became the first to wear the unique insignia with a wreath around its star.[26] Over the next decade, through the efforts of the first CMSAFs, support for the office grew among both officers and enlisted members of the Air Force.

The office has continued to grow in importance as succeeding Chiefs brought their own particular talents to it. Through their competence and dedication they have invested it with true professionalism over a time of rapid social and technological change. The theme of change punctuated by rich and colorful anecdotes runs through this interview and touches on other facets of life in the enlisted force. Chief Airey's career reached back into the Army Air Corps. He recalled the danger of flying B-24s on missions deep into Europe, of being shot down, and of being taken prisoner. Chief Harlow also remembered the Army Air Corps and the commitment of those who chose the career it offered before pay-raises with cost-of-living adjustments, before adequate housing, and before CHAMPUS (the Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Uniformed Services).[27]

Chiefs Barnes and Gaylor entered the service after World War II. Chief Barnes, the only black CMSAF to date, recalled landmarks in the Air Force's long process of integration and the hardships of service in Korea. Chief Gaylor, who spent most of his career as a security policeman, described the difficulties of building a strong sense of "one Air Force."

They all spoke bluntly of their impressions and opinions developed over long years of service and were not shy about discussing aspects of military life that never get mentioned on recruiting posters. They were quick to point out, however, the many advantages to Air Force service.

At the end of the interview, Chief Gaylor lamented the lack of colorful heroes in today's "corporate" Air Force. Although these four Chiefs may not be heroes in the classic military sense, their impressive careers stand as fine examples of achievement and professionalism to which the enlisted force can look for inspiration.

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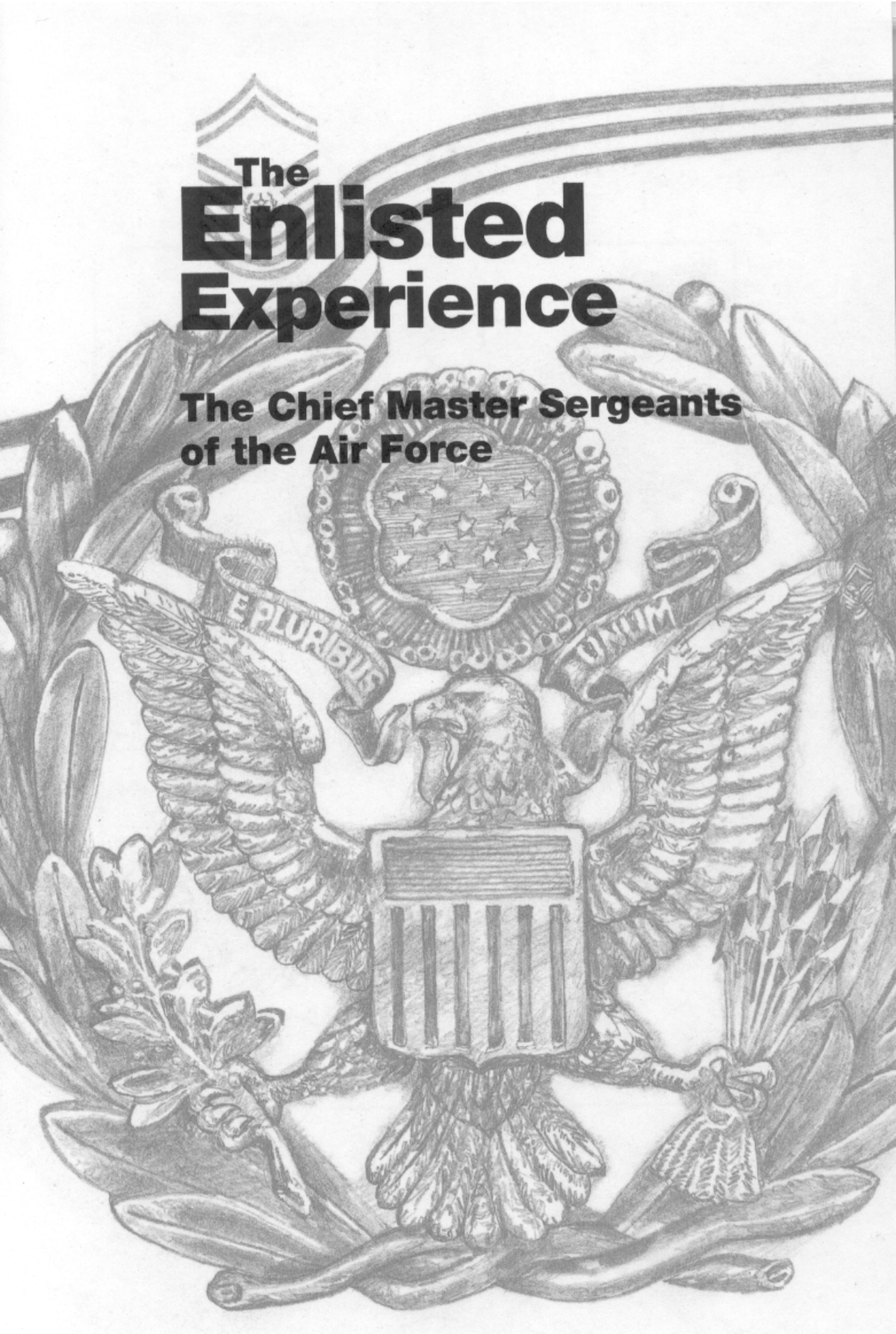
[26]"The Chiefs," *Aerospace Heritage*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Air Force Association, 1984), pp. 5-7.

[27]For a summary of the gradual improvements in the quality of life of the enlisted force see Maj Lewis Allen, "Genteel Poverty—Gone But Not Forgotten" (Air Command and Staff College Research Paper).




# The Enlisted Experience

## The Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force

CMSAF Paul Wesley Airey was born December 13, 1923, and entered the Army Air Forces in 1942. He trained as a aerial radio operator at Scott Field, Illinois, and then moved to Fairmont Field, Nebraska, where he trained for service on the B–24. In March 1944 Sergeant Airey was sent to North Africa but was soon transferred to the 485th Bomb Group based in Italy. Flying as a radio operator-aerial gunner, he saw action over Romania, Germany, and Austria. In July 1944, while on his twenty-eighth mission, he was captured by the enemy after flak brought down his B–24 over Austria. He remained a prisoner of the Luftwaffe until May 1945. Weighing only 100 pounds at the time of his release, he returned to the United States for three months of recuperative leave. Once he regained his health, he reported to the radio school at Scott Field as an instructor.

After six years at Scott, Airey moved to Naha Air Base, Okinawa. There he made another of his many important contributions to the Air Force. Working with improvised and salvaged parts, he devised a much-needed corrosion control assembly for use on aircraft radio and radar equipment. His resourcefulness, which resulted in great savings to the Air Force, earned him the Legion of Merit, the nation's fifth highest military decoration.

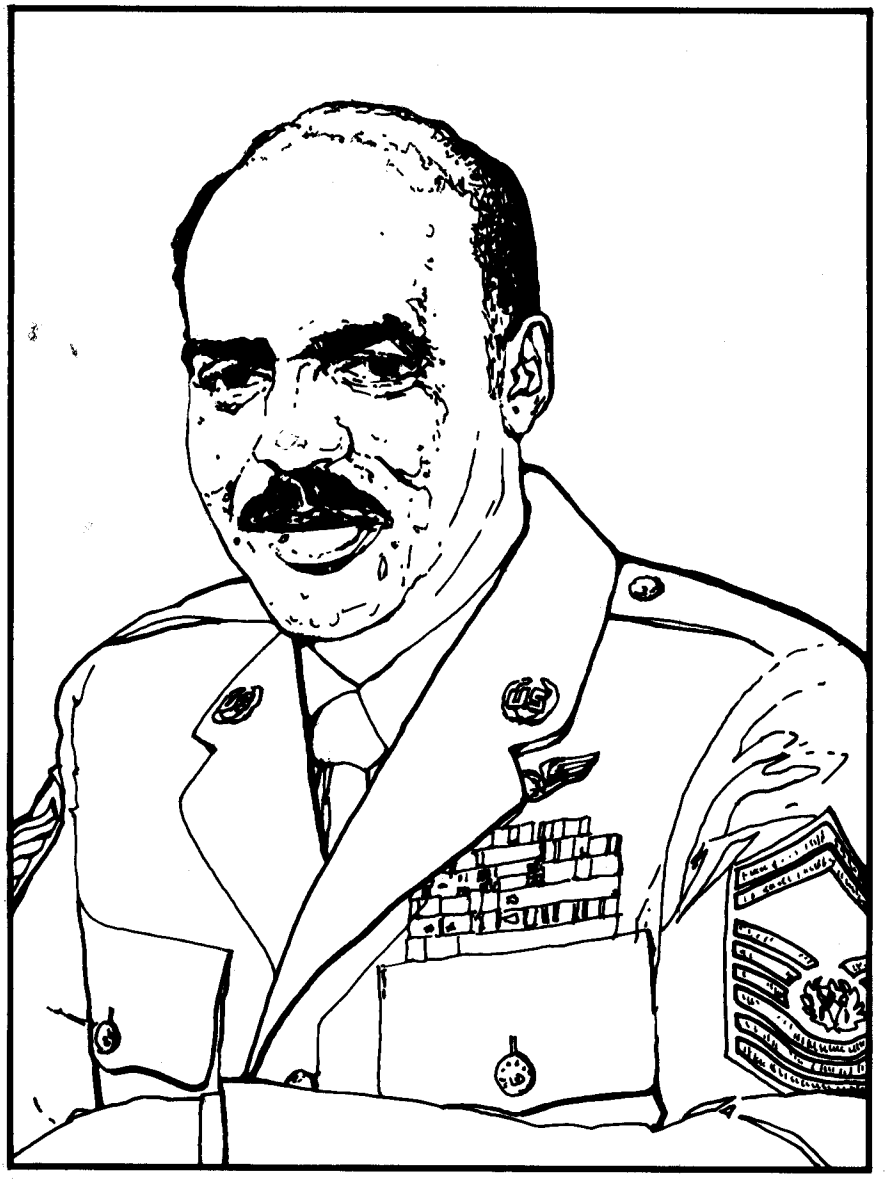
Returning to the United States in 1953, Airey began his first assignment in the position that he rated second only to that of the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. He served, once again at Scott, as First Sergeant. He went on to several other duty posts as First Sergeant. His responsibilities over the years also included a tour as the NCOIC of the Airmen Section, Directorate of Personnel, of the 478th Fighter Group and later as Personnel Sergeant Major. His last tour as First Sergeant came in 1964 at the 4756 Civil Engineering Squadron, Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. On April 3, 1967, he began his tenure as the first Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. According to those who followed him, during twenty-seven months in office he built the position into one of undeniable importance and influence. Chief Airey remained on active duty after stepping down as CMSAF—the only former CMSAF to do so—from a desire to complete thirty years of service to the Air Force. Once he retired, he went on to enjoy varied career opportunities, even working for local television in Florida. Primarily, however, he has been associated with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, setting something of another precedent for subsequent CMSAFs. Most who followed him have moved from the Air Force into important middle management positions in corporate America. That accomplishment stands as a tribute to the skills and abilities cultivated by these men during their long years of service to the Air Force.

CMSAF Donald L. Harlow, born September 22, 1920, entered the Army Air Corps at age 22 in 1942. He served throughout the war as an instructor in the Aircraft Armament Ground School. In 1946, after rising to the rank of staff sergeant, he briefly left active duty, but remained with the Air Force Reserve. Before being recalled to active duty in 1950, Chief Harlow attended the California College of Commerce where he also taught. He left school in 1948 to take a job as an Assistant Sales Training Instructor for the Clary Multiplier Corporation.

Once back on active duty, Chief Harlow served as the Personnel Chief Clerk, 5th and 9th Maintenance Squadrons, Travis Air Force Base, California. After a brief tour at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, he transferred to the 5th Air Division in Rabat, Morocco. There he served in a number of capacities including Personnel Sergeant Major, Custodian of the NCO Club, and as steward of the Officer's Club.

Returning to the United States in 1954, he embarked on a number of assignments in the personnel field. Along the way he earned a bachelor of science in business administration from Southern Methodist University in 1955. He continued his professional military education at the Strategic Air Command NCO Academy where he graduated with several honors—the Student Commander Trophy, the Gold Key for Academic Achievement, and the Drill and Ceremonies Award. In 1963, after only sixteen years of active duty service, he attained the rank of chief master sergeant.

After his promotion he moved to Headquarters, U.S. European Command, as Personnel Sergeant Major, Air Force Element, and then, in July 1965, he went to the Pentagon to serve as Sergeant Major, Executive Services Division, Office of the Vice Chief of Staff. While serving there he was named Headquarters Command Outstanding Airman of the Year, 1967. He assumed the position of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force on August 1, 1969, and retired from the Air Force on September 30, 1971. In addition to serving as chairman of the Richard D. Kisling Fund (a memorial to the third CMSAF who died in 1985), Chief Harlow is also a member of the board of directors of SOVRAN Bank of Virginia, a member-at-large of the USAF Retiree Council, and he travels extensively speaking at various Air Force functions.



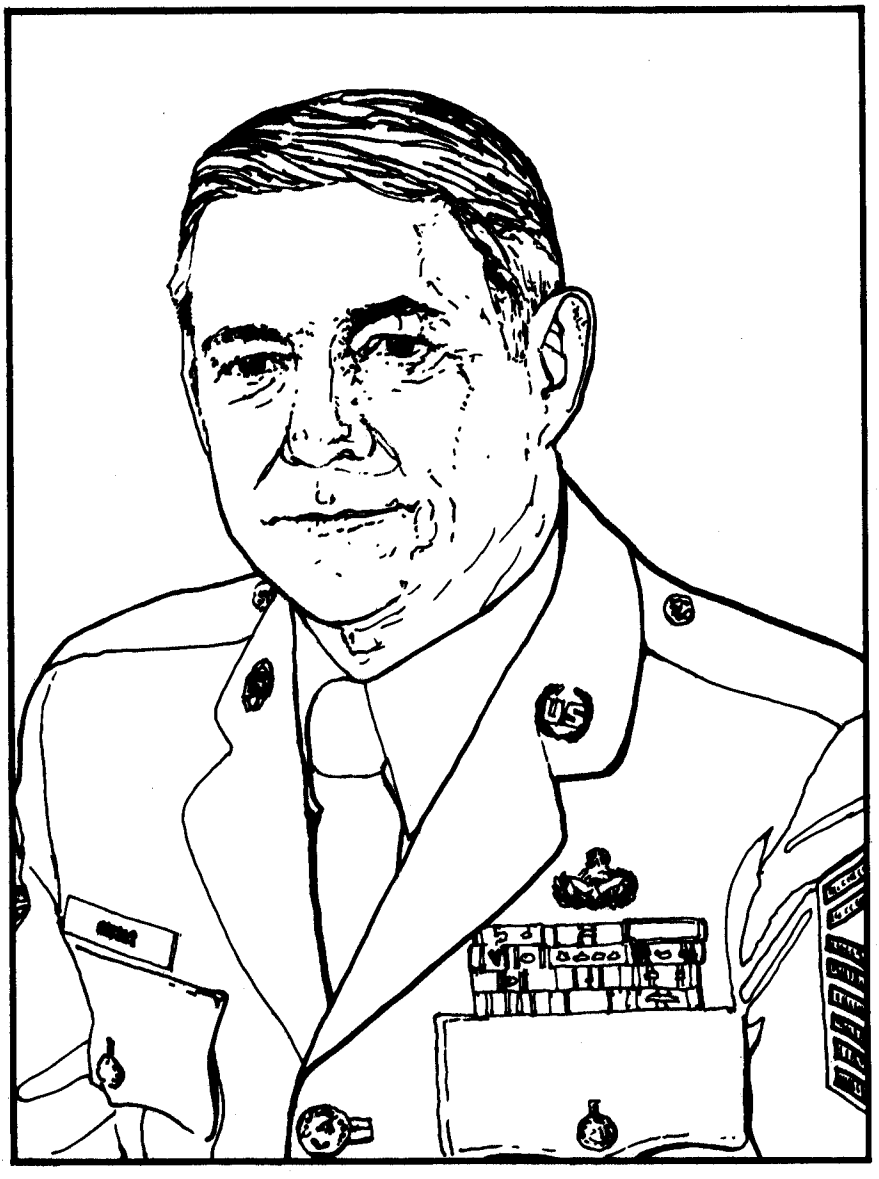
CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes, born November 16, 1930, entered the Air Force in April 1949. After completing basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, he went on to both Aircraft and Engine School and Hydraulic Specialist School at Chanute Technical Training Center, Illinois. Chief Barnes's subsequent career in the Air Force clearly illustrates the role of changing technology and the necessity of training, retraining, and adapting to change.

Following brief service at McChord Air Force Base, Washington, Chief Barnes transferred to the 4th Troop Carrier Squadron based at Ashiya, Japan, a unit charged with supporting the Korean War. Chief Barnes completed on-the-job training there as a flight engineer and subsequently served as both a flight engineer and a hydraulic specialist.

He returned to the United States in 1952 and went to the 30th Air Transport Squadron, Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts, where he received transition training as a flight engineer on the C–118. He volunteered for temporary duty with the 1708th Ferry Group, Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, and served on crews ferrying aircraft between various Air Force depots and Hawaii, Japan, and the Northeast Air Command. In 1952 he transferred to Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland. There he served as Crew Chief/Flight Engineer on a number of aircraft including the B–25, T–11, C–45, and C–47. In 1958 he left Andrews and went to Loring Air Force Base, Maine where he served as a B–52 Flight Chief and Senior Controller.

In 1966 he trained for service with yet another aircraft, the F–4, and in December of that year went to Southeast Asia. There he served as the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing NCOIC, Reparable Processing Center, as a Senior Controller, and as the NCOIC, Maintenance Control. Upon his return to the United States, Chief Barnes went to Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, where his duties included T–38 section Line Chief, NCOIC of Maintenance Control, and Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Commander of the 3646th Pilot Training Wing. He left Laughlin Air Force Base in 1971 to serve as the Command Senior Enlisted Advisor, Air Training Command Headquarters, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

The Air Force chose Chief Barnes as its fourth CMSAF and he began his duties on October 1, 1973. He received two extensions of his tenure and, therefore, served longer in that office than anyone else. He retired from the Air Force on July 31, 1977, and currently works as a Vice President and Director of Employee Relations, Association Corporation of North America.



CMSAF Robert D. Gaylor, born May 8, 1930, entered the Air Force in September 1948 and served most of his career in the security police field. From 1948 until 1957 and again from 1962 until 1965, Chief Gaylor served at James Connally Air Force Base, Texas, Laredo Air Force Base, Texas, Kusan Air Base, Korea, Tachikawa Air Base, Japan, Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, and Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand. From 1957 until 1962 he served as a Military Training Instructor at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

In 1965 Chief Gaylor was the honor graduate from the Strategic Air Command NCO Academy. As honor graduate he was invited to remain there as an instructor and did so until the Academy closed in April 1966. After briefly returning to the security police field, he returned to Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, at SAC's request, to help reopen the Academy in 1968. He then was named the Second Air Force Senior Enlisted Advisor.

In 1971 Chief Gaylor went to Europe, serving at Headquarters, United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE). He toured bases within the command, conducting classes in management techniques. In 1972 he established the USAFE Command Management/Leadership Center where USAFE NCOs could receive a sixty-hour, in-residence course in management and leadership. He left the center in 1973 when he was named USAFE Senior Enlisted Advisor. Later, he returned to the United States to serve at the Air Force Military Personnel Center. While there he continued to travel and act as a Management/Leadership instructor. He became the fifth CMSAF on August 1, 1977, and retired from that post on July 31, 1979. He is now the Quality Programs Administrator for United Service Automobile Association.

## Interview Participants

CMSAF Paul W. Airey
CMSAF Donald L. Harlow
CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes
CMSAF Robert D. Gaylor
Richard H. Kohn, Chief, Office of Air Force History

**June 24, 1987**
**Bolling Air Force Base**
**Washington, D.C.**

## Volunteering and Fighting in World War II

**Kohn:** First, let me thank you all for taking the time and making the effort to come to Bolling Air Force Base to share your experiences with the Air Force. I thought we'd start the discussion early in your careers with the 1940s. Chief Airey and Chief Harlow, what were your experiences coming into the Army Air Forces [AAF] during World War II?[1] What was life like at that time? The air forces were part of the Army then, but certainly back in World War II, and at times in the late 1940s, it must have been a different experience for all four of you than it would be today.

**Harlow:** Yes, it was. Going back even prior to 1940, I remember when I was a young man in school we had in the town what were called vagrants; today they're called either street people or derelicts. The police would pick them up at night and put them in jail. The next morning they'd have to go before a judge, and the judge, depending on how many times they'd been picked up, would say, "Thirty days in jail, or join the Army." There were quite a few of those individuals in the Army. Some of them turned out to be excellent soldiers; others were the same sort of vagrants in the Army as in their towns and, eventually, they were kicked out. In those days we had a cross section of America in the Army Air Corps.[2]

When I was inducted, I went to Fort Devens, Massachusetts. Of course, it was strictly Army. I remember about the seventh or eighth day

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[1]The rapid growth of the Army air arm in the months before World War II created organization and coordination problems. On June 20, 1941, Army Chief of Staff Gen George C. Marshall issued Army Regulation 95–5 creating the Army Air Forces (AAF). He named his Deputy Chief of Staff for Air, Maj Gen Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces. A subsequent reorganization in March 1942 gave the Army Air Forces co-equal status with the Army Ground Forces and the Army Service Forces. The Army Air Forces remained a part of the War Department until the September 18, 1947, creation of an independent Air Force. Alfred Goldberg, ed., *A History of the United States Air Force, 1907–1957* (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1957), pp. 51, 99.

[2]During the early 1920s some members of the Army Air Service led by Brig Gen William "Billy" Mitchell called for the creation of an independent Air Force. More moderate airmen wanted the Air Service to gain a status similar to that of the Marine Corps in the Navy Department. President Calvin Coolidge appointed a committee under the leadership of Dwight W. Morrow to study the issue. The committee reported in late 1925. Congress accepted its recommendations and incorporated them in the Air Corps Act of 2 July 1926. That act renamed the Air

we'd fallen out in formation and were waiting to do some drilling when the corporal, two stripes, came down the row and said to each individual: "You're going into the Air Corps; you're going into the Air Corps; you're going into the Infantry." Whether he really knew I don't know, but he said to me, "You're going into the Army Air Corps."[3] Well, I didn't know it until three days later when the orders came out, but I was going to go to Atlantic City for basic training because I was going into the Army Air Corps.

**Airey:** I think you have to go back before the war. If you recall, back in 1939 and 1940, when the draft started[4] and before we went into World War II, the United States Army Air Forces only had something like 40,000 officers and men, and then suddenly we were in a war. There's no way we can compare the United States Air Force today with the old Army Air Corps of yesterday. Then, the whole idea was predicated on winning that war. We went into a total expansion, from 40,000 people until we finally ended up with something like 11 or 12 million people in the services. As I

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Service the Air Corps, created an Assistant Secretary of War for Air, and authorized two additional brigadier generals as assistant chiefs of the new Corps. Goldberg, p. 36; Lt Col John F. Shiner, *Foulois and the U.S. Army Air Corps, 1931–1935* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), pp. 12–32.

[3]Since 1775 the Army has created numerous basic and special branches. As the Army developed, it needed officers with special skills (engineers, medical doctors, supply experts). For each evolving skill the Army created a branch or corps of specialized officers. The basic branches included: Infantry, Adjutant General's Corps, Corps of Engineers, Finance Corps, Quartermaster Corps, Air Defense Artillery, Field Artillery, Armor (which replaced the Cavalry), Ordnance Corps, Signal Corps, Chemical Corps, Military Police Corps, Transportation Corps, and Military Intelligence. The special branches included: the corps of the Army Medical Department (Medical Corps, Army Nurse Corps, Dental Corps, Veterinary Corps, Medical Service Corps, and Army Medical Specialist Corps), the Judge Advocate General's Corps, and the Chaplain's Branch. From May 14, 1942, until October 20, 1978, the Army also had a Women's Army Corps and from 1926 until 1941, the Army Air Corps (the Army Air Forces was established in June 1941). Army officers were commissioned into one of the branches or corps. Enlisted personnel were members of the Regular Army and were assigned to the various branches or corps. *The Department of the Army Manual* (April 1982), pp. 5-1–5-22, 5-47, 6-3.

[4]Congress passed the Selective Service and Training Act, the country's first peacetime draft, in September 1940. Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1984), p. 396.

say, you can't compare it.[5] In my own case, even before the war I had an inclination toward a military career. In those days the area that I grew up in was predominately Navy. In Quincy, Massachusetts, we had the huge Fall River Shipyard which produced many capital ships for the Navy, such as the famous carrier, *Wasp*, and the cruiser, *Quincy*. Both ships went down fighting the Japanese later in the war. In addition, Boston was a great Navy town. My plans as a young boy were to eventually go into the United States Navy.

I haven't told this story very often, but in 1942 I went into the Navy recruiting office and there was an old chief petty officer sitting there. He gave me a bad time, said he couldn't fool with me that day. "We want only men, we don't want to screw around with you today, come back later"—just one of those belligerent types that really turn you off, the type that we try and keep away from recruiting offices now. So I went down the street and joined the Army Air Forces. I owe that petty officer much for what he did for me by making me change my mind.

**Barnes:** Let me talk for a moment about my impressions with regard to World War II. I was born and raised in an industrial town, Chester, Pennsylvania. The principal industry was shipbuilding. Before the war, the city had done commercial shipbuilding in four yards; during the war they were doing full-time Navy production. There was a Ford Motor Company plant within a half mile of my home that also turned to full war production of Jeeps and halftracks for the Army. These things were parked outside, so there was a military presence in the town. As a school child—my father having died when I was fourteen—I worked to help support my family in the Sun shipbuilding system nights and weekends as a summer worker. I was not in the actual shipbuilding yards, but out in a support area, so I had contact with the war activity. I was impressed with what was going on and I grew restless and sought someway to relate myself to what seemed a very patriotic effort at the time in the military.

The surprise for me came in 1948 when I left home and entered the Air Force's basic training system. I left home with a rather mixed group from the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station, which was at the Schuylkill Arsenal in Philadelphia. We traveled by train to San Antonio, which in and of itself was an experience, since we picked up people along

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[5]In June 1940 command strength of the Army Air Corps stood at 51,165. Total military strength stood at 458,365. At its highest in June 1945, American military strength stood at 12,123,455, with 2,282,259 in the Army Air Forces. *Selected Manpower Statistics*, 1980, p. 80.

the way. Friendships developed on that train ride. Some of the people that I met and the ones that I'd left Chester with, we all ended up having our bubbles burst, for when we arrived at Lackland there was a separate military training element for blacks and for non-blacks.[6] So for me the change began right then.

I saw the waning days of the Army Air Forces, but it didn't wane very rapidly. It waned only to the degree that the kinds of things that were becoming distinctly Air Force were noticeable. Basic training for me was a little longer in that it took nearly a month to get enough blacks together to create a flight and begin the training. I had a little casual time at Lackland prior to actually beginning training, waiting on the flight to fill.[7] What this allowed as the people came in was the chance to make some very deep friendships. We grew into it, and we were used in a casual duty sense.

**Airey:** During World War II we needed all the people we could get, and personnel from all walks of life were coming in with the draft or from enlistments. One of the differences I see today is that if you walk into a barracks now all you will see are very young people. I was very young also. However, we had a wide spread of ages from the very young up to and including men in their forties. This had a stabilizing effect on us younger troops. On the other hand, we had a wide variance in educational levels. We had college graduates and those who couldn't read or write. I can still

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[6]Until after the presidential order to desegregate the military in 1948, the Army and subsequently the Air Force operated segregated training facilities and bases, especially in the South, where local law mandated strict racial segregation. The military fought as it trained—segregated. Chief Barnes left for basic training from his home in the North (Pennsylvania) where segregation was not mandated by law. Evidently, since he and the others traveled on a military train, they crossed into the South without having to comply immediately with local segregation ordinances. They were not required to segregate themselves until their arrival at Lackland. Had Chief Barnes been on a non-military train, once he crossed into the South local law would have demanded that he and any other blacks move into separate all-black railcars and his experience with segregation in the South would have occurred earlier. For a more complete discussion of blacks in the military and the conditions they faced prior to desegregation, see Alan M. Osur, *Blacks in the Army Air Forces in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1977); Alan L. Gropman, *The Air Force Integrates* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1981); Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940–1965* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1989); Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight* (New York: The Free Press, 1986).

[7]A "casual" was a military person in transit awaiting transportation to or from a duty station, or awaiting orders to a duty station. Gregory R. Clark, *Words of the Vietnam War* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1990), p. 88.

see the First Sergeant writing the words "his mark" beside an "X" someone had made signing the payroll. We had people we had to write letters for in order to help them. This would be unthinkable in today's Air Force. However, these people did contribute towards winning the war by doing much of the menial labor, such as sweeping the hanger floor, keeping the fires going in the barracks, and many other tasks.

You have to keep in mind, too, in those days we had people that were let out of jail to come into the armed forces. We had people who were in military prisons for felonies, including murder, who, when World War II broke out, were paroled in order to come on active duty. One of them that I knew retired some thirty years later as a master sergeant with an excellent record.

There was also a common purpose, plus the fact that there were more mature people around, grown, mature, family men who were drafted or enlisted. We were drafting up to age thirty-five. In fact, I think we drafted above thirty-five, if they didn't have any dependents—and later they reduced it to thirty-five.[8] Of course, discipline was harsh. It was what they called the "old brown shoe days."[9]

I believe that at the time we had much more respect for, or fear of, authority. The thought of being placed in the Spartan barracks kept many of us straight. Spartan barracks were a form of punishment that was passed out for many different reasons—failure to obey, [being] late for duty, missing a formation, that kind of thing. You were put in a special barracks, and you double-timed to chow. You double-timed every place. You were restricted to a particular barracks, and your day was monitored. In other words, you did your duties and the rest of the time you spent listening to lectures and double-timing and exercising. It was pretty damn rough.

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[8]The draft age during the World War II era varied over the course of the war. During 1940 and 1941 the draft age ranged from twenty-one to thirty-five. During 1942 and 1943 the draft age was expanded to include men aged eighteen to thirty-seven. In the last two years of the war, 1944 and 1945, the draft was limited to men eighteen to twenty-five. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, Part II (Washington, D.C., 1975), p. 1143.

[9]According to Chief Airey, the "old brown shoe days" referred to the time when the air forces were still part of the Army and the airmen wore the Army uniform brown shoes. Any practice or idea that harks back to the days of the Army Air Corps or Army Air Forces was referred to as being "old brown shoe." For example, thinking that harsh discipline was the way to control the troops would be considered "old brown shoe." Telephone Interview, Janet R. Bednarek with CMSAF Paul W. Airey, Ret.

**Harlow:** Going back to the early days—1943, 1944—I was stationed at Matagorda Island, Texas.[10] I was in the ground school teaching gunnery, teaching the students how to take apart .50-caliber and .30-caliber machine guns and how to synchronize them through the aircraft propeller. When I got assigned to the school, there was a tech sergeant in charge. I thought, "Gee, this guy's an old guy." He looked old. He was a tech sergeant in the Army.[11] Soon after I was there for a while, I found out that he was about five years younger than I was. I couldn't understand it until payday came around. He and a bunch of the other troops would go into the boiler room of the barracks. They had a big table set up, with a bottle of whiskey and cards. They'd gamble the whole weekend and wouldn't even go to bed.

While at Matagorda Island, I was teaching some classes to second lieutenants just out of flying school.[12] I love teaching, and it was a great challenge. During my tour there, I also wrote and prepared tests. They'd never had any real lesson plans or tests in those days. Everything was fast and furious because of the rush to get into combat. They were more concerned with the mission than training so I wrote the first test that was ever given at Matagorda Island to second lieutenants. I took it over to the OPS [operations] officer, a lieutenant colonel, and I'll never forget his comment. He looked at it and said, "Sure glad I don't have to take this test." That's when I got interested in academics, because I found out there was so much opportunity there. There was so much you could do to help people.

Then in the spring of 1945, a hurricane came along and we got blown off the island. We had to evacuate. At that time we got transferred to Victoria Field in Victoria, Texas. I thought I was pretty smart; I finagled a

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[10]Matagorda Island and Peninsula, off the south coast of Texas, along with several other locations in the south and southwest, were acquired in late 1941 and early 1942 as training ranges. See Frank Futrell, "The Development of Base Facilities," in Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, Volume VI: *Men and Planes* (New Imprint, Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), p. 143.

[11]During World War II the Army enlisted rank structure included the rank of private, private first class, corporal, sergeant, staff sergeant, technical (tech) sergeant, and master sergeant.

[12]During the 1930s flight training took place on two Army Air Fields located near San Antonio, Texas. Air cadets received their primary training at Randolph Field, headquarters of the Air Corps Training Center, and advanced training at Kelly Field. After 1940 the Air Corps opened a number of new training bases in southern and southwestern states, taking advantage of the favorable year-round flying conditions. During World War II, once pilots earned their wings, they then underwent transition training in the planes they would fly in combat. Finally, they received training as parts of organized units. Goldberg, pp. 37, 50–51, 95, 173.

couple of three-day passes so they couldn't catch up with me and put me on KP [Kitchen Police]. When I came back from the second one, I decided I'd better do something, so I went to the sergeant major in personnel and told him I'd like to go to work in personnel. They put me in the personnel processing section.

At that time we had the old Form 20, the service record, the medical record, and others. There were twelve different records.[13] I had one desk, and was handling the Form 20. I wanted to find out what they did with all the other records, so I visited around—I had two stripes at the time, a corporal—and I found out what all the other people did with each one of their records. It so happened that about three or four months later, as the war started to wind down, the staff sergeant in charge of the section was going to be reassigned. The captain, our boss at the time, called me in and said, "I understand you're the only one who knows all of the desks here." I said, "Yes. I don't know if I'm the only one, but I do know what everybody does." He said, "Fine. When the staff sergeant leaves you're in charge."

In those days—it's interesting compared to today—the captain was a pilot; he was assigned to us as the officer in charge of processing. He spent most of his time in the training phase and in flying, and he used to come into the office at 9 o'clock in the morning and leave at 10. He was there to sign papers or answer any questions or anything else. Then, he'd come back in the afternoon, maybe about 1:30 or 2, and he'd stay until about 3. He said, "This is where you can always get in touch with me. In the meantime, you're in charge." Well, there I was with two stripes, and I was in charge.

I only recall one time when I had a problem. A colonel from the hospital came in and raised a little hell, and when I couldn't satisfy him I had to call the captain. Otherwise, everybody knew I was in charge, but I didn't overextend myself on that point, and we got the job done.

During the early days of the Army Air Corps, the officer was a policy decision-maker, and the NCO [Non-Commissioned Officer] ran the pro-

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[13]During World War II, the service record (War Department, Adjutant General's Office Form No. 24) was a multi-page document containing a series of different records regarding induction, immunization, designation of beneficiary for insurance, prior service, military qualifications, special duty, furloughs, foreign service, trial by courts-martial, clothing account, endorsements, and final endorsement. According to a World War II-era manual, War Department, Adjutant General's Office (W.D., A.G.O.), Form No. 20 was a soldier's military qualifications card, listing training he had received and duties for which he was prepared. See Lt Col C. M. Virtue, *Company Administration Including Supply and Mess Management and Personnel Records Including Personnel Office Organization and Procedure* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Military Service Publishing Company, March 1943), pp. 167–202.

gram. I remember many a time that the officer would say, "What do you think?" And I'd say, "According to the Army regulation, we're supposed to do it this way." He wasn't that much concerned with the details. He was concerned about making the decision, and he depended on me to provide him with the facts on which he could base that decision. We had very few line officers.[14] They were mostly pilots and navigators. They had a secondary job, but they depended on NCOs to do it, and they tended to their primary job of flying. It was an opportunity that we had as young people that's very difficult to give to our young NCOs today because of the number of officers we have.

**Airey:** My experience in World War II was different. After graduating from aerial gunnery school, my class was sent by troop train to Salt Lake Army Air Base in Utah, for crew assignment and refresher training in radio operating. When this training was completed, we received a ten-day leave. When I returned, the crew that I was assigned to went to Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho, for B–24 transition training.[15] Evidently, that's where Jimmy Stewart, the movie actor, had trained some months ahead of us.[16] Stewart, they say, was the only famous movie actor that actually rose

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[14]In classic military terms a line officer is a member of the chain of command or line of command. Presently, all Air Force officers except those serving as chaplains, judge advocates, nurses, in the medical service and bio-medical service are defined as line officers or line of the Air Force. Air Force line officers serve in rated operations, non-rated operations, or in mission support.

[15]During transition training a student pilot, after winning his wings, learned to fly the plane he would fly in combat. At that time, as well, the other crew members, having received training in their specialties, learned to work with the pilot and each other as a combat team. Training missions were performed by full crews so that the members of the crew could learn to work with one another as individuals as well as specialists (bombardier, navigator, gunner). The idea was to instill a clear sense of teamwork before the crew was sent into combat. Arthur R. Kooker, "The Foundations of a War Training Program," in Craven and Cate, Volume VI, p. 454; Thomas H. Greer, "Combat Crew and Unit Training," in *Ibid.*, p. 606.

[16]Jimmy Stewart, already a famous Hollywood film actor, enlisted in the Army as a private in March 1941. He received flying training in California and New Mexico and did his B–24 transition training at Gowen Field, Idaho, and Sioux City, Iowa. He was commissioned a first lieutenant in July 1942 and within a year rose to the rank of captain. From November 23, 1943, until March 30, 1944, he flew with the 445th Bomb Group. After promotion to the rank of major, he served as Operations Officer for the 453d Bomb Group until being named Chief of Staff of the 2nd Combat Wing under the Eighth Air Force in June 1944. He continued to advance, attaining the rank of colonel in March 1945. During the war he flew twenty combat missions. After the war he remained in the reserve and in July 1959 attained the rank of brigadier general.

to a command position of leadership in the war. Later he led the entire Eighth Air Force on missions into Germany.[17] After Boise we reported to Fairmont Army Air Base in Nebraska and helped activate the 485th Bomb Group, which, after completion of training, was assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force then operating in the Mediterranean [May 1944].[18] First, we flew to a base in North Africa, via the southern route—Puerto Rico, British Guyana, Brazil—then across the Atlantic to West Africa, and from there into the North African base. While I waited in North Africa for our base to be completed in southern Italy, something happened that had a profound effect on me. As it turned out, for the first time, the war struck close to home. It started out as a rumor that the convoy which most of my squadron was coming over on was hit by German planes in the Mediterranean Sea and the whole shipload was lost. This was very strongly denied as a vicious rumor. Rumors aided the enemy. Those who spread rumors could be court-martialed. However, as later verified, it was all true; we lost the entire squadron. The ship was carrying gasoline and explosives and received a direct hit shortly after nightfall. There were no survivors. My entire squadron had disappeared—all the ground crews, the orderly room —there was no one left. Members of the bomb group who were on the other ships said they'd just begun to relax after crossing the Atlantic and they felt they were home safe when the disaster struck. I always had the feeling that it was one hell of a way to go, as you didn't even have the opportunity to fight back. It was an air attack. Planes came out and got them. All were lost. The Luftwaffe was still pretty strong up until that time.

My initial B–24 combat missions were into the Balkans and into Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania. I went to Ploesti once, but not on

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[17]Jimmy Stewart did not lead the entire Eighth Air Force, but he could have flown combat lead at the wing, squadron, or group level.

[18]The mission of the strategic bombers of the Fifteenth Air Force, as part of the combined bomber offensive, was "the progressive destruction of the German military, industrial and economic system, and the undermining of the morale of the German people to a point where their capacity for armed resistance [was] fatally weakened." In carrying out that mission, the Fifteenth Air Force concentrated on the destruction of the German Luftwaffe, Axis oil refineries, supply installations, the ball bearing industry and "other centers of vital military production." The Fifteenth Air Force flew missions over Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania, Italy and southern France. See "The Statistical Story of the Fifteenth Air Force," Center for Air Force History.

the famous first low-level raid.[19] Flak was the most frightening or the most frustrating thing because you could do nothing about it except watch it come at you. Many tales and jokes have been told about flak being so thick that you could walk on it; however, I've seen it so thick that it darkened the sky, almost blotted out the sun. Take a heavily defended target, such as Wiener Neustadt—New Vienna—which was an industrial area with oil refineries and aircraft plants; it could really put out a massive amount of flak.[20] In other words, they shot a large amount of flak up into an area and let you fly into it. Once a formation hit the initial point, there was no evasive action.[21] You just held formation and flew to the target. Flak took a terrible toll, and many thousands of casualties could be attributed to it. Thousands of POWs [Prisoners of War] could testify that flak was what got them.

I was shot down on a mission to hit the Florisdorf oil refineries [July 1944], which were on the outskirts of Vienna also. The aircraft was hit by flak shortly after bombs away. I can recall the pilot feathering one engine and then another. By this time, we were well across the Danube over Hungary. Of course, Hungary was an ally of the Germans. I can remember when the oil pressure in the third one started going down, the pilot said, "Get out. If that third engine goes, this thing's going down like a lead sled." We all bailed out. I'd seen other planes go down over a target. I'd seen B–24s go into a spin. I'd stood at the waist window praying for the chutes to come out, and no chutes would come out. Centrifugal forces

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[19]In August 1943, B–24 bombers from the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces (MAAF) in Operation TIDALWAVE targeted the vital oil refineries in Ploesti, Romania. According to historian Albert F. Simpson, it was "the first large-scale, minimum-altitude attack by Army Air Force heavy bombers upon a strongly defended target and the longest major bombing mission, in terms of distance from base to target, undertaken up to that time." The AAF lost 54 planes with 532 airmen dead, captured, missing or interned. The cost was very high, but the damage done to the refineries was considered severe. For example an estimated 42 percent of the total refining capacity was destroyed, 40 percent of the cranking capacity knocked out for up to six months, and the production of lubricating oils greatly reduced. See Albert F. Simpson, "Sicily and Southern Italy," in Craven and Cate, Volume II: *Europe: Torch to Point Blank, August 1942 to December 1943*, pp. 482–83.

[20]Wiener Neustadt was the site of a huge Messerschmitt airplane manufacturing complex. Together with the factories at Regensburg, these two production centers fabricated 48 percent of all German single-engine fighters. See Alfred Goldberg and Arthur B. Ferguson, "POINTBLANK," in Craven and Cate, Vol. II, p. 683.

[21]The initial point is a point on the ground (identified visually, by navigational aids, or by dead reckoning) over which an aircraft begins a bomb run.

prevented them from bailing out. You figured that the Fifteenth Air Force put up 500 to 800 planes on a maximum effort raid, and they could lose 25 or 30 or 40 aircraft on a mission. You'd say to yourself, "The odds are pretty good." But, when you multiplied that by the number of missions you had to fly, the odds start going down.[22] So, what I had always said to myself was, "This could very well happen to me. I just hope and pray that if we do get hit, we'll have the opportunity to get out." So when that pilot said, "Go," there was no hesitation on my part. Right out the camera hatch I went.

We all got out [with] one broken leg—the copilot's—no direct wounds from flak or fighters. We all bailed out at a fairly high altitude. One of the reasons we went down is we went over the target at only 18,000 feet, as that was all the altitude the lead ship could get, so we all went over at that height. The pilot was the last to leave the ship, and on landing we were scattered over a mile or so radius. I remember getting the "psycho card" from my flight suit leg pocket and tearing it up in small pieces and scattering it to the wind. This card, of course, was the code that radio operators used to encode and decode messages.[23] I had no sensation of falling as we'd bailed out so high. I also remember reaching in my pocket, finding my smokes and lighting a cigarette. Then the ground started coming up, coming up fast. I could see the woods off in a distance, and that's where I planned to go. As I got down closer, I could see them [Hungarian farmers] coming from all over. I never got out of the chute. I landed, and they were waiting, all the farmers, and I got the hell beat out of me. They were irate, angry. We were rounded up and taken to a local town jail for the night. The next day we were taken to Budapest, Hungary, and incarcerated in a larger civilian prison.

We were interrogated, to a degree. I was placed in solitary for a few hours and then placed in a room with many other POWs, including my crew. It seems as though our air losses were so heavy that they were in a hurry to process us and get us on trains to Germany. This prison was the collection point for airmen shot down all over the Balkans and the Mediterranean area. A point to remember is that all air force POWs became automatic prisoners of the Luftwaffe. Ground troops became POWs of the German Army. The Germans even considered [those who

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[22]The Fifteenth Air Force flew 152,542 bomber sorties and 89,835 fighter sorties. The costs included 2,703 killed, 12,359 missing in action, 4,352 POWs or internees, and 2,553 wounded. See "The Statistical Story of the Fifteenth Air Force."

[23]The nickname "psycho card" was probably a corruption of cypher card or cypher-code card.

fired] antiaircraft artillery as air prisoners as the German Air Force handled antiaircraft guns. This caused some confusion over who belonged to whom.

After processing we were placed into groups of about thirty men and then taken by train to Stalag Luft IV in Germany, a journey that took several days.[24] We changed trains several times and crowds would gather . . . many of them wearing black armbands, and calling out "luft gangster" and "terror flyer" and such expressions as "Al Capone." It wouldn't take long before we had a pretty rowdy mob. The guards weren't needed to keep you from getting away, escaping, but to keep the local population away. They were a pretty upset group of people. You can understand. The air forces were the ones that were doing the damage, the RAF by night and, of course, [the USAAF] by day.

We knew more or less what camp conditions would be like because there'd been a couple of escapees from the German prison camps. We got some pretty good briefings on that. We knew pretty well what to expect, that the Germans would live up to the Geneva Convention after a fashion, except for certain individuals. The main job was to try to keep alive, try to keep from catching pneumonia or dysentery or some other sickness.

The Germans had a favorite expression, "For you the war is over." I heard it many times from them. I was in Stalag Luft IV up at Grosstychow near the Baltic. It must have had 10,000 Allied prisoners, maybe 8,000. They had four lagers [sections] which must have had 2,000 or 3,000 apiece. In the camp the only officers were medics. We had a British doctor, an American doctor, and a British chaplain. If we were prisoners of war today, the ranking man would automatically assume command. But then, it was very difficult for the Americans to pick—we didn't have any old soldiers with us, so we had an election and voted officers in. There were no master sergeants; the highest rank, to the best of my knowledge, was tech.

We did have military discipline in the camp. Our orders were to have a total, hands-off policy vis-à-vis the Germans. The decision was made: "You do not fraternize with them. If they ask you questions, give them a military answer. When they try to get close to you—they had guards specifically assigned for that purpose, ferrets—don't barter with them, don't offer them a cigarette from your Red Cross package, don't give them any, and keep away from them." This was the policy we had. Later, I got to a camp that was mostly British. They had the Germans under their thumb, totally corrupted them. The Germans were afraid that if they said any-

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[24] Stalag Luft IV was a prison where the Germans interned enlisted members of the U.S. Army Air Corps. It was located near Grosstychow in the northern part of what was, until 1990, East Germany. David A. Foy, *For You The War Is Over* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), pp. 62, 70.

thing, they'd get shot. There's another thing you have to keep in mind: the Americans, for the most part, were pretty new at this prisoner-of-war bit. We had Englishmen who were going on their fifth year. Theirs was an entirely different situation. I know we marched into this one British camp, and the British had the Germans so screwed up that they didn't know how many prisoners they really had.

I don't think there was a doubt in anyone's mind that we were going to win the war. It was a matter of surviving... which was unlike other wars. Unlike the Korean War or Vietnam War where people were prisoners for six or seven years and didn't have any idea of what was happening, there was no doubt in my mind, or in the mind of any other POW that I knew, that we were going to win the war in a matter of months or a year. That was all there was to it; I think that was the big difference. I was a prisoner for ten months.

## The 1940s and Segregation

**Kohn:** Was the experience of coming into the military from the civilian world a shock for those of you who entered after World War II? Chief Barnes, it was your first experience with segregation. I assume that in Chester, Pennsylvania, the schools and other institutions were partially segregated, but that legal segregation did not exist.[25]

**Barnes:** That's correct. I came from a mixed neighborhood. The high school was certainly a mixed high school. School was a quasi-segregated place, though more by choice than by requirement. So I experienced it first when I entered the service, and it was a shock. It was very different.

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[25]Blacks in the North and the South both faced the hardships of racial segregation. However, prior to the 1960s, the segregation experience was different for each. In the North, blacks faced informal social and residential segregation, while in the South segregation was enforced by law and extended across a much broader range of activities. In the North, blacks lived in segregated neighborhoods and attended segregated schools. No law, however, stated explicitly where blacks could or could not live nor did any law dictate the formation of all-black schools. Segregation existed in fact but not in law. In the South, in addition to a certain level of social and residential segregation, blacks also faced segregation mandated by law. Most southern states had "Jim Crow" laws which required the strict segregation of all public transportation, schools, and public accommodations. For example, blacks and whites could not share taxi cabs, eat in the same room in a restaurant, or sit in the same section of a theater. There were separate schools—primary through professional—for blacks and whites.

**Gaylor:** What I vividly remember about entering the Air Force... in my case was that everything that happened was an exciting adventure, something new and something different, even the three-day train ride from Indiana through Parsons, Kansas, and getting off the train to eat a meal because they didn't serve you on the train. From the moment we arrived at Lackland, we were told: "Get in this line, now this line." We had to get haircuts and shots, and they gave us a Bible and all of that business. Everything to me was just exciting, like being at a playland park or something. I recall thinking that it was fun; it was so different in 1948. The song then was, "Nothing Can Stop the Army Air Corps." We still sang that. We wore the OD [Olive Drab] uniforms, but we had an Air Force patch, of course, on our shoulder to identify that we were in the Air Force.

Commenting on the issue of segregation, Tom and I went through basic training about the same time, in the 1948-era. I lived in a single-story, tar-paper barracks. Basic training was twelve weeks long. One of the most exciting things was when we were on a ten-minute break, and somebody would say, "Here they come now," and here would come a flight of the black airmen, marching by on their way to the firing range down toward Kelly Air Force Base.[26] We'd all rush out to the edge of the street to watch them march by because of their cadence, their marching skill, and their ability. It was really something to watch. One time a guy in my flight yelled something that was probably racially derogatory. The TI [Technical Instructor] heard it, and that kid got stood and braced and told, "You will not say anything as they march by." There was a lot of redneck-ism. Believe me, there were a lot of the guys from north and south who strongly believed that segregation was, in fact, the right thing. Later, when they sent me to Waco Air Force Base, Texas, segregation still existed. The blacks had their own guard house, their own motor pool, their own dining hall. When integration took place in the summer of 1949, there was

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[26]Blacks were excluded from the Air Corps until 1939. In that year the Air Corps was authorized by law to expand and mandated to accept blacks within its ranks. Once in the Air Corps, blacks were assigned to segregated units. Only reluctantly did the service allow them to pursue flying or technical training. Mirroring the pattern in the Army, black airmen were, by and large, relegated to what were known as "pick and shovel" menial tasks. Generally, black units were commanded by white officers. Despite the often outstanding performance of black flyers in World War II (the 99th Fighter Squadron won three Distinguished Unit Citations and no bomber entrusted to the 332d Fighter Group was ever lost to German interceptors), Army Air Forces and then Air Force leaders proved reluctant to accept their contributions. The strict segregation of the races within the service continued until after the issuance and implementation of Executive Order 9981 in 1948. Osur, pp. 20–38; Gropman, pp. 1–127.

considerable aggravation.[27] I know that where I was, we were told that the first one of us that caused any problem that was racially-oriented would be subject to court-martial, and I think, for the most part, we got the word.

It was interesting to me because I grew up in Mulberry, Indiana, where I'm not sure I'd ever seen blacks. I'd never lived with them. I'd never gone to school with them. To me, they were different in appearance, but I had no reason to feel different toward them personally, so I couldn't accept why this segregation was taking place. To me personally, integration was somewhat of a natural thing. I couldn't understand why there was opposition, since I was an MP [Military Policeman] and by then had established some friendships with some of the black MPs. I can still recall vividly black airmen marching by and drawing comments. I remember one guy said, "Well, they might march good, but I understand they don't learn too quick. You know, academically they're slower and behind." That was the belief of many.

**Barnes:** I can support Bob in the things he's described to you. Both of us experienced different childhoods, mine in a mixed neighborhood and his with no exposure to any blacks. My first exposure to real segregation was in basic training; tech school was another experience. Friendships that developed in tech school on the base were shattered immediately outside the gate as establishments in the community were unwilling to accept blacks. As a black, you either lived with that attitude well or you didn't live with it well, and that shaped your success at the time. If you let discrimination become an internal issue for you, then early failure in the Air Force was a certainty. [Discrimination] affected your work. It wasn't so much that learning was difficult for blacks; instead, it was the stereotyping and the very real feeling that no matter what one did, it would have no real bearing

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[27]On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981. The document did not directly call for the integration of the armed services; rather it declared "equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services without regard to race" as national policy. When asked a few days later if this meant integration, Truman simply replied, "Yes." Even before the order was issued, the Air Force studied the possible ramifications of integration. The service already recognized the limitations and waste associated with a segregated force structure. Issued on May 11, 1949, Air Force Letter No. 35-3 spelled out the new policy of integration. Over the next several years, all-black units were disbanded and their members reassigned. The last all-black unit disbanded in June 1952. By most accounts integration of the troops proceeded rather smoothly. By the 1950s the Air Force was one of the most fully integrated institutions in American society. Gropman, pp. 86–142. See also McGregor, especially pp. 270–342, and Nalty, especially pp. 204–269.

anyway. Thus, it tended to affect one's learning ability early on. So, jobs and/or duties were decided on that basis—educational performance. Hence, the feeling and the actual fact that blacks tended to get the dirty kinds of jobs. While AFSCs [Air Force Specialty Codes] were not a factor at that time—MOSs [Military Occupational Specialties] were the thing—it was the source for what were later called, "Ghetto AFSCs."[28] Ghetto AFSCs were jobs of servitude, service-oriented jobs, and this is where blacks went.

**Gaylor:** If I might—just a quick story, jumping all the way to 1958. By then we were eight years into integration, and by then, for the most part, it had settled into the Air Force, at least in people accepting one another. In 1958 I managed the Lackland [Air Force Base, Texas] baseball team. We left Lackland on a bus to go to Alpine, Texas, to play three baseball games. I had three black baseball players. At a restaurant in Uvalde, Texas, we stopped to eat, and the guy said, "I'll feed the blacks, but they have to come around to the back door. They cannot come into the main restaurant. I'll gladly feed them. I hope you can understand that I can't allow them in." Once again, that was a surprise to me because by then acceptance of the racial situation in the military was far along, but this was happening in 1958. I said, "Then none of us will eat there, and you'll lose about fifty or sixty dollars of business." We got back on the bus and drove on into Del Rio and found a place to eat.

I remember, too, that when blacks did move into our dormitories, things changed. The music changed. Everybody had their own little record player with the seventy-eight RPM, and I was hearing different music than I had ever heard before. I was hearing Billie Holiday and Billy Eckstein. The smells changed. I just mean the cosmetics, for example, the shaving lotions. Noxema was very popular then. It was very common for blacks to have it. I remember some of them going to bed at night with Noxema on their faces and cloths over them. I'm not sure what the reason was.

**Barnes:** I can explain that later, and I will.

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[28]When the Air Force first became independent, it inherited the Army's Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) system used during World War II. The new Air Force, however, realized that the old Army system did not fit the newly independent service, with its many highly technical specialties and few enlisted combat specialties. In 1951 the Air Force introduced a revised system of Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSC), which eliminated unneeded Army jobs and defined new technology-based Air Force specialties. Bruce D. Callender, "The Evolution of the Air Force NCO," *Air Force*, September 1986 (Vol. 69, No. 9), p. 169.

**Gaylor:** Go ahead. I just wanted to say it was interesting.

**Barnes:** What Bob touched on turned out to be a major problem and a part of the turbulence in the sixties. For blacks the frequent requirement for shaving was, early on, a problem because of pseudo-folliculitis.

**Gaylor:** Which in the fifties we knew nothing about.

**Barnes:** We didn't know about it. Noxema was the only medicating cream that tended to soothe it to some degree. The shaving process was one that tended, given the natural tendencies of black hair to curl inward, to make the freshly shaven hair come out and turn in—the two ends of the hair went down into the face, the follicle end and the other end turned inward. That caused a razor bump. Shaving cut the bump, and the two ends of the hair were down. There was scar tissue which in time built up, and every time you shaved, you actually bled. But the requirement was to shave. Because this situation was little understood, when "mixed" TIs got into the picture; it was brutal. So the Noxema cream and the cloth over it, generally a hot cloth, was an effort to soothe the pain, but it hardly ever did.

The smells Bob talked about earlier probably had at one point a sulphur-like smell, maybe like rotten eggs. This was an early effort at a shaving powder, a depilatory powder, called Magic. Now it was scented and came in several strengths. It didn't shave; it drew the hair out. It was preferred as opposed to shaving. That was little understood and tended to become a part of the already strained relationship between the races, and an association of smells with blacks.

**Gaylor:** It gave ample opportunity for those who chose to comment to do so.

**Barnes:** It was really a rugged situation. Commanders and First Sergeants were very removed from this issue simply because of the authority figure of the corporal—like Don described—who was God Almighty.

**Gaylor:** You have to appreciate that we were in an open bay barracks. That point has not been made. We are not talking about rooms. We're talking about thirty-eight guys thrown together in one large room, with absolutely no privacy whatsoever. Even in the latrines, there were no stalls. My God, you sat knee to knee, six of you, in there, and that's where the phrase "———house rumor" started—a latrine rumor. It was a commu-

nity of sorts. You could sit there on your footlocker shining your shoes and look across and see what the guy was doing that was different, and say to yourself, "Isn't that unusual?" There were fights, sure there were, but, for the most part, they were covered up because you knew everybody would get into trouble. There were fisticuffs and shovings and the what-have-you-here when somebody would get a little too much to drink and come in and turn the lights on late at night with everybody else trying to sleep. I'm surprised we made it through as well as we did. I think there was a tolerance and an acceptance that at the time we didn't appreciate as we look back now.

**Airey:** When this whole integration program started, I was a master sergeant. We were briefed and warned that it would be our duty to suppress any type of racism. I think the Air Force handled it well, and it was a very smooth operation. First of all, no organization would have at that time a strength of over 10 percent black. Then it slowly developed into what we know today. It just did not happen overnight. We went to lectures and briefings prior to its happening.[29] That's why, I think, integration went into effect in rather a smooth transition.

## Enlisted and Officer in the New Air Force

**Kohn:** What was the relationship in those times between officer and enlisted? Is there a way to describe it? Also, I think we would all be interested, too, in the relationship between new airmen or new privates and the TIs [Technical Instructors] and the NCO. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**Gaylor:** I know in 1948 a corporal was God [laughter]. Our TI was a corporal. And officers, my gosh, when they said the lieutenant or captain was coming, that was the same as saying the Pope was coming. In my early

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[29]During the time between the issuance of Executive Order 9981 and Air Force implementation, all officers and NCOs were required to attend special orientations on race relations. Entitled "Negro Manpower," the lectures dealt with such subjects as encouraging those involved to "make it easy," brotherhood, and the contributions blacks had made and were making to the Air Force. Telephone interview, Janet R. Bednarek with CMSAF Paul W. Airey, Ret.

days there weren't that many officers, and they were really something. You never thought that some of them might have been idiots. It turned out some of them were, but you never thought that.

**Kohn:** You mean you never said it, or you never thought it?

**Gaylor:** You just assumed an officer was sharp—until you got to know him better. Then you found out that a lot of them didn't have their act together. The guys have heard me tell a story, and it's a true story. Sitting out on the back steps of our dormitory there at Waco, Texas, those NCOs who'd seen action in World War II did the talking and we listened. They used to tell me, "Shut up and listen, Gaylor." I remember being told, "The only way you can learn is to listen." One guy one time said, "What possibly could you add to this conversation that would be of any significance?" For the most part, when you were around those seasoned NCOs, they did the talking and you listened. I even fantasized that someday I'd get to do the talking. Then I went to the NCO Academy, and they told me the one thing NCOs have to do is shut up and listen. I remember raising my hand and saying, "I got cheated. I never got to talk when I was an airman; I was told to shut up, and now that I'm an NCO I'm told to shut up."

**Harlow:** The relationship between officer and enlisted at that time was structured. Unless you were a supervisor or a First Sergeant, you very seldom saw an officer or you very seldom talked to an officer.

**Gaylor:** What about the pay line?[30]

**Harlow:** In the pay line, sometimes you might. Yes.

**Gaylor:** If you had to report to one, that was serious.

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[30]During the 1940s and into the 1950s, enlisted personnel received their pay (in the early years in cash) once a month from the paymaster. Airmen would line up, then approach the pay table. Four feet from the table they would stop, salute, and, upon request, give their name and identification number. Depending on the size of the unit, this activity could take up an entire day. The pay line eventually gave way to twice-a-month pay, bank checks, and, finally, direct deposit into personal bank accounts. Interview, Janet R. Bednarek with Lt Col Vance Mitchell, USAF, Ret.

**Barnes:** I would support that. The officer-enlisted relationship was practically nonexistent.

**Harlow:** But they had fewer line officers in those days.

**Barnes:** That's correct. The mission was so different at that time, and there were so few jobs in which both worked together. On the other hand, going back to the NCOs, I certainly agree with Bob about the awesome impact of a two-striper, a corporal.

**Gaylor:** You had to call, "Attention!" when he came in the door.

**Barnes:** Yes. He was for all practical purposes something just completely beyond belief. But I think it was at that very early point that the desire for growth and attainment of corporal became every airman's, or private first class's, goal. Then, in reaching that plateau, the buck sergeant had still another stripe. The staff sergeant was, as far as the NCO corps went, a plateau.[31]

The officer-enlisted relationship for me became a reality after I got onto flying status in the C–54, which was a crew airplane.[32] I had to interface with officers. I found it to be, depending on the crews that I worked with, extremely good or extremely bad.

**Gaylor:** I would say extremely good, normally, in the air.

**Barnes:** Extremely good or extremely bad. There was no middle ground. When you had a crew that you learned to trust, and they learned to trust you because of the job you did, it was consistently good in the air and on

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[31]From 1947 until 1952, the Air Force's enlisted ranks were, like the Army's, private, private first class, corporal, sergeant, staff sergeant, technical sergeant, and master sergeant. In 1952 sergeant changed to airman first class (A/1C), corporal to airman second class (A/2C), private first class to airman third class (A/3C), and private to basic airman.

[32]The C–54 or Skymaster, a modified version of the Douglas DC–4, was used by the Air Force as a troop or cargo transport. This four-engine plane first went into production in 1942. In 1950 Douglas modified thirty of the planes to serve as air ambulances and the Military Air Transport Service used them to evacuate U.S. Korean War casualties from Japan to the United States. The C–54 carried a crew of six. *Jane's All the World's Aircraft, 1951–1952* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, Ltd., 1951), pp. 231c–232c.

the ground. You were in that kind of relationship that continued even with other enlisted crew members. The radio operator, particularly, and the flight engineer were very close. Everybody worked together harmoniously in the airplane.

I found in other kinds of flying later on, where there were not opportunities for a crew—for example, a period when the pilot had the crew chief flying in the right seat; this was during T-11 and C-45 flying—that it was a different story.[33] That kind of mission only involved the officer getting from point A to point B, and [the crew chief was] ancillary to that. Once you landed, he'd jump out. In those days the quarters situation for enlisted and officers was just drastically different. It was unbelievable. It was like the difference between living in a house and in a dog house.

**Gaylor:** When you went for your TDY [Temporary Duty] pay, there was a very definite difference.

**Kohn:** Enlisted got less TDY reimbursement?

**Barnes:** Absolutely.

**Gaylor:** Serving as crew in the air, there was tremendous teamwork and comradeship, but once you landed and went to sign into billeting, if you were at a foreign base, I guarantee you the quarters were different. The eating facilities were different. And the TDY reimbursements were different.

**Airey:** I'm going to take a little bit of exception to this discussion. In World War II, I ended up in a heavy bomb wing. I was an aerial

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[33]The Beechcraft T-11 Kansan served as a training plane for bombardiers and air-gunners beginning in World War II. It carried a crew of three or four and was similar in configuration to a C-45A. Also built by Beechcraft, the C-45 Voyager served as a military light transport aircraft. The twin-engine, six-to-eight-passenger monoplane could also be outfitted for vertical and oblique photography and had a range of 900 to 1,000 miles. *Jane's All the World's Aircraft, 1942* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1943), pp. 143c-146c. Chief Barnes spoke on the differences between serving as a member of a flight crew and riding as the crew chief in the right seat of a T-11 or C-45. On a crew airplane, each crew member had a mission in flight—flight engineer, radio operator, gunner. In the T-11 or C-45, the crew chief "went along for the ride." While in flight, the crew chief had no mission. His mission was maintenance of the airplane on the ground.

gunner/radio operator in a B–24, with six enlisted men and four officers.[34] By the standards of today, we had a very formal relationship and atmosphere between us. Of course, I liked it that way, personally.

**Gaylor:** Yes, but Paul, you used the word "exception." You're talking about the early forties, and we're talking about the fifties.

**Airey:** I think it was as I said. If you compare standards of flying crews, it was a very formal atmosphere compared to what we have today, and it continued to be that way. It just wasn't informal on my crew. I think it was formal in the majority of them.

**Kohn:** Despite the fact that this was a combat airplane and you all fought together, depended on each other in a combat situation, it was quite formal?

**Airey:** That's correct. I think it is, as I said before, very difficult to compare the past and the present.

**Kohn:** Let me ask you to turn to the period when Chief Barnes and Chief Gaylor were just coming into the Air Force. Chief Airey, you were then a senior NCO with World War II combat experience. What's your perspective on that relationship between the veterans and the new airmen? I'm speaking about the late 1940s, in terms of taking these kids who had no experience in war, and perhaps not even the foreign travel that you had. You had been in combat. You had been shot at. You had been shooting at people. What was your opinion of these new airmen?

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[34]The B–24 Liberator developed by Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation was a four-engine bomber used by the United States Army Air Forces, the United States Navy and the British Royal Air Force during World War II. It initially carried a crew of six or nine. During the war, the B–24 was modified to include a top turret gunner for a crew of ten. A modified "Liberator III" served as a transport. *Jane's All the World's Aircraft, 1942*, pp. 161c–162c; John W. R. Taylor, ed., *Combat Aircraft of the World from 1909 to the Present* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), pp. 462–464. On the B–24 every crew member but the pilot served as an aerial gunner during an attack. When not under attack, the radio operator, among other things, operated the radio direction finder and radio compass and communicated with ground personnel. *The Official Guide to the Army Air Forces: A Directory, Almanac and Chronicle of Achievement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), pp. 43–44.

**Airey:** That I can compare. The vast difference is that today we're taught to lead people. It was General George Patton who said, "Wars are fought with weapons, but they are won by men." This is why we're trained in leadership. In those days it was more of a harsh, "Do It!" type of thing. There was a certain amount of fear... rule by fear, yelling and screaming, where today we're taught to lead people. It's a vast change and for the good as far as I'm concerned.

**Harlow:** Let me tell you a story about the old Army and how it used to be. When we left Fort Devens in 1942 and were going to basic training in the Air Corps at Atlantic City, New Jersey, they woke us up at 4 o'clock in the morning—there were some 250 of us going on the train. We had breakfast at 5, and were at the railroad station with our duffle bags and everything packed at 6 o'clock. The train came in at 9:30. Between 6 o'clock and 9:30, it started to rain. We had blue duffle bags because they were making them fast in those days to handle so many conscripts. When we got to Atlantic City, New Jersey, and got to the hotel, it was beautiful. You know, we stayed in hotels in World War II. We walked into our rooms, and found a surprise; they were stripped of everything—no beds, no dressers, no rugs, nothing but a footlocker and a GI cot.

Well, we got into the rooms, opened up our duffle bags, and every one of the uniforms, our underwear, everything, had streaks of blue. The duffle bag had gotten wet and all of the colors had run. So, of course, we had an inspection the next morning. It took them about two weeks before they issued us new uniforms. You don't have that today. We don't have the troops waiting three and a half or four hours for a train or something else.

**Kohn:** In the leadership style at that time, did you have to establish a physical prowess over the men that you dealt with?

**Gaylor:** In some cases, some did. They might not have had to, but they did. "If you can whip me, you can be the First Sergeant." I've heard that.

**Harlow:** There was a master sergeant who was the crew chief in one of the first units I was in. One of the one-stripers, a PFC [private first class], was always late. This master sergeant didn't have to go to the First Sergeant for discipline; he just grabbed this kid one morning when he was late and said, "Come with me." He walked him across the field and went to the mess sergeant and said, "I want you to put this kid to work on the dirtiest job you've got for two weeks." He turned around to the kid and said, "Now if I catch you goofing off again, I'm going to get you court-

martialed." That kid stayed there for two weeks. All the master sergeant did was to call up the First Sergeant and tell him what he did.

**Gaylor:** In 1948 and 1949 World War II had been over about three or four years. "This was the war to end all wars."[35] There weren't going to be any more wars. So I think we have to ask, "Who was in the enlisted ranks in those days?" We had, I think, two categories of people: those who chose to stay in because for some reason they preferred to, and those young'uns like Tom and myself who were looking for a chance to travel, mature, and grow up a bit. Then we'd probably return to where we were from and settle down. I think we had those two categories—the crusty veterans like Paul, who'd seen action in World War II, and then the young kids like us.[36] In many cases we were looked upon as young, snot-nosed kids who really had never seen anything. "You've never been out of Peoria, Illinois." That's why I think we were told, "Shut up and listen. You've never done anything, and you've never been anywhere."

It might not be statistically correct, but I recall that in my unit in Waco, Texas, of about seventy people, few had a high school diploma. It was less than 20 percent; 18 sticks in my mind. I think, in fairness to those who did not, many of them left high school to fight in the war and then never had a chance to go back and get their diplomas. Later they did through GED [General Equivalency Diploma]. Many of them even went on and got their college degrees. But I think that it is important to ask: Who was in the military at that time? Then, of course, when Korea broke out in 1950, the force went from a rather small peacetime force to pretty close to two million within a year. Tent cities were opened at Sheppard and Lackland in Texas, at Parks, California, and up in Samson, New York. Then the force changed dramatically.[37] In 1948 and 1949 it was a little old

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[35]Although that phrase was usually used in connection with World War I, many felt that World War II would accomplish what the earlier conflict had not.

[36]In 1948 and 1949 the newly independent Air Force began to expand. The number of active duty enlisted personnel had reached a post-war low in June 1947, standing at 263,029, as a result of the post-World War II rapid demobilization. During the next two years, as the military in general expanded in the light of the dawning Cold War, the number of Air Force enlisted personnel expanded to 337,435 and then to 359,636. *Selected Manpower Statistics*, 1980, p. 84.

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| Numbers of Air Force Enlisted Personnel, Korean War: | |
|---|---|
| June 1950 | 352,085 |
| June 1951 | 678,806 |
| June 1952 | 847,737 |
| June 1953 | 837,667 |

*Selected Manpower Statistics*, 1980, p. 84.

sleepy Air Force. The most exciting thing going on was the Berlin Airlift, and unless you were a part of that you weren't really affected by it.[38] So, to me, there was a very dramatic change in mid-1950 when the Korean conflict broke out.

**Airey:** I'd like to back up something that Bob said. Suddenly we'd won World War II. By early 1945 we'd already won the war in Europe, and a couple of months later the bomb was dropped in Japan.[39] All of a sudden the war was over.

**Gaylor:** There was nothing to do, no wars to fight.

**Airey:** The main thing was that the United States Army Air Forces suddenly realized that we were going to have to become part of an army of occupation. Anyone who'd said in 1945 that in 1987 we'd still have several hundred thousand troops overseas, would have been thought to be out of his gourd. We suddenly found out that we were going to have to keep a fair-sized standing armed force in peacetime. So, immediately, a reenlistment bill came out.[40] You got out, Don. They offered men the chance to reenlist with the rank they held previously. We all had temporary ranks. The Air Force went on a major pitch to get people to stay in. Of course, I always had a liking for it. I wanted to stay in, and I did. What I'm leading

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[38]After World War II the Allies divided Germany into four zones of occupation: American, British, French, and Soviet. Berlin, the former capital, while in the Soviet zone of occupation, was similarly divided among the four powers. In June 1948, attempting to force evacuation of the city by the Western forces, the Soviets cut off all rail, barge, and highway traffic into the American, English and French parts of the city. The only remaining contact was by air, through three twenty-mile-wide air corridors. Immediately, the United States, England and France resolved to supply the city by air. From June 1948 until September 30, 1949, U.S. and British crews flying C-47 and C-54 transports airlifted 2.325 million tons of food, fuel, and supplies. Despite the round-the-clock schedule and adverse flying conditions, only thirty-one Americans lost their lives in twelve crashes. In addition to lives lost, Operation VITTLES, as it was named, cost $181.3 million. See Goldberg, pp. 235–241, and Roger D. Launius, "The Berlin Airlift: Constructive Air Power," *Air Power History* (Spring 1989), pp. 8–22.

[39]The United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, August 6, 1945, and the second bomb on Nagasaki, Japan, August 9, 1945.

[40]As part of the massive post-World War II demobilization, most servicemen and women chose to separate or join the reserves. In August 1945, Army Air Forces active duty personnel stood at 2,253,182 officers and enlisted personnel. By June 1946 the total had dropped to 455,515. It reached a post-World War II low of 303,614 in May 1946. *Selected Manpower Statistics*, 1980, p. 80.

up to is this: In order to get these people to reenlist, there would be no quality control programs. There were a lot of people who stayed and reenlisted who we were stuck with for the next twenty years, and who, by today's standards, would never be allowed to stay in the United States Air Force.

**Gaylor:** Some of them were criminals.

**Airey:** As I said, there were no quality control programs. Many of these people never did anything that you could court-martial them for or throw them out for, but they never did anything the other way either. We were stuck with a lot of them. The quality control program that Bob started talking about, came in at about the time of the Korean War. We started getting more selective.[41]

**Harlow:** I remember another thing about the officer corps. Between the end of World War II and, say, 1949—before the Korean War—officers were mostly pilots, and they had a few extra administrative jobs. But when the Korean War broke out, they took a lot of these pilots and gave them a specific job, like director of personnel in small units, and things like that. I remember that when I got recalled in 1950 and went to Travis Air Force Base [California], I was amazed at how little was actually being done in the personnel field. We used to have what was called the personnel report, the P-3 report.[42] When I got in there the captain I was working for at that time said, "You know, we've submitted a P-3 report for the last nine

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[41]In response to the critical manpower needs brought on by the Korean conflict, Congress significantly lowered the mental standards for induction. None of the services was pleased with that action. After 1953 each service apparently reinterpreted the standards, and rejection rates rose dramatically. In 1958 Congress further modified the standards to exclude more Class IV individuals from induction. The Selective Service divided potential draftees into four broad classes based on age, mental abilities, number of children, prior service, being a sole surviving son, and being a conscientious objector. Class I individuals were the most desirable to the services—young, single, healthy and with an above-average mental aptitude. Class IV were the least desirable—older, married, with dependents, and with certain physical or mental limitations. This measure, along with better pay and benefits, allowed the services to be more selective and helped increase retention. James M. Gerhardt, *The Draft and Public Policy: Issues in Military Manpower Procurement, 1945–1970* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), pp. 219–221, 236–237.

[42]According to Chief Harlow, the P-3 report was a monthly personnel report compiled from the daily reports.

months and we've never got one right yet." I had to get the personnel troops to work at night. We'd take the morning report and the P-3 report and start going down the page name by name before we finally got it straightened out. Before that war, everyone was relaxed. There was no war to fight, so it was "close enough." But then all of a sudden the Korean War started, and they started recalling these second lieutenants. I remember the first officer I had assigned to me after I got recalled was a second lieutenant, John Hood. He turned out to be a fine officer.

**Kohn:** Before we discuss Korea, I want to raise just one other early question, and that is family life. People weren't married, were they, Chief Airey?

**Airey:** Oh, yes.

**Harlow:** Lots of people were married.

**Gaylor:** No. Most enlisted people didn't marry. My gosh, you had to be a tech or a master. I don't remember a corporal or a buck sergeant getting married in 1948.

**Airey:** I think you're right, but let's break it down. Actually, in World War II, there were thousands and thousands of married people who got drafted or enlisted. But when we went into the peacetime years, very few of the young people were married. It was a different situation.

**Barnes:** Quite frankly, marriage was discouraged. It was also a barrier to flying, to OCS, or OTS at that time. If you were married, OTS pay would not support you and a family.[43]

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[43]The Army's first Officer Candidate School (OCS) opened in February 1941 to train exceptional enlisted personnel for commissions. It remained a primary route for advancement to the officer ranks until it closed in 1963. Between 1959 and 1963 the Air Force introduced a new system of training enlisted college graduates for the officer ranks. The Airman Education and Commissioning Program (AECP) paid for two years of college education. After completion, AECP-sponsored graduates and enlisted personnel who had otherwise received a college degree could go through the new Officer Training School (OTS) opened in 1957. OTS also provided training for civilian non-ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) college graduates. Col Donald J. Ferris, "Texas Training Ground for USAF Leaders," *Air Force*, March 1968 (Vol. 51, No. 3), pp. 96–100.

**Gaylor:** You had to get permission from your squadron commander. He had to approve, and he had to sign. Two guys that I joined with, Clyde Beaver and Eldon Skyles—we all signed up for three-year enlistments—got married to Indiana girls a year after they enlisted and were immediately let out of the service. There was a provision that if you got married and you were a one-striper, you could leave the service. And they did. They each served a year and have never been back in since.

**Barnes:** Marriage really was discouraged. Quite frankly, while we haven't said it, we've talked around it. I remember the old saying: "If they wanted you to have a wife, they'd have issued you one." That was the general feeling about marriage and family. So, there was little family life, in a direct answer to your question, during that period.

**Kohn:** Then, if you were a married airman or junior NCO, there was no housing for you, was there? Did you have to live off base?

**Barnes:** Yes. There was no housing.

**Harlow:** There was no housing to begin with. In 1943 I went back to Massachusetts and got married. The commander told me, "Now if you want to bring your wife down here, it's up to you. You've got to find a place to live, and she's got to find a place to live. There's nothing else. You make an allotment out to her. That's fine." That was it. They provided nothing.

**Barnes:** The allotment was the only provision. It was a big deal.[44]

**Gaylor:** Keep in mind the allotment was also an authoritarian action. The thinking was, "There's no way that we can trust an enlisted man to receive all his money and take it home to his family." So the wife got an allotment check on about the third of the month that only she could cash.

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[44]The allotment system allowed a portion of a serviceman's pay to be disbursed to a designated individual. There were several classes of allotments, including Class B for the purchase of U.S. savings bonds, Classes D and N for payment of premiums on life insurance policies, Class Q for support of a dependent (spouse or child), and Class QP for support of a dependent parent. For airmen, Class Q allotment payments were mandatory if the airman had a spouse or child; for officers, it was voluntary. *The United States Air Force Dictionary* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: The Air University Press, 1956).

**Kohn:** Simply because the institution did not trust the enlisted person?

**Gaylor:** Yes. The institution didn't trust you with the money.

**Barnes:** It was a mandated thing.

**Gaylor:** There's something else I think is very important. I spoke of the year 1948 as being different from 1950 when Korea broke out. My experience is a good example of the difference. I joined in 1948, made corporal in May 1949. I made corporal in eight months. I made buck sergeant three months later, in July 1949. Then Korea broke out, and everybody that was present for duty and breathing got promoted to make way for this mass influx of new people. I made staff in two years. Now, you talk to a guy who came in 1950, and you'll find that rank slowed down. As a matter of fact, the police career field froze in 1956. So timing was important. You say, "My gosh, Bob, you moved up the ladder fast." But I was sitting there, and they said, "Bob, here's another stripe."

At the small base that I was at—James Connally [Texas], which was changed from Waco to James Connally in 1949—everybody got promoted simply for being present for duty.

**Kohn:** Chief Gaylor, did that cause any problems?

**Gaylor:** Yes. There was the problem of having a very young NCO force at the time when the Korean War broke out. Here we were: I'm running around with four stripes on my arm and I'm twenty years old. There were no leadership schools and no leadership training, so the only way to go would be to stand up and say, "I'm the staff sergeant. You've got to do what I say."[45] The old "count-the-stripes-on-my-arm" business. You had to

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[45]Recognizing that NCOs needed more than just their stripes to effectively serve as leaders, the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) and the Strategic Air Command (SAC) opened the first NCO academies to prepare the new sergeants for roles of greater responsibility. In 1950 Gen John K. Cannon, Commander-in-Chief, USAFE, established the first NCO Academy in Wiesbaden, West Germany, to improve NCO leadership and management skills. The school closed, however, in March 1951. SAC began a more sustained effort at providing academies in November 1952 when it opened its first school in West Drayton, England. Other commands soon followed SAC's example. TSgt Harold L. Craven, "Schools for Air Force Sergeants," *The Airman* (October 1958), pp. 12–13.

literally inherit and practice the authoritarian approach because you didn't have the knowledge and the skills to use another approach.

**Airey:** Let me give you some of the rationale and the history behind that, Bob. When World War II finished, and Don will remember, they allowed every commissioned officer—pilot, bombardier, navigator—whatever his specialty was—to reenlist as a master sergeant, automatically.[46] This played havoc with promotions. There were no promotions until the Korean War broke out, or close to that time. Bob, you fell right into that period. But from 1945 until 1950, that five-year period, it was starvation. Then all these master sergeants who were officers got recalled back to their jobs as pilots or navigators.

**Kohn:** So they had been master sergeants for five years in the enlisted force and then...

**Gaylor:** Yes. The highest rank was master. Nobody could make master; it was all sealed up.

**Harlow:** Even all the warrant officers became master sergeants.

**Kohn:** We had warrant officers then, too?

**Gaylor:** They stopped making warrant officers in 1959 when the super grades came out.[47]

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[46]In 1948 the Air Force announced a program which permitted all veterans of any service to reenter the armed forces as part of the Air Force. If they qualified in any needed skills, they could reenlist directly in grades as high as technical sergeant. Former officers could re-enlist as high as master sergeant. *Air Force* (January 1948), after p. 48, inside back cover.

[47]When the Air Force became an independent service, it inherited the Army's career system which included the warrant officer (WO), enlisted personnel who had moved into top (supervisory) positions. The creation of the "supergrades," E-8 and E-9, in 1958 did not end the warrant officer system. However, nine months after those grades were introduced, the Air Force stopped promotions to warrant officer. In November 1958, the Air Force had 4,445 warrant officers, grades W-1 through W-4. The numbers diminished gradually over the next two decades and the last Air Force warrant officers retired in the late 1970s. Callender, pp. 168–173; *Selected Manpower Statistics*, 1959, p. 29; 1980, p. 74.

**Airey:** Only warrant officers, flight officers, and officers were allowed to reenlist as master sergeants, and that really—I don't want to use the other term—"flubbed" things up badly.

**Gaylor:** We had one in our squadron. He was a master sergeant, and he had wings and ribbons.

**Harlow:** I got discharged in 1945 as a staff sergeant. Of course, I was in the Reserves.

**Gaylor:** You see, here's the difference. Don chose to get out, as most did. Paul chose to stay in, as few did. He explained that he liked, as they used to say, "Three hots and a cot." You got three meals and a place to live, whereas Don said, "The war's over; I'm now going back to what I was doing previously." Then along came Korea, and guys like Don got a letter saying, "You are welcome to come back in. Please do." Many of those guys were immediately sent off to Korea, and those of us on active duty stayed in the States. A lot of the guys who went to Korea were out of Guard and Reserve units. I guess the Air Force figured they had previous experience and were best prepared to fight the war. So they were on their way to Pusan.[48] Those of us on active duty said, "Let *them* go to those 'far away places with strange sounding names.' "

## The Korean War

**Kohn:** Let's talk about Korea. You've already described some massive changes in the character of the enlisted force, the expansion, the change in ranks.

**Harlow:** That's when the officer corps started to proliferate. That's when we got a lot of line officers on board.

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[48]Pusan, South Korea, was the port of entry for U.S. and United Nations (U.N.) forces entering the country. When the North Koreans conquered most of South Korea, they left the area around Pusan, the "Pusan perimeter," the only area under U.S./U.N. control. T. R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), pp. 108, 158; Burton I. Kaufman, *The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), pp. 47–48.

**Gaylor:** Initially, Korea was a gnat on a mule's butt. Everybody said, "What's going on over there? Send a few people over there and quell that disturbance." America—the general population—never accepted Korea. It was just as I said, a gnat: "Go over there and swat it." Most people don't realize we lost thousands and thousands of men over there to death and injury.[49] It was the first war that we never won. The only people who cared about it were those who fought there, or the families of those who were there. The rest just sort of laid back and said, "What the hell."

**Barnes:** I think I can add some to what Bob has said about the attitudes concerning Korea since the organization I was in, which was a troop carrier squadron, prepared for a thirty-day TDY to Japan in support of U.S. forces in Korea. We were to fly from southern Japan, from Ashiya Air Base, to all of the Korean "K" designations, K-whatever.[50]

**Kohn:** We designated our bases by "K"?

**Barnes:** K-2, K-8, K-9.

**Gaylor:** Kimpo was K-14; K-55 was Osan.

**Barnes:** The preparations to move the entire organization were smooth. [They] took into consideration tools and equipment needed to support the airplanes, supplies necessary to support the airplanes, and personal belongings to carry one for the designated period. Thirty days, as Bob said, was the "attitude." That was what we went to do. Unfortunately for some, they took only thirty days' worth of belongings. Personally, I hate to leave anything behind. That's why I brought my bag today. I hate to leave

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[49]In Korea 33,629 Americans died in combat and another 20,617 in non-combat situations. Of those, Air Force personnel made up about 1,200 of the battle dead and 5,884 of other casualties. In addition, 102,284 were wounded (368 from the Air Force) and 5,866 were missing in action (859 from the Air Force). *Selected Manpower Statistics*, 1980, p. 153.

[50]During early operations in Korea confusion arose over place names. They varied as alternate names for the same place appeared on different maps. In July 1950, FEAF (Far East Air Forces) decided to give each airfield in Korea a "K-site" number in order to standardize identification. Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, Revised Edition, 1983), p. 65.

anything. I took everything I had at the time. Now, one of the major differences at that time was that in an overseas deployment, there were no civilian clothes permitted. That cut your baggage right in half. The civilian clothes that you could wear in the States, of necessity, needed to be sent home, stored, or something. I took my military belongings *in toto*, which was all I could take. At the end of thirty days there was an extension of another thirty days to deal with this action that Bob described, and then at the end of that, another extension. This went on for eleven months. Then they made my squadron return to the States "on paper" and sent another squadron over "on paper." We stayed in Korea. At the end of the eleventh month, the TDY ended and a PCS [Permanent Change of Station] went into effect, and my TDY overseas had become a very realistic overseas tour.

**Harlow:** Let's talk about the politics of that, too.

**Barnes:** That lay in the mindset of the Congress, the military services, and our society in general as regards the Korean War.

**Gaylor:** We never planned for that war. We fought it day to day, really. We never sat down and planned for it. As Tom said, we did after-the-fact stuff to justify what had already happened. If you were caught up in it, you said, "Goodbye, I'll see you later," to your loved ones, and you didn't know when that "later" might be because you might just end up at Okinawa. They flew some activities out of Okinawa and Japan.

**Kohn:** It must have been hard duty because the support structure wasn't in place, and that's a pretty harsh climate and a pretty harsh place.

**Gaylor:** It was harsh because nobody appreciated it. I was in Korea, and I went to Japan for a three-day TDY and the good life. They had $2,000 bingo jackpots and slot machines and 25¢ steaks, Kobi beef![51] Then you went back to Korea, and you didn't have any equipment. You froze to death. You brushed your teeth out of a canteen. Nobody knew there was a war going on except those who were immediately associated with it.

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[51]"Kobi beef" was a slang term for a generous prime cut of grain-fed, pen-raised beef. "Kobi" was a corruption of the name of a Japanese city, Kobe.

**Harlow:** I was in charge of the personnel records for the 5th and 9th Maintenance Squadrons. The word came down that the 5th Maintenance Squadron was going to go to Korea, so we had to prepare what they called mobility records—boxes to put the assignments in, orders, and everything else—and get them ready to go. Forty days later the word came down that, no, it was going to be the 9th Maintenance Squadron. So we go through the whole personnel process again, take the records out to issue new orders, sign the records off, put them back in the boxes, and get them ready to go. That occurred four times. The problem was that the officers and NCOs were being transferred from the 5th to the 9th, from the 9th to the 5th, from the 5th to the 9th.

**Kohn:** To avoid going?

**Harlow:** Yes. They didn't want to go.

**Harlow:** We had them all set up. The 9th was the one to go! I got a call at 6:30 one night. I was just getting ready to go home. They said, "The 5th Maintenance is leaving. Get their records ready." No time to transfer anybody. And that's what happened.

**Gaylor:** A point that may be of interest is that in June of 1950 when Korea erupted, there were those in the military who appreciated and enjoyed a good fight, a good skirmish, a good war. Some people thrive on it. It's the very reason for which they joined. They're disappointed if there isn't one. I happened to have a boss like that at Waco, Texas—our provost marshal, Maj. Albert Fallon. Shortly after the conflict broke out, we guarded the base water tower. We guarded the water pumping station. We guarded the fuel storage area. He convinced the base commander to supplement the police force with clerks and food service people. In addition to their duties they pulled guard duty. We fortified Waco. You could never have captured us. You could've overrun Taejon, Korea, but you would never have captured Waco, Texas. He was so excited and caught up in it. I'll never forget him. He used to hold briefings on "A slip of the lip might sink a ship," and "When you're downtown having a beer, don't say anything that would indicate troop movements." He was really excited that we were back into an actual war. I'll never forget it. Many of us said, especially if we walked around the water tower for eight hours, "Why are we doing this?" He said, "Because, you know, this could escalate into a war." That was a reality, and I don't think that Waco was the only place

where that happened. There were many who sort of got caught up in it; it was the opportunity to do their thing.

**Barnes:** I was away at a school when the announcement came for the organization I was in, the troop carrier squadron, to go to Korea. I was a hydraulic specialist at the time and had gone from McChord Air Base [Washington] to Great Falls Air Base [Montana] to learn the C-54's hydraulic systems. When I got back to McChord, following that school, the announcement to go to Korea came in mid-week, I think on a Wednesday morning. The squadron was assembled in a hangar, and our commander stood up on a B-4 maintenance stand and told us that Saturday morning the airplanes would be loaded and take off for Korea.

That was all the lead time you had. My point in mentioning this is that if you had a family, wherever it was, you had from Wednesday to late Friday night to settle whatever you needed to settle—to get the wife a power of attorney, which is about the only thing you had, and let her handle things.

**Gaylor:** If you had a family, you were the only one who cared. Nobody else did.

**Barnes:** Yes, you really had a problem and they gave you just that long. Saturday morning at the designated time, the first airplanes began taking off. Between that announcement and Saturday the entire priority of that squadron was in banding up equipment, getting it in, and getting our clothes stored and put away. In whatever time was left, you [handled] your personal affairs. I want to highlight and underscore my point: That Wednesday we got the notice and Saturday we moved out.

**Kohn:** It was a different time, a different Air Force, and . . . a different attitude then towards our people.

**Barnes:** Precisely that, a difference in attitude about people.

**Gaylor:** "Your butt belongs to Uncle Sam," was fairly well the motto, and you had to respond to it. It's interesting that none of us actually rebelled against it. We accepted it. I accepted it. I don't recall ever considering mutiny.

**Barnes:** I don't either, and I don't recall hearing anybody complain.

**Gaylor:** There was the griping, what I call the healthy griping—"Hurry up and wait," "Here we go again"—but there was an acceptance. "You signed on. You are here because you indicated you wanted to be. Now, get on with what we've told you to do."

**Barnes:** I think, too, that our acceptance, which was different from what would come later, was the product of our society. I think it had to do with school. I think it had to do with parent-child relationships, and of not questioning what you had to do. You just got on with the job. I think some things happened in our society later that caused a change. That's why there was no complaining. The product was reflected in the acceptance of the job at hand. Otherwise the country, militarily, would not have been as successful as it has been.

**Harlow:** In those days, many of the troops that came into the service lived better, some of them, than they did at home. They didn't have their own bedrooms. They didn't have a lot of things that they got in the Air Force.

**Gaylor:** One thing we haven't addressed is that in 1948 there was a provision that you could come in for one year and then you had a five-year reserve commitment. I would say half of my flight at Lackland in basic training in 1948 were one-year men. They were called one-year men—"Oh, you're a one-year guy." A lot of them were in my unit at Waco, and after a year they disappeared. The one-year program with the five-year commitment continued until Korea. Then they went from the three-year enlistment to the four-year enlistment.[52] So, there were a lot of guys who came in, spent their year, barely began to wear their uniforms out a bit, and then left the service and went back into a Reserve component.

**Harlow:** They also went into the indefinite enlistment, too.

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[52]The Selective Service Act of 1948 allowed a limited number of eighteen-year-olds (the draft age was then nineteen) "to enlist for one year of active training and service, to be followed by four years of compulsory service in an organized reserve unit (or six years in a reserve pool)." Gerhardt, p. 105.

**Gaylor:** Well, yes. You couldn't get out. You had the Truman year. You could either reenlist, or you were extended.[53] I reenlisted because the $150 bonus enticed me. I was able to buy a car.

**Kohn:** You figured you would get extended year-to-year anyway.

**Gaylor:** Yes. I was a Republican, and I wasn't going to let Truman put anything over on me! I said, "I'll fix him; I'll reenlist!" I did and bought a 1939 Chevy and lived happily ever after. That's another point. In 1949 in my unit at Waco there were four cars out of eighty people. The commander had a car. The First Sergeant, John McKay, had a car. A master sergeant, Buff Howard, had an old beat-up Buick. There was a staff sergeant with a Cadillac, and to this day I've never figured out how he got it. For a quarter a person he gave us a ride into Waco; it was seven miles [away]. Four or five of us would chip in a quarter apiece, and he—Sergeant Daniel was his name—would take us into Waco, but not bring us back. He'd take us in, and then we'd hitchhike back or get back the best we could. There were no cars, and there were no families to speak of.

**Harlow:** There were a lot of camp followers.

**Gaylor:** Now that was the exciting part.

**Barnes:** Is that what you called them?

**Harlow:** In those days we called them camp followers.

**Kohn:** They were around every base?

**Gaylor:** Sure. You knew where they hung out. We got paid on the last day of the month. We were told, "Buy your toilet articles as soon as you get paid." Almost invariably you ran out about halfway through. Also, they

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[53]In order to expand the manpower pool rapidly, the Truman administration made several proposals including extending for one year enlistments due to expire during fiscal years 1951 and 1952. Other, more controversial, proposals included lowering the induction age from nineteen to eighteen and extending the involuntary service obligation from twenty-one to twenty-seven months. Gerhardt, p. 149.

told us, "Buy your cigarettes, so that you're not begging. And shoot whatever's left, after you pay your GI laundry, give a dollar to the Red Cross, and pay your jawbone poker debts." The rest was yours, and that amounted to maybe about twelve bucks, so you went to a lot of base movies at a quarter each and you played a lot of sports. That's when I got caught up in literally every competitive sport.

**Harlow:** The other reason for the ladies around the camps was they'd heard about the allotments. They were looking to get married, and then they'd get the allotment.

**Gaylor:** And some of them were just prostitutes. Oh, yes, you could fall in love. I had one guy who worked for me who was from Brooklyn. Every payday, he got a three-day pass. It would take him just that long to spend his money. When his time was up, he'd sober up and come back and work hard for twenty-seven days. He was our gun room man, our armorer. We facilitated things by giving him a three-day pass. He had a standing pass authorized so that every payday he was off for three days. He'd go do his thing and then come back and work like crazy the rest of the month.

In the 1948–1949 era you were able to do those things because we weren't fighting anybody. There was no threat of war, so the attitude was, "Don't get too heated up about it; take things easy." If a guy came to work drunk, you indicated he'd been given the night off. I remember that was a frequent occurrence—unless you didn't like him. Then you reported him unfit for duty: Article 104. What is now Article 15, the UCMJ [Uniform Code of Military Justice] hadn't come out yet.[54] So you really had to goof

[54]Article 104 under the *Articles of War* and Article 15 under the *Uniform Code of Military Justice* both outline a commanding officer's authority in the area of non-judicial punishment. They indicate what punishments a commanding officer may impose for minor offenses. The Continental Congress adopted the first Articles of War in 1775. These did not deal with non-judicial punishment. Despite a frequent concern over whether such action was legal, all summary punishment from 1775 unto 1916 was imposed without Congressional sanction. Congress added Article 104 in 1916 after concern was raised once again over the legality of summary punishment without statutory authority or due process. Article 104 essentially outlined the types of punishment that might be meted out for minor offenses. A revision in 1920 limited the duration of punishments to one week. After World War II Congress held a number of hearings on the military justice system and as a result adopted the *Uniform Code of Military Justice* in 1950. The provisions of Article 104 were incorporated in Article 15. The revised Article 15 contained a more detailed list of punishments, a provision extending the duration of punishments to two weeks, several exceptions for Naval personnel attached to or em-

up to get into trouble. They used to post on the bulletin board, "So-and-so, seven days restriction." That meant, "The rest of you read this so you know that you can be punished."

**Barnes:** I think what was interesting, too, at that time was that there was no double jeopardy. You could go in town and really screw up, and if you got back in the base gate, you were clean as a whistle. You had no relationship with the town. I'm serious. There were many dead heats in races with local authorities to the gate.

**Gaylor:** You may have had to lay low for a while, but you dared not go downtown.

**Barnes:** I need to clarify that I'm only making a point. I'm not saying that I did that! If I can digress a little bit, we're still talking about the late 1940s and early 1950s. I'd gone through basic training and been overseas and back. I didn't come back to McChord; I ended up at Westover, Massachusetts. The Air Force got new airplanes and I got out of C-54s and into C-118s. I had one of the first C-118s in the Air Force. They were so new, as a matter of fact, that there was no school, no FTD [Field Training Detachment], and I went for training to a Navy school. The Navy called the thing an R6D, if I'm not mistaken.[55]

At some point I got a TDY back to Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio [Texas]. San Antonio, because of the Spanish influence, became a place I liked. I was fluent in Spanish, so I really kind of enjoyed that freedom in the community. That became an asset to me later on. When I went back, I was in the 1708th Ferry Group, which ferried airplanes

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barked on a vessel, and it strengthened the rights to appeal and review. Article 15 is generally considered an improvement over Article 104. Capt Harold L. Miller, "A Long Look at Article 15," *Military Law Review* (Vol. 8, 1965), pp. 37-46; *Manual For Courts-Martial, United States Air Force, 1949*, pp. 299-300; *Manual for Courts-Martial, United States, 1951*, pp. 417-18. See also William T. Generous, Jr., *Swords and Scales: The Development of the Uniform Code of Military Justice* (Port Washington, New York: National University Publications, Kennikat Press, 1973), especially pp. 146-164.

[55]Douglas modified its DC-6 as a transport for the Air Force (C-118) and the Navy (R6D 1). In production until 1955, the military versions could carry 74 passengers, 60 stretchers, or 27,000 pounds of cargo. It featured controlled cabin pressurization and air conditioning, making possible the transport of perishable cargo at high altitudes. *Jane's All the World's Aircraft, 1959-1960* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 295-296.

around, and I made friends with a number of people, plus the other crews. The significance of this point is that instead of a First Sergeant, your crew commander was your direct overseer, your direct supervisor.

One day we went into San Antonio, down to Broadway near Breckenridge Park, which has been there a long time and has always been an attraction. There was a hamburger stand on Broadway, and I was riding in a 1949 Ford convertible with three flight engineers, and we drove in to get a hamburger. The carhops hooked the tray on the side of the car with the milkshakes and the hamburgers on it. As we sat there eating, we began talking generally about our jobs and the next mission. We went out on a rotational basis and picked up an airplane from a depot and delivered it to a command that needed it. You could dead head back—fly a commercial airplane back—or pick up another airplane that needed to go to the depot. We used Chico, California, and Tinker [Air Force Base, Oklahoma] and Davis-Monthan [Air Force Base, Arizona] as the three places where we dropped off airplanes and/or picked them up.

Then, the waitress's shift changed as we sat there eating. Our second order of hamburgers led to one of the biggest shocks in my life. While things, I thought, had settled down, the new waitress told the guy who was driving the car, "I can't serve you with him in the car." We just ate! It was ridiculous. "Why was this?" She answered, "I don't make the rules; I just carry them out." That was her attitude, different than the previous waitress, who made no issue of it. I said to my friends, "Rather than spoil it, I'll get out of the car and just wait for you guys." "No," they said, "don't do that. Stay in the car." I thought, well, we'll leave and go somewhere else, but that didn't happen either. They tried to order again, and she said, "I'm sorry; I can't serve your car." Then they said to me, "Tom, get out and go wait for us over there." I went right to the corner of the lot. I was standing right there on the edge of the parking lot when she brought the hamburgers and milkshakes and was going to hook [the tray] on the side of the car. I saw trouble coming. One of the guys hit the tray, and it spilled all the stuff on the girl. We didn't pay, obviously, and we wheeled out.

They called the police, who stopped us on Broadway for two things—that incident and speeding. The guy in the right front of the car got out, went around to the police officer, and said, "Do you see that bump on my nose?" This guy did have a bump on his nose. The police officer looked at him and said, "Yes." Then the guy said, "I'm going to put one on yours just like it," and hit him in the nose and knocked him down on the ground. That's when I learned about dual carburetors and three-quarter racing cams! I didn't know that kind of power was in that little Ford, but it was really hot. We got back to Kelly, and it all stopped right there at the gate. I remember that incident. It gave me some concerns about going back into town for a while.

**Gaylor:** I think you're still wanted, Tom, in San Antonio. I recall now reading, "Wanted For Assault on a Policeman."

**Barnes:** There were very bad relationships between installations and communities that surrounded them.

**Gaylor:** They put Wichita Falls, Texas, off limits once to the Sheppard Air Force Base people in the early fifties. The relationship was very strained—"GIs and Dogs Stay Off the Grass."[56]

**Airey:** Do you remember that to improve things they started paying the troops in two-dollar bills, to prove to the local civilians the impact of the money all over town?

**Kohn:** They issued two-dollar bills to the troops?

**Airey:** It wasn't every place, just a couple of commanders tried it. It silenced a lot of people because they saw all the two-dollar bills going through town.

**Gaylor:** Something else a little different that the airmen of today do not experience—and here they are sort of missing something—was the thrill of being at a processing place like Parks, California, for about six days, waiting to go overseas. It was the same at Camp Stoneman [California] or

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[56]Problems between Sheppard Air Force Base and the community of Wichita Falls, Texas, began during World War II. During the war, Sheppard housed thousands of young airmen, yet the base lacked recreational facilities. So, every weekend up to 20,000 young airmen left base for town. There they came into conflict with locals, especially young men, who resented the airmen's presence. Trouble continued after the base reopened in 1948 as a major training center. In 1959 retired officer and Rotarian Lt Col Floyd Taylor suggested that local businesses adopt the squadrons stationed at Sheppard. At his suggestion, the Rotarians adopted the 3767th Student Squadron. They invited members of the squadron to attend Rotary luncheons and purchased a television for the squadron's day room. Other local groups and businesses followed and by the program's twenty-fifth anniversary, fifty-eight local adopters were participating. Although the fact that Sheppard Air Force Base became the town's largest employer may have helped improve relations, the Squadron Adoption Program undoubtedly played a major role in turning around what had been a very unpleasant situation. TSgt Jim Katzaman, "The Growing Legacy," *Airman* Vol. XXIX, No. 6 (June 1985), pp. 32–35.

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**Airey:** McNamara[60] started one [of several reforms] during the Vietnam war, but the one Bob talks about was...

**Gaylor:** That one happened in 1954, 1955, 1956.

**Harlow:** This [Project 100,000] was when the hippies came in and everybody wanted long hair.

**Gaylor:** I got a bunch of cops in Laredo Air Force Base, Texas, that you couldn't believe. They'd come to work, and I'd put them on base patrol, riding with one another. You'd see them driving by, and one would have his head on the window asleep. You'd call him in, and he'd say, "What's wrong with that?" We were taking people into the force under Project 100,000—each service had to take so many Category IVs.[61] Before, we were handpicking and culling the volunteers; we now had to take these men, and they were being placed in the soft-core [non-technical] career fields, like the cops, the cooks, and the civil engineers. We ended up with problems. When was the Code of Conduct established?

**Harlow:** After 1956.

**Gaylor:** Sure. Why was it that we didn't need a code of conduct in World War II? Why all of a sudden did we need a fighting man's creed and code? Because society was becoming more permissive.

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[60]Robert S. McNamara was Secretary of Defense from 1961 to 1968 under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. While secretary, McNamara introduced a series of comprehensive management reforms, collectively known as the Planning-Programing-Budgeting System, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department of Defense. The idea was to eliminate duplication of effort in order to produce more defense with fewer resources. After becoming disillusioned with the war effort in Vietnam, McNamara left the Johnson administration in March 1968 to become the president of the World Bank. David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1969), pp. 214–240; McNamara, pp. 87–104.

[61]The armed services divided inductees into four categories based in part on mental ability. Category I individuals scored the highest on the exams; Category IV, the lowest. Generally, the services, especially the Air Force with its great need for technically trainable people, accepted Category IV individuals with reluctance.

**Kohn:** Well... the Code of Conduct came out of the perceived behavior, or poor behavior, of our prisoners in the Korean War.

**Gaylor:** Exactly, but it was a reflection of society.

**Airey:** Eleven prisoners of war decided to stay.

**Gaylor:** More than that, twenty-five or twenty-six.[62]

**Barnes:** Let me address that point about the prisoners because the attitude [of people] in Korea was very different from the [attitude] of people involved in World War II. What I mean is that we had a military capability in World War II and there was both the will and the commitment to use that capability as it developed. It wasn't a latent capability. It was a developed capability, ending, as Paul said earlier, in the dropping of the bomb on Japan. The American public has always been attuned to a return for its investment, and Bob described the investment as one that cost in lives in Korea. The investment was high, but the return was the armistice at the 38th parallel which is still there today. There was nothing that people could say, "This is what I got for losing my son, my daughter, my father, my husband, or my brother in that conflict." The American people as Korea went on were not supportive at all, and their attitude

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[62]Following the Korean conflict, the American public believed that American prisoners of war (POWs) had proven ill-trained to withstand the rigors of incarceration and interrogation. Press reports insisted that few POWs had demonstrated remarkable valor and gave great weight to the fact that twenty-one prisoners finally refused repatriation, choosing instead to remain with their communist captors. Later investigations disproved many allegations and sought to dispell misconceptions. However, at the time most Americans believed there was a serious problem. In 1954 Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson appointed an all-service committee to investigate. The following year Brig Gen S.L.A. Marshall, USA, Ret., with assistance from other members of the committee, wrote a new Code of Conduct which detailed how American servicemen (and now women) were expected to behave while in captivity and went beyond the ambiguous "give only name, rank, serial number and date of birth" instructions in effect before the conflict. President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the text of the code as part of Executive Order 10631 on August 17, 1955. See Albert D. Biderman, *March to Calumny: The Story of American POW's in the Korean War* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), especially pp. 1–26 and Maj G. S. Moakley, "U.S. Army Code of Conduct Training: Let the POWs Tell Their Stories" (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, June 11, 1976), especially pp. 21–50, 101–122.

impacted on the behavior of the prisoners. I think there were disgraceful acts that occurred.

**Gaylor:** It was a different war. There was an inhumanness over there from the people we were fighting.

**Barnes:** It differed from the kind of clear-cut lines in World War II.

**Gaylor:** If you'd gone to Korea in the fifties, you'd have sworn that the fighting was to have "the other guy take it." You couldn't imagine fighting to win that land. Korea was a desolate place. It was a horrible place. There was nothing there. It was just cold and barren and desolate and horrible and ugly.

**Barnes:** That's what caused the change in attitude towards the prisoners and the breakdown. It was truly different.

**Gaylor:** "I didn't come over here to get shot. I just want to get out of here."

**Barnes:** The *Airlift Times* showed a PIO [Public Information Officer] sign on the side of an airplane after a salvage was done, and you had people right over there in the middle of the war, typing and reporting day by day. This influenced the fathers of the kids who later came along and gave us disciplinary problems. The fathers felt bad about their own involvement in a no-win war, knowing about [our] capability, [our] hands tied behind our backs. We couldn't cross the Yalu River. We could chase airplanes to that point but couldn't follow them across.[63] This generated a mindset in America that partially carried on into Vietnam. As we hit a second war where we weren't using all of our military capability, it got worse. The kids

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[63]In order not to widen the war, the Truman administration restricted the air battle to Korea. For example, Chinese bases were strictly off-limits even though they provided sanctuary to attacking MiGs. U.S. bombers were confined to targets south of the Yalu River, the border between China and North Korea, and had to exercise extreme caution. Few restrictions, however, were placed on the types of targets that could be hit within North Korea; an exception was the dam system (used for both irrigation and power generation). Policy makers felt that an attack against the irrigation dams would be an attack on the food supply and, hence, an attack on the civilian population. Gen William M. Momyer, *Air Power in Three Wars (WWII, Korea, Vietnam)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), pp. 5, 56; Futrell, *Korea*, pp. 667–669.

were vehement about not going or getting involved in somebody else's war for nothing. It was the Spock era.[64] We believed in the "betterment of my kids compared to me." All of this together served to create a reaction in a generation of people that went through the military; it was a problem.

## The 1950s and Strategic Air Command

**Kohn:** Could I ask you about what peacetime conditions were like in the Air Force from 1953 to the early sixties, how it was different from what you remembered in 1948, 1949, and 1950?

**Harlow:** These were very trying times because of the lack of promotional opportunities.

**Gaylor:** What happened was that the Air Force appreciated the hard-core career fields, those that were related to the mission, like maintenance, while the soft-core, like the cops, were a turn-off. When they said to you, "You're in a soft-core career field;" they were sort of saying, "You're not as important as this guy over here." What they did to the police field, for example—and in others too—was they simply froze it. They said no one will be promoted to staff, tech, or master until this freeze is lifted. In some cases it lasted two or three years.

**Harlow:** Six or seven years in some fields.

**Gaylor:** Had I not made master when I did, in April 1956, I may never have made it because right then it froze. Once again, timing. That was

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[64] Dr. Benjamin M. Spock, physician and educator, wrote one of the most influential guides for parents ever published. *Baby and Child Care* appeared in 1946 and deeply influenced the generation of parents who raised the so-called baby boomers (children born between 1946 and 1964). The permissive style of child rearing outlined in the book drew both critical acclaim and condemnation, especially as many of the children raised "according to Dr. Spock" joined the youth movement in the 1960s. During that decade, Dr. Spock gained increased notoriety as he participated in the anti-war movement on the nation's college campuses. He was arrested and convicted of conspiracy "to counsel Selective Service registrants to unlawfully, willfully, and knowingly neglect, fail, refuse, or evade service in the armed forces of the United States." See Jessica Mitford, *The Trial of Dr. Spock* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), especially pp. 1–17, 195–205.

something that had to be faced. It was a dilemma that the Air Force couldn't handle. Another thing, a lot depended on what command you were in. I was in Air Training Command, and it was sort of soft, the good life. If you were in SAC [Strategic Air Command], that wasn't the good life. You had ninety-day TDYs to North Africa. You had ORIs [Operational Readiness Inspections], and you had other commitments.[65] So, [there were almost] different air forces within the Air Force. It just happened that you were affected by where you were.

**Harlow:** General LeMay said that SAC was the Air Force.[66]

**Barnes:** In the mid-fifties, I was at Andrews in a mission called CRT, which was Combat Readiness Training. The mission at Andrews supported Pentagon pilots who were desk-bound. The unit also supported the Air Research and Development Command, which was headquartered at Friendship Airport, near Baltimore. In support of that there were B–25s, C–45s, T–11s, and "Gooney Birds" at Andrews's 1402d and 1403d Flightline Maintenance Squadrons.[67] I was doing maintenance in that period, supporting those organizations. The flying in the Combat Readiness Train-

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[65]Strategic Air Command (SAC) in the 1950s constituted much of the nation's nuclear deterrent and as a result maintained a state of mobility and constant readiness. In order to be prepared to go to war at a moment's notice, it trained frequently and intensely. Every SAC unit rotated overseas for a period of ninety days every year and frequent Operational Readiness Inspections (ORI) kept the command at a high state of readiness at all times. Goldberg, pp. 126–127. See also Walton S. Moody, *Building a Strategic Air Force* (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1995).

[66]General Curtis E. LeMay entered the Air Corps in 1928 as a flying cadet and received his regular commission on February 1, 1930. In October 1948, he became Commander-in-Chief of Strategic Air Command. During his nine-year tenure he built it into the world's finest long-range bomber force. In July 1957, he left to serve as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Four years later he rose to the position of Chief of Staff. He retired from active duty on February 1, 1965. Gen LeMay died on October 1, 1990.

[67]Named for the famed proponent of air power, Brig Gen William "Billy" Mitchell, the B–25 Mitchell first flew in 1940. Built by North American, the B–25 could reach a top speed of 322 miles per hour. The plane's firepower was steadily increased throughout World War II. One version of the plane carried a 75mm M-4 cannon, "the largest weapon ever installed on an American bomber" up to that time. Gen James "Jimmy" Doolittle flew a B–25 on his historic carrier-based raid on Japan in April 1942. Lloyd S. Jones, *U.S. Bombers, B–1 to B–70* (Los Angeles, California: Aero Publishers, Inc.), pp. 84–87. The C–47 transport, developed by Douglas, was known officially as the Skytrain and popularly as the Gooney Bird. A modified version of the DC–3, the twin-engine plane carried a crew of three

ing was tied to this difference in air forces that Bob mentioned earlier. I think that's a key point. Don mentioned that SAC was building up then, and it was becoming renowned as the command it is today. On the other hand, ATC [Air Training Command], during that period was referred to in terms of the acronyms, "American Toy Company," "Allergic to Combat." It had that kind of reputation. It was a Sunday kind of an operation; on Sunday everything just closed up.

On the other hand, the ninety-day TDYs that Bob referred to were simply caused by the airplane's structure. Non-global airplanes... required a posturing or positioning in a forward location. It was the same for many of the other commands. Yet, at the same time, because of that requirement, SAC experienced some very bad things along with the good. For example, it had at that time the Air Force's highest divorce and separation-from-the-service rates and family problems because of these TDYs. Also TAC [Tactical Air Command], as it became global and its capabilities turned around, inherited these problems. TAC still has to do the posturing of its airplanes in some forward locations, and its forces must operate on an extended away-from-home basis. That kind of experience beset the Air Force in this interim time period.

Then, abruptly in 1958, we got into what was then commonly referred to as the Lebanon crisis, and the whole world went on alert.[68] It changed my life in that I left the maintenance effort at Andrews and went to SAC

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three and could handle 6,000 pounds of cargo or twenty-eight fully armed paratroopers. The C–47 and a modified gunship version, the AC–47, saw service in the Southeast Asian conflict. The reliable "Gooney Bird" is still in service in parts of the world, especially Africa and Asia. *Jane's All the World's Aircraft,1951–1952*, pp. 234c-235c; Carl Berger, ed., *The United States in Southeast Asia, 1961–1973: An Illustrated Account*, pp. 5–6, 8–9, 12, 18–19, 22, 25–26, 28–29, 40, 44, 56–57, 61, 64–65, 105, 108–109, 123, 127, 130, 169, 217, 247, 255, 261–264, 302, 314–315, 318.

[68]In early 1958 a rebellion broke out in Lebanon culminating in general political unrest and rioting by May of that year. The stability of the Middle East was further imperiled when on July 14 forces favoring the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nassar assassinated the king of Iraq. The President of Lebanon and the King of Jordan both requested U.S. assistance. The United States responded on July 15 by sending naval units, a battalion of Marines and Army airborne, tank, and combat engineer troops to Lebanon. The Air Force provided airlift and logistics support. In addition, two F–100 squadrons, one B–57 tactical bomber squadron, and one RF–101/RB–66 composite tactical squadron deployed to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. The situation stabilized and U.S. forces were withdrawn by October 1958. Maurice Matloff, ed., *American Military History* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Military History, Army Historical Series, United States Army), p. 580; Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: A History of Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force, 1907–1984*, Vol I, (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1989), pp. 610, 612; Roger J. Spiller, *'Not War But Like War': The*

at Loring, Maine. I went from the kind of flying I was talking about earlier into B-52s. There were airborne missions of an alert nature which were coded HARD HEAD and CHROME DOME.[69] They were twenty hours and thirty minutes in length on the one hand, and twenty-four hours on the other hand. The airplanes took off, went to an orbit point, orbited, and then were refueled. They flew in extra crew members to keep them there. The expansiveness of our air capability was really developed during that period.

**Gaylor:** That was when they built the DEW [Distant Early Warning] Line, the early warning system across Canada; millions and millions of dollars were paid for it.[70] Thule, Greenland, was an exciting place to be. Sondrestrom [Greenland] and Goose Bay, Labrador—those were all SAC assignments that were classics.

**Barnes:** They were the places to be. That was a very interesting period between 1953 and 1965.

**Kohn:** At this time all of you were then becoming senior NCOs. I want to ask Chief Airey, since by now you were an experienced First Sergeant, whether you saw a change in the kind of leadership style that was necessary from the 1940s. While you were in a peacetime Air Force, SAC was faced with a very tough, demanding "peacetime" mission. Earlier, you spoke of the permissiveness in society. The service contained draftees in

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*American Intervention in Lebanon* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Leavenworth Papers, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, January 1981), pp. 1-45.

[69]HARD HEAD and, more commonly, CHROME DOME were nicknames for SAC's twenty-four-hour airborne alert. In part a response to the Cuban missile crisis (October 1962) SAC began a program of "24-hour flights and immediate replacement of every aircraft that landed. All bombers... were armed with nuclear weapons." The airborne alert continued until 1968. Office of the Historian, HQ SAC, "The Development of Strategic Air Command, 1946-1986" (September 1, 1986), pp. 107-108, 153.

[70]In an effort to improve the air defense system of the United States a series of radar lines were built across Canada to warn of approaching Soviet aircraft and missiles. These radar lines included the Pinetree Line just north of the U.S.-Canadian border, the Mid-Canada Line, and the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line near the Arctic Circle along the 69th parallel. Construction began in 1955, and the DEW Line became operational August 1, 1957. The Pinetree Line, built by the United States, was completed in 1955. Canada completed construction of the Mid-Canada Line in 1957. See Goldberg, pp. 133-135.

the fifties, or draft-induced volunteers—not the volunteer force of today. And we were drawing away from the Army; that is, the Air Force was gaining its own character and beginning to build its own enlisted culture. Can you recount some experiences?

**Airey:** Of course... the forefathers of the United States Air Force were very smart people. When the service was formed, we became the United States Air Force. There was no corps of engineers, no medical corps, no quartermaster corps.[71] We were one United States Air Force. We had these people who did these various jobs, but there was just one Air Force. From that period on to the period you're leading up to, slowly but surely, the United States Air Force was formed, getting its own ideas, its own customs, its own traditions. In this period, and once again it was a very traumatic time, we had people who retired or got out because they couldn't stand the differences. Overnight you went from soldiers to airmen. Slowly but surely the stripes changed.[72] There were several other changes. Once again, some people couldn't stand [them] and they left. When you look back, it wasn't that long a period of time. From that time on we started opening the NCO Academies, and we started our management and leadership training. About this time, the late 1950s, we started the United States Air Force as we know it today. We started to lead people, not drive them, and it was a decided change that slowly but surely evolved.

**Kohn:** You and Chief Barnes were or had been flying crew. In the fifties the enlisted force was heading towards a force in which the predominant flying crew, the predominant people in combat, were officers as opposed to a mixed force of officers and enlisted. What changes did this cause? Chief Harlow, you were in the personnel business, was there a change, and did it cause any leadership challenges, or differing identifications within the enlisted ranks?

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[71]As the United States Army developed, it needed officers with special skills—engineers, medical doctors, supply experts. For each evolving skill the Army created a branch or corps of officer specialists. When the Air Force became independent in September 1947, it adopted a "One Air Force" organization in which officers were commissioned into and enlisted personnel were members of the Air Force. Although they performed specialized jobs, they were all part of "One Air Force," not a specialized branch or corps.

[72]In 1948 the Air Force adopted a V-type grade insignia, replacing the Army stripe. In 1949 a new blue uniform was approved. The new uniform also eliminated the shoulder patch common to Army uniforms. Callender, p. 169.

**Barnes:** I think it caused differing perceptions as crew airplanes became a factor. When B–52s got into the system, gunners were a factor; as the KC–135s entered, boomers were a factor; and as the cargo airplanes got into the force with loadmasters and flight engineers, the inclusion and the acceptance of crew members created, quite frankly, an elite class of enlisted people.[73] The difference was the additional pay. You drew some additional pay, the hazardous duty pay which you were eligible for per diem, bad as it was, nevertheless, you got it. Then there was always something about . . . a different kind of garb, and flying suits, as opposed to fatigues, were distinct. [They] kind of placed you in another category. So, yes, the perception was there that flying crews were something a little apart from the rest of the corps.

**Gaylor:** You pulled an alert if you were in SAC, and that made you different.[74]

**Barnes:** So, there were some differences in . . . the uniform. [We had] the ability to wear more emblems and to display other things, for instance, ascots. They were all distinctive marks, and they were quite prideful things, to be very honest. But I think that the leadership wasn't necessarily different. There was an allegiance to the crew commander. There was a distinct separation where the First Sergeant was managing the rest of the organization and the operations officer was managing the flying part. It tended to separate squadrons. There was a better relationship with opera-

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[73]The B–52 began development in 1946. Eight different versions, the B–52A–H, were produced by Boeing before production ceased in 1962. This eight-engine long-range heavy bomber carries a crew of six and can reach a speed of over 650 miles an hour and has a service ceiling of over 50,000 feet. The plane, also known as the Stratofortress, still provides the bulk of U.S. strategic manned bomber forces. Modified for conventional bombing, it played a key role in the Southeast Asian conflict. Marcelle Size Knaack, *Post-War II Bombers* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1988) p. 205; *Jane's All the World's Aircraft, 1959–1960*, pp. 260–261; Berger, pp. 40–41, 45–47, 49, 51–62, 64–65, 70–71, 81–82, 86, 89, 94, 98–99, 105, 108–111, 114–119, 130–131, 134, 141–143, 146–147, 149–167, 201, 203–209, 217, 221, 232, 252, 255. Boeing privately developed the Model 367–80 as a demonstrator tanker-transport. When the Air Force ordered the plane (designated the KC–135), it gave Boeing clearance to build concurrently a commercial version of the aircraft which eventually evolved into the Boeing 707 family. The KC–135 solved the problem of refueling jet bombers, fighters, and reconnaissance aircraft. The first all-jet tanker-transport, the KC–135 could refuel a B–52 and an F–4 at their normal speeds. *Jane's All the World's Aircraft, 1959–1960*, pp. 257–259.

[74]"Pulling an alert" meant being assigned alert duty.

tions, I think, with flying crews that had enlisted people on them, than with administration, who really ran things.

However, if you were in field maintenance in a support organization, what did start to happen was that these NCOs gained comparable rank to the First Sergeant. There were some awkward leadership dilemmas for First Sergeants, particularly in organizations after the grades E–8 and E–9 came. You had maintenance superintendents at E–8 and E–9 levels and the First Sergeant was at the E–7 level. The commander had to really look carefully at how he supported his maintenance superintendent, for example. If the First Sergeant said, "Kohn, get Barnes back up here to clean up his room," and the Wing Director of Operations [DO] or the Director of Maintenance [DM] or somebody else might say, "He's got an airplane to fix down here." The airplane was the mission. This created some leadership challenges.

**Gaylor:** Now imagine, if you will, a SAC wing. I'm at Columbus, Mississippi where, of course, the emphasis is on the crews. They're the reason the base is there. Everything is dedicated toward launching that airplane and rightfully so, but in building that elite feeling among the group, whether you realize it or not, you're downplaying the importance of the others. As a result, a lot of the crews resented my cops. They saw them as a barrier to getting on their airplane. They had to show their line badge—"What the hell, we come out here every day. You know us." "You have to show your line badge." "If you people would get out of the way. . . ." A lot of my guards felt, "I hope somebody blows up your aircraft. I don't care." There was no feeling of solidarity. In 1964 we tried something at Columbus, and I don't know if it had been tried elsewhere, but it was meeting with the crews to attempt to share with them our role as policemen. We wanted the policemen to be an extension of the crew, ground members of the crew, if you will. We enjoyed some success in bridging the gap that existed. But I'm sure that divisions throughout the Air Force where the emphasis was on the crews, somewhat inadvertently created a feeling. . .

**Barnes:** You alienated a lot of people.

**Gaylor:** "Alienated." That's a good word. You did, and not purposely, but it happened. In your attempt to promote the distinctive importance of the crew, you created that. Leadership, in many cases, wasn't able to cope. . .

**Barnes:** It was a problem. In direct answer to the question that you asked about leadership challenges, yes, that caused one.

**Harlow:** We had another problem there, too. We lost some good flight engineers and some good people on the aircrews. We lost a lot of good maintenance people, especially during Vietnam. The crew members were pretty well taken care of in promotions. On the maintenance side, if you had a reciprocal engine specialty as a secondary, and yet you [had a] primary specialty in jet engines, the recip people kept going back to Vietnam. The ones who stayed here in the jets were getting promoted, so, that created a problem which had to be fixed—and it was fixed in a hurry because after a year of that we lost a lot of people who came back from Vietnam and said, "The hell with this; I'm going."

**Kohn:** In the late 1950s the grades of E–8 and E–9 were created. Do you remember that occurring in 1958? What was the purpose of [creating those grades] from your perspective at the time, and what impact did it have?

**Harlow:** It was started to open up promotional opportunities, number one—which were pretty slim at that time. Even though it was intended to give more responsibility and some authority, that really didn't occur for a long time. All that resulted was more pay and so forth. There were still warrant officers in the Air Force. In fact, one of the questions asked of me right after I retired was, "Why do we still have morale problems in the Air Force?" My perception was that we had colonels who were doing the jobs of chief master sergeants, lieutenant colonels doing the jobs of senior master sergeants, and majors doing the jobs of master sergeants in many areas. It took a long while before some of these things changed. Today we have a commandant of the Senior NCO Academy and we have commandants of many of the NCO Academies that are chiefs. That is a change.

**Airey:** The E–8s and E–9s were hailed as a major breakthrough, of course. I'd been a master sergeant for many years when Congress finally approved these two grades [and caused] some very serious complications. Number one, "they," the people that run the United States Air Force, decided that these promotions were going to be slanted toward certain career fields. In some career fields people had absolutely no chance of getting promoted. One of them was the First Sergeant. Now, heretofore, and Tom alluded to this fact, the First Sergeant was pretty much the top gun in any outfit, and all of a sudden he finds out he can't even make senior master sergeant because the new senior grades are going to go to all the electronics types. The cops were also left out. Once again, we lost some people who couldn't take it. I go back to the theory that everyone is needed to make one United States Air Force: cook, baker, candlestick maker, cop, crew chief, gunner, or whatever. But sometimes we fouled up

those programs. I, of course, was not eligible, which upset me. I was a First Sergeant. I had to qualify myself as a personnel man and pass that personnel AFSC in order to make senior master sergeant three cycles later.

**Barnes:** Where there were jobs needing very, very high grade structures, i.e. talent, the Air Force could get the job done for less money [by using NCOs]. But to NCOs it meant more money.

My perception of the warrant grade is that it was... caught in the middle. The problem was where this guy lived and recreated and all that. He kind of vacillated...

**Harlow:** He was neither fish nor fowl.

**Barnes:** I guess... when housing became more available, it was hard to figure where this guy really fit in the picture. He'd lived in officer quarters, lived in NCO quarters, and as quarters and families became more important, the warrant officer became a handicap to the Air Force, in my opinion. So, this shift to E-8s and E-9s was driven by the budget and by an internal social situation that needed fixing. It did create alienation. It also created an aspiration; here was somewhere to advance. But, again, Paul's route in getting there was, as he described it, the same for many others. So, it wasn't readily accepted by everybody. On the other hand, it was there as bait, a rank to get to. It was an incentive.

**Harlow:** If you look at anything that the services do, or ask for, on Capitol Hill today, programs are created to attract and retain the specialties needed in the particular service, at the time. The only problem is those specialties change constantly because of the change in weapon systems.

**Kohn:** It's a dynamic concept and you change the personnel system to respond.

**Gaylor:** I look at it from a personal angle—I made master in April 1956. I'd had seven years, seven months service, which was somewhat unheard of —to be a cop and advance that fast. A lot of it I attribute to what I said earlier about being at the right place at the right time. There I was looking at thirteen years, at least, in the same grade. I had gone as high as I could go, so in 1958 at Lackland Air Force Base an officer said to me, "You don't want to be a master sergeant the rest of your career. Apply for warrant officer." I took the test for warrant, and my name went into the

hopper. I received the answer, "You've qualified; however, we aren't making any more warrants. Some new grades are coming out."

That was the first I heard of it and then, appearing on the scene in 1959, came the senior and chief. To me, it was, "Wow! I may not be a master all of my life." I didn't really want to be a warrant because I didn't like the term "Mister." I wanted to have a military rank. I thought at the time that this new system [would] open another door. In 1963, with seven years in grade, I made senior. I think, like we are all saying, the intent of the grades was to [let] people assume additional responsibilities. That didn't happen for a considerable period of time. Had it not been for Vietnam, I don't know when it would have happened.

**Harlow:** And you didn't get any more authority.

**Airey:** Chief master sergeants—E-9s—were supposed to take the place of the warrant officers, and doing away with the warrant officer program was one of the smartest things the United States Air Force ever did. I still get questioned about it. A certain segment would like to see it come back, and it's ridiculous.

**Kohn:** What did the warrant officers do, basically?

**Gaylor:** They were absolute experts in their area of endeavor. If you saw a warrant officer in the finance business, he could recite the manual to you. In the Air Police, we had Mr. Anderson, a walking book of knowledge, primarily because of his long tenure. He'd been working for twenty or twenty-five years in one field.

**Kohn:** Did they rotate assignments as often as other enlisted grades?

**Gaylor:** They replaced other warrant officers.

**Kohn:** Did they stay at a base? Did they homestead much more?

**Harlow:** Not necessarily. In World War II they were the specialists for the commander on special projects.

**Gaylor:** In World War II nobody stayed in the same place. It was a mobile force.

**Harlow:** That was the role of warrant officers. They were specialists for the commanders.

**Gaylor:** Yes, they found another use for them. It really downplayed what a warrant officer was. It was simply a grade that they assigned to helicopter pilots because the Army didn't quite know what else to do with them.

**Kohn:** May I ask some other questions about the 1950s? Didn't conditions improve? We started to have a stable base structure, started to get some family housing, and started to solidify the service. Can you remember much from that period?

**Gaylor:** That's one thing LeMay did. LeMay said, "If you're in SAC, you'll be taken better care of." When he opened the bases in the northern tier, they had better housing. It was good housing then. Now, some of it is antiquated. That's when we began to hear, "I'll work your butt off, but I'll take care of you." I've always felt that LeMay did a tremendously good thing for enlisted people by building up the SAC bases. Paul can comment on that better because he was at Grand Forks. On trips that I made from ATC bases to SAC bases, I found, for the most part, better facilities.

**Kohn:** Recreational facilities too?

**Gaylor:** Yes, because General LeMay was an outdoorsman—[he liked] pistol ranges and fishing lakes and that type of thing, racquet ball courts, anything that stimulated you physically.

**Barnes:** Let me answer the question from another perspective because some other things happened during that period. There began to be more humane treatment of families. Medical care for families in the mid-to-latter fifties was bad [with] long waits, and really not very good attention to family needs. Wives would wait inordinate amounts of time to be seen, no matter what their illness. Family medical care and dental care had no priority, and there had been very little focus or interest on it. As the other things began to develop, some attention got focused on it. Quite frankly, medicine for Air Force people, other than flying crews, who were seen by the flight surgeon, was a different kind of medicine, believe me, and a different kind of physical exam each year. If you had regular sick call, you just went and sat and waited until somebody called your name and you got seen. You may get the cursory tongue depressor and the venerable aspirin and go home. It wasn't even an aspirin at the time. It was an APC; you didn't get an aspirin. An "all purpose capsule," they called it.

**Kohn:** A placebo?

**Barnes:** No, it was an aspirin-type thing, but it was called an all purpose capsule, and they gave it to you for everything.

**Gaylor:** Rarely was anything called by what it really was.

**Airey:** And it cured gonorrhea, too, didn't it?

**Gaylor:** Oh, it cured everything, even ingrown toenails! "GI Gin" was the expectorant that would break up everything you had in your chest.

**Barnes:** That was the kind of medicine at the time, I think it's important to recall. On the other hand, the guy who got flying crew attention—the flight surgeon really looked at him. I shifted from one kind of medicine to the other when I really got into flying. There was absolutely a difference in the treatment.

**Gaylor:** My first two kids were born in civilian hospitals. My third was born in a military hospital, all in the same location. To back up Tom's point, in 1954 medical care for dependents was not available. In 1956 it became available at that same base... primarily [on] the doctor's whim. Some doctor would say, "Yes, I'll take a few civilians." But, other than that, it was, "Go downtown." There was no CHAMPUS.[75] I paid out of pocket for my first two children.

**Airey:** I want to make a point about medics and medical treatment. I can remember the perception that there were many people who were malingering, riding the sick book, and goldbricking. This type of person was rather rare. I can remember at one outfit I was with, anyone going on sick call had to go to the supply room with his mattress, his bedding, and his pillow,

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[75]CHAMPUS (Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Uniformed Services) grew out of the Dependent's Medical Care Act of 1956 which first gave the services responsibility for providing medical care for dependent members of the armed forces. In 1966 that program expanded to include not only dependents of active duty armed forces members, but also retired members, their spouses and children, and the spouses and children of members who died while on active duty or while entitled to retire. CHAMPUS provided civilian health care services and came about largely because of overcrowding at military hospitals and clinics. Ted Sturm, "Don't Overlook CHAMPUS," *The Airman* (April 1970), pp. 27–31.

and turn them in, regardless. You might have a broken finger or a fever. The idea was that putting you to all that trouble would keep you from going on sick call. We had many guys deathly sick with fevers or [other] illnesses. But that was the attitude some of the people had who were running things in those days. Certainly, you couldn't get by with something like that today, thank God.

**Barnes:** I think medical care was a major issue as things improved for the military. Medicine was very key, and it was kind of the first indication that somebody was really taking a look at what was happening.

**Gaylor:** Commissaries, BXs [Base Exchanges], it was just a very gradual upgrading. What it took was for somebody to start it at one base, and then the others said, "Why don't we have what they have?" It wasn't the whole Air Force at once that was upgraded.

**Kohn:** There was no Air Staff directive:[76] "There will be improvements in conditions?"

**Gaylor:** No.

**Barnes:** Another thing that took place in that period was the change—somebody will have to help me with the specific year—from [getting paid] once a month to getting paid twice a month. Everybody in the Air Force did it mandatorily for six months to see if it would work, and then after that the NCOs had the option of being paid once a month. Everybody else, once they really locked in the system, had to take their pay twice a month.

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[76]Army Regulation 95-5, which created the Army Air Forces on June 20, 1941, also created an Air Staff which dealt with aviation matters and policy. The Air Force Air Staff came into existence with the independent Air Force in September 1947. The job of the Air Staff is "planning, programming, policy-formulating, and budgeting for the Air Force and assisting the Secretary and the Chief of Staff in managing Air Force resources." It acts basically as a planning staff, but also has responsibility for "supervising the implementation of Air Force plans and policies by operating commands and agencies." Gen John C. Meyer, "The Air Staff," *Air University Review*, Vol. XXI, No. 2 (January-February 1971), pp. 3-9; Herman S. Wolk, *Planning and Organizing the Postwar Air Force, 1943-1947* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1984), pp. 21-22.

**Gaylor:** We stopped reporting for pay. First, it came in check fashion, then eventually, direct deposit.

**Barnes:** That was one of the improvements.

**Kohn:** Why was that done? What is the significance of that?

**Gaylor:** You could manage your money better. You knew you had some money coming in.

**Barnes:** Early on we said, if you recall, you got that check, and for the first three days of the month you were raising hell, and then for the next twenty-six or twenty-seven days you could be broke.

**Gaylor:** You cut your cigarettes in half so you'd have two.

**Barnes:** Yes. I never did take the twice a month deal. I got paid once a month even while I was stationed at the Pentagon. I just liked it better. But it was a big thing. The twice-a-month pay was highly sought after.

**Harlow:** Yes. But I remember, too, in the pay line that the manager of the NCO club sat in that line, and everybody who went through paid his bill at the NCO club. That's what the commander insisted upon.

**Airey:** I know it's old fashioned brown-shoe thinking, and, of course, I've changed, but at the time I was opposed to the twice-a-month pay plan.

**Gaylor:** Do you recall why?

**Airey:** With the organizational missions of the squadrons, it had always been difficult to get everyone together at any one time. But this once-a-month mandatory pay day gave us the perfect chance for everyone to get a good inspection and for the commander to see everybody. There were some troops, due to the shifts they were working on, that you never got to know unless you made a point of it. So, once a month at least you got to see them and make corrections on the spot because everyone came for his money.

**Gaylor:** I played the game from the other side. I could say, "They're going to see me once a month. Look sharp at that time, and say the right things." So, it became a game of "us" against "them." When the boss is around, look busy, look sharp, and do the right thing. That was one of the problems of leadership that had to be overcome. There wasn't trust. There weren't expectations. For the most part leadership's attitude was, "If we don't look at them once a month, they'll screw up," instead of, "If we don't look at them, they'll do it right because they've been trained right." It was an institutionalized fallacy.

**Airey:** It was a time to get together with people. Quite often on paydays we'd have a squadron function, get togethers, ball games, beer parties.

**Gaylor:** You've tempered it now with that follow-up comment, but at the time not everyone saw it that way. The First Sergeant said, "I've got to look at them." It was the same way with the clothing shakedown.

**Kohn:** What was a clothing shakedown?

**Gaylor:** That was an inspection in which you had to display your total issue of clothing. What we used to do, believe me, was relay a fatigue cap the length of the barracks. The First Sergeant would go along and say, "Everybody's got to have a fatigue cap," when, in fact, one fatigue cap stood the same inspection for the whole barracks. It was game playing, "us" against "them." It frequently went on because there was no communication of trust. It was the same with pay. "We can't trust them to make it home with their pay." Unfortunately, a lot of First Sergeants labored under that belief.

**Barnes:** Bob, why don't you explain for the record and history what that clothing shakedown was like when you did it in a hangar.

**Airey:** It was once a year, wasn't it?

**Barnes:** It depended on the organization. Sometimes it was spontaneous.

**Harlow:** It depended on the commander. Sometimes we'd have it once a quarter.

**Kohn:** We don't do it now, do we?

**Gaylor:** Oh, no. We don't even do it when we go overseas. That used to be one of the fun things at the port of debarkation. You had to have your clothes stamped, the black things with a white stamp, and the other things on the shirttail. Basically, it was an inspection to insure that you had those clothes that you were required to have in your issue—three pairs of fatigues, six pairs of drawers, knee-socks, and all of that business. At that time in the fifties, if you knew the supply sergeant, you had more than enough clothes. You could go down to supply and say, "I need another khaki shirt." But, otherwise, you had to turn one in to get one. You were required to have a standard issue of clothing. Normally, they'd blend the clothing inspection in with a stand-by inspection... so they could look at you and your clothes all at the same time. If you had all of your clothes, you passed. If you didn't, you had to buy them, bring them in and show your purchase.

**Barnes:** It was a real pain. In the hanger, you laid them out, and then they had the men standing by in productive work time displaying clothes. It was ridiculous.

**Kohn:** For hours on end?

**Barnes:** Until it was done.

**Airey:** It was particularly tough for that married person who lived downtown and had to haul every single thing out to the base.

**Barnes:** Everybody had to bring it in and display it.

**Kohn:** When did these inspections go out?

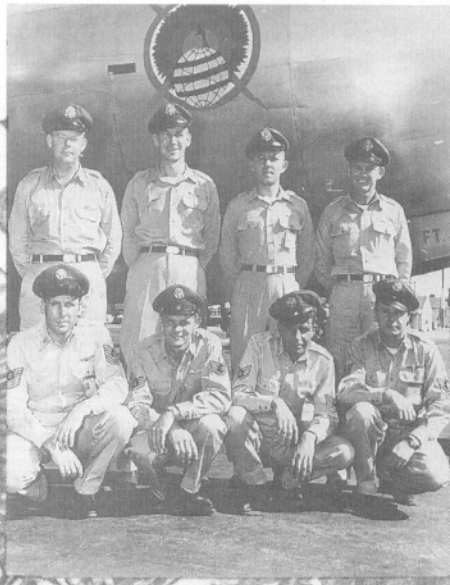
**Gaylor:** When I went to Thailand in 1966, we had a clothing inspection.

**Barnes:** It was that late; you're right.

**Airey:** But that was only when going overseas.

**Gaylor:** We used to have medical inspections.

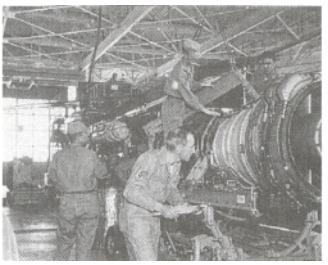
# The Enlisted Experience

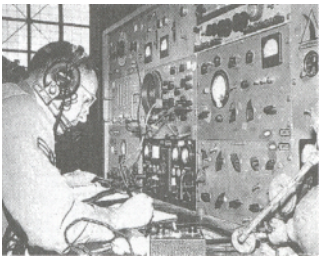


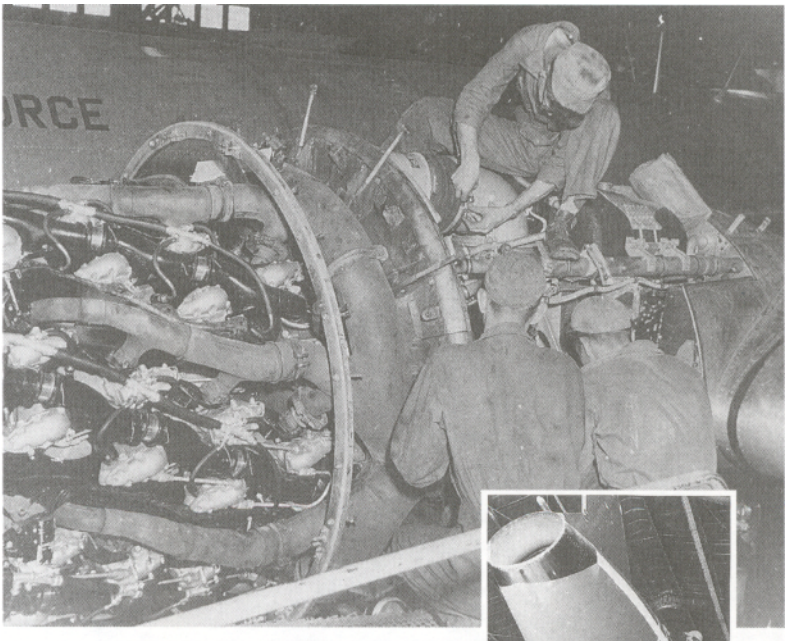
From the 1940s through the 1970s the U.S. Air Force faced unprecedented technological and social changes. With the full and enthusiastic support of its enlisted personnel the service met every challenge. This photograph of a stateside B-50 bomber crew during the Korean War captures what is so critical to the success of every mission in peace as well as in war—a spirit of camaraderie between both the enlisted and officer corps.

## Technological Changes

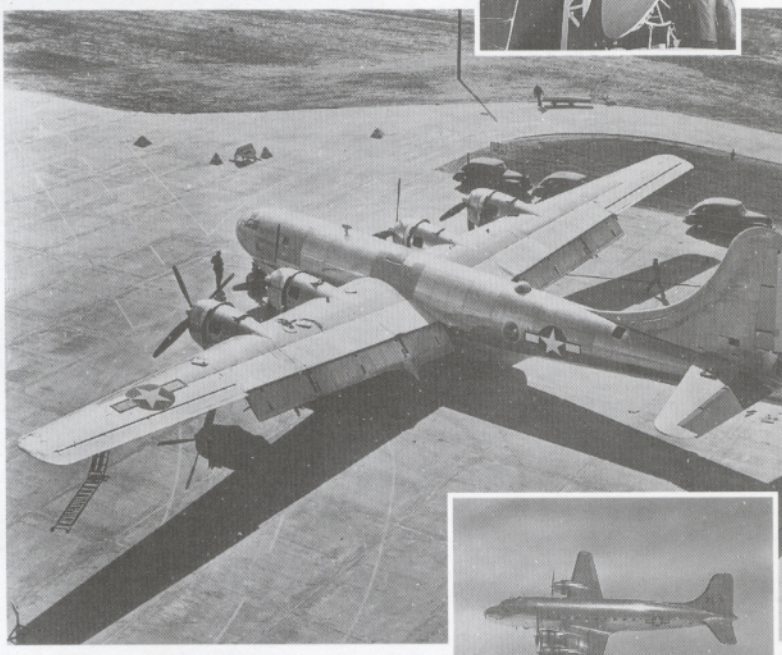
From 1940 to 1980 Air Force weapons increased spectacularly in complexity and capability. Successive generations of enlisted personnel met the task of maintaining a host of systems such as B-24 Liberator, B-29 Superfortress and B-52 bombers, C-54 and C-118 transports, the F-4 Phantom jet, and the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile. The ingenuity and skills applied by enlisted personnel from World War II through the Korean and Vietnam Wars to such sophisticated systems resulted from a commitment to learning and excellence.

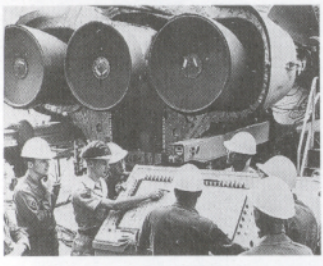


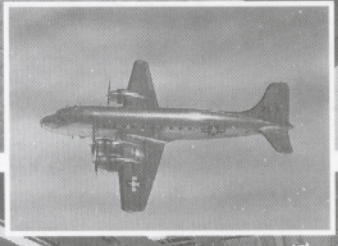


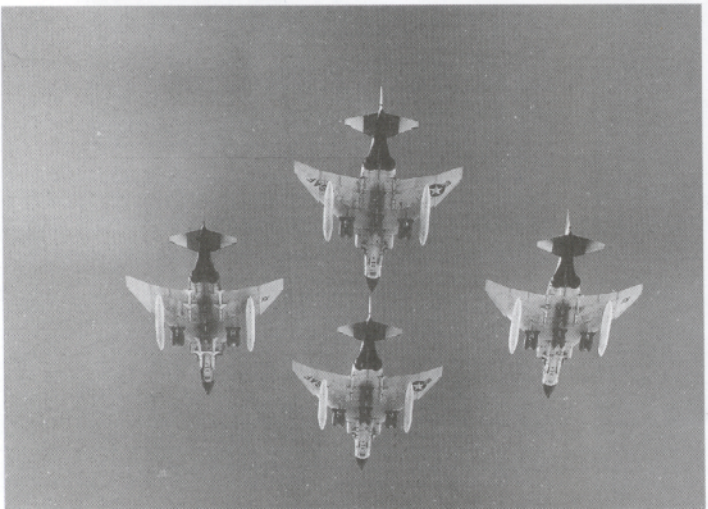



MILITARY AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE
U.S. AIR FORCE





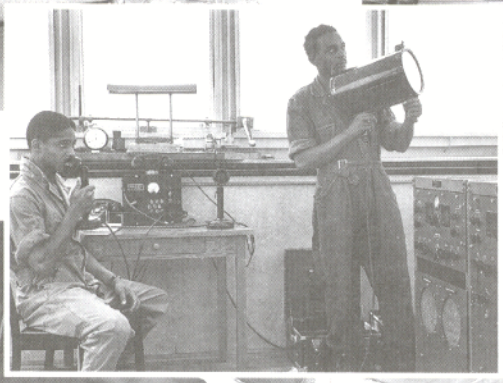


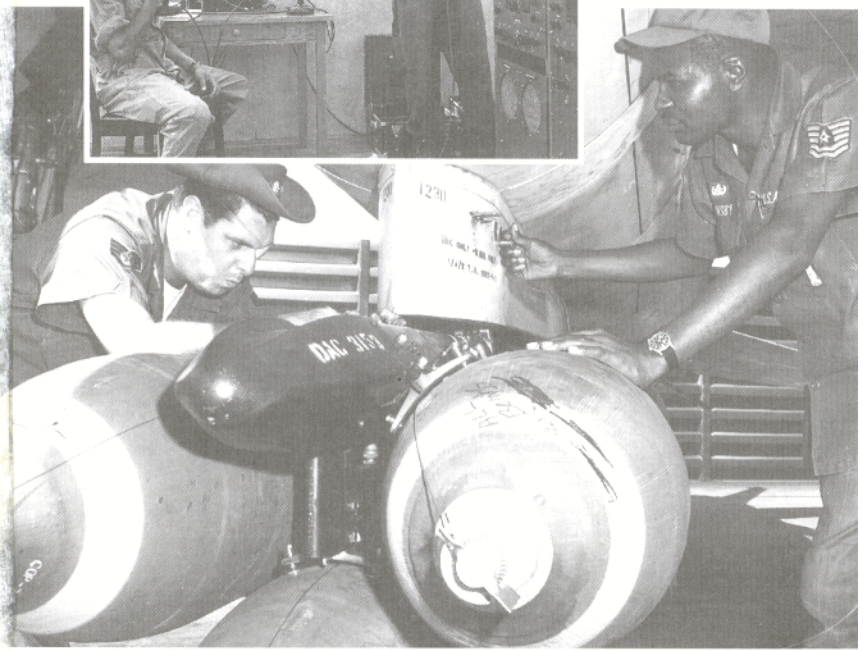


## Social Changes

By the 1950s the Air Force, to retain its competent enlisted force, began offering more opportunities for professional advancement. It established NCO Academies to prepare promising applicants for new positions in such career fields as personnel, administration, and security. Over the years, NCO Academies have introduced enlisted personnel to an ever-broadening curriculum whose courses now include military supervision and management, instructor training, communications skills, problem solving, military justice, world history, national security, human relations, and recognition and treatment of substance abuse.





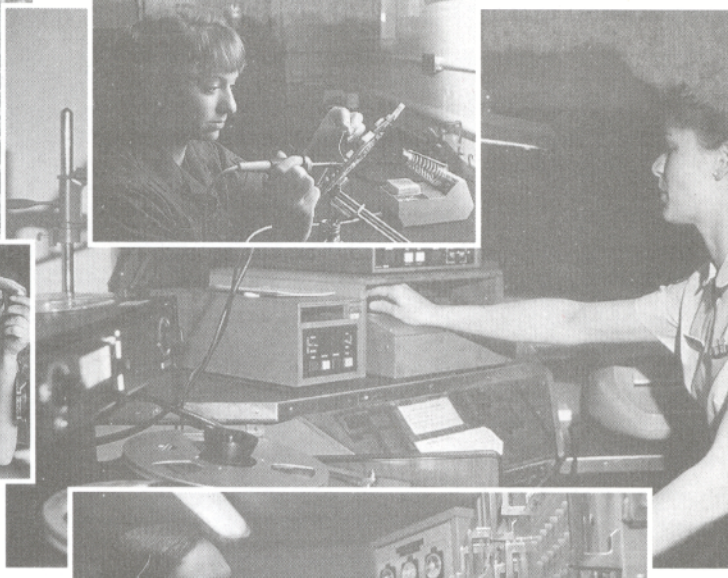
## Social Changes

**The official end of the segregation of blacks within their own units by the armed services, typified in this group portrait of Army military police at Fort Benning, Georgia, was declared officially ended in 1948 by presidential decree. The two Air Force enlisted men pictured working together demonstrate that racial integration in the military services proceeded far more smoothly than in society as a whole. Shown during World War II are enlisted men loading a B-25 with ammunition and operating a microphone and blinker light at the control tower of the Tuskegee Army Flying School in Alabama. With the Vietnam War, blacks and whites shared both the risks and rewards of military service as demonstrated by armorers loading Mk 117 bombs on an F-105D Thunderchief.**

## Social Changes

Women have served the nation's military air mission with distinction. During World War II their dedication was amply demonstrated by unprecedented numbers of women joining the fight, such as those shown in the central photo. Somewhere in England during World War II enlisted members of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) plot the courses of lost or damaged bombers, maintaining direct communications and guiding them safely back to base. The Air Force's restriction of professional opportunities for women imposed after the war depleted the ranks of what had become in the mid-1950s the Women's Air Force (WAF). By the mid-1970s, however, the service, reflecting growing social trends, began to open up a number of career fields to women. Enlisted women have proved up to the demands entailed by the varied duties pictured here.



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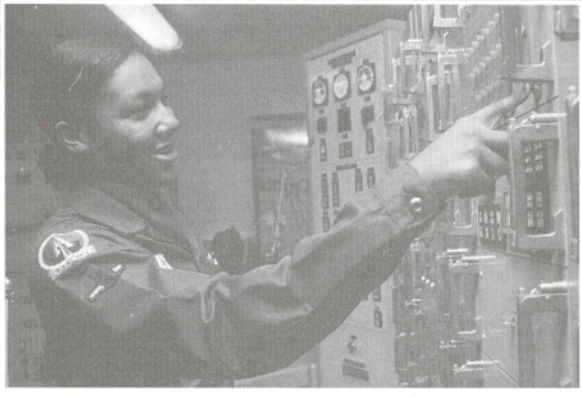
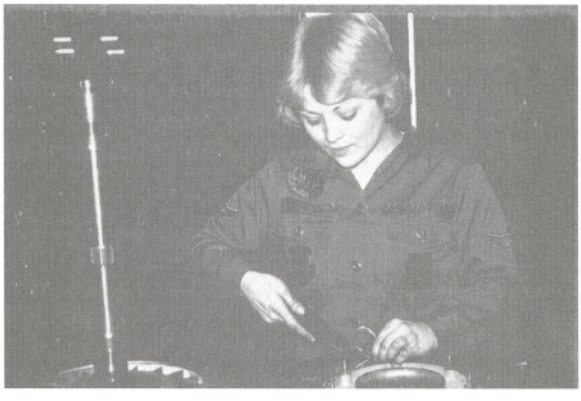




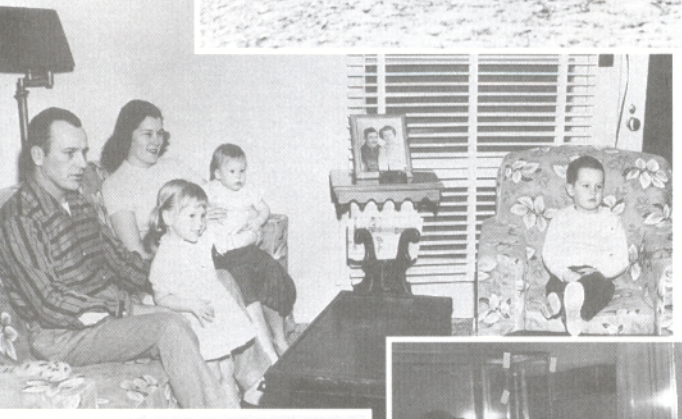
## Social Changes

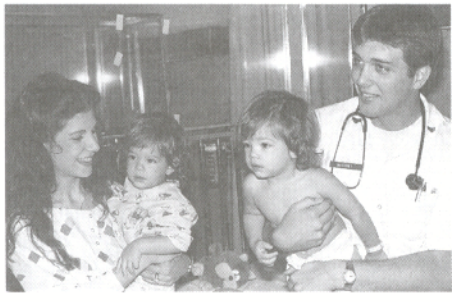
**The greatest frustrations faced by the Air Force as well as the Army and Navy from the 1940s through the 1970s lay in the erosion of public support for the U.S. military services. The photograph of a World War II-era mobile recruitment display, evoking the solidarity of the nation as the Army Air Forces attracted enlistees in countless American towns, stands in sharp contrast to the scene of radical activists outside the Pentagon in 1967 protesting the Vietnam War. The enlisted force itself increasingly mirrored the discord and conflict that swept the nation.**

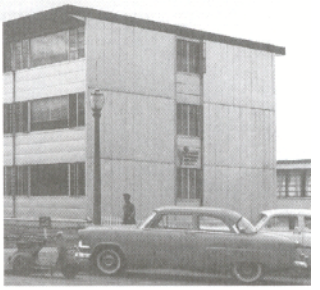


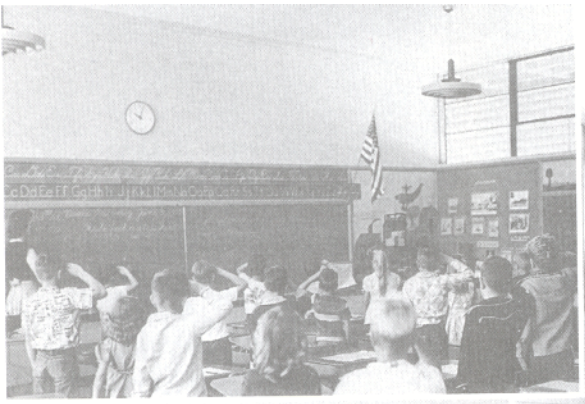

## A Great Way of Life

**When the Air Force was part of the Army and later a young independent service, any amenities were extended solely to its uniformed personnel–not to their dependents. The quality of those amenities varied greatly from base to base, as new recruits discovered on inspecting their tent accommodations at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, a key in-processing center during the rapid buildup for the Korean War. Eventually, Air Force families were allowed housing, clinics and hospitals, schools, exchanges, commissaries, libraries, theaters, churches, and social, recreational, and child care facilities at installations throughout the world. Buildings shown here and on the next page reflect the architectural styles popular in the United States from the 1940s through the 1970s.**





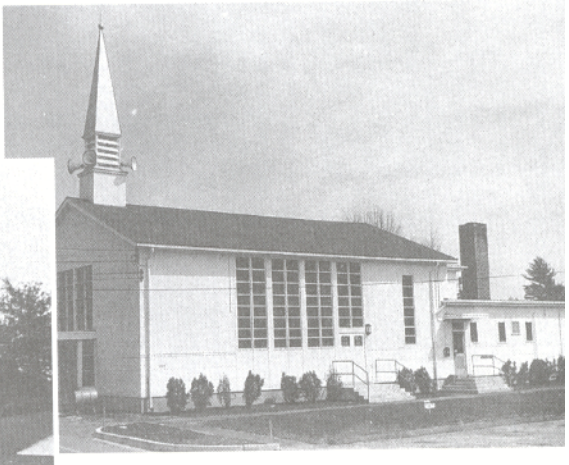


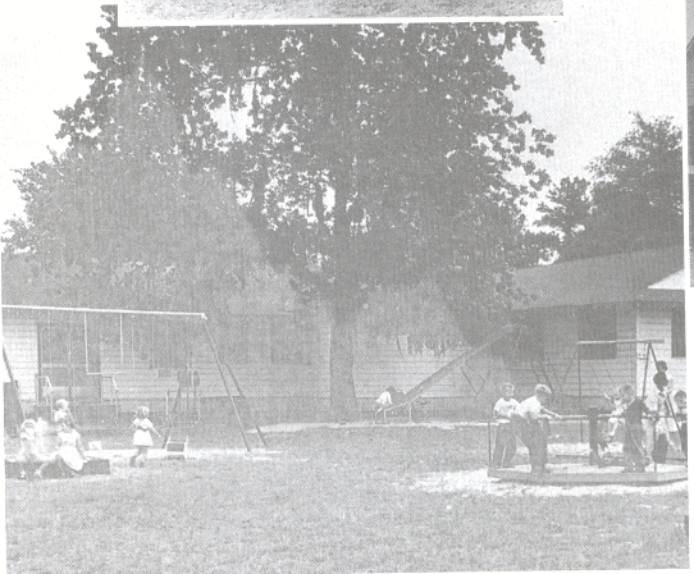



SERVICE CLUB
BASE LIBRARY


THEATER


BASE EXCHANGE






## Community Outreach

**Enlisted personnel have, as good neighbors, seen to it that the Air Force installations to which they are assigned are more than just economic assests to the localities surrounding them. Such outreach activities as the base tours, neighborhood clean-ups, pictured on this page and the next and even rescue missions have become traditions, cementing the friendship between civilian and military communities to ensure the smooth functioning of base operations.**


EMERGENCY UNIT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**Barnes:** They'd check you for communicable diseases and vermin. Before you came back from overseas, you had to have a certificate that said, "Paul W. Airey has been inspected this day and found free of communicable diseases and vermin." That was the truth. Everybody had to have those little slips every time.

**Gaylor:** There was no Social Actions office, either, in this era. There was no recourse. I once said to Captain Holowinski, "Sir, I have a problem." He said, "It's not your day to have a problem. When it's your turn to have a problem, your name will be on the bulletin board." I thanked him and walked out. There was no recourse to these mandatory things, so, you simply accepted them and went along with them to the best of your ability. There was no IG [Inspector General] complaint system.

**Gaylor:** Writing your congressman was almost a sin. If you wanted to become known around the base, you'd write your congressman and everybody'd say, "That's the guy who wrote his congressman."

**Harlow:** You had what was called a CI file, Congressional Influence.

**Airey:** You, Don, saw those as a personnel NCO?

**Harlow:** Yes. Way back in those days they were identified. They'd stamp them. That's all they did—no letters or anything—just stamp them "CI."

**Kohn:** This raises the question of the informal authority structure within the enlisted force, that is, those areas where you took care of yourselves, and it never saw the light of day. I'm not just talking about "behind the barracks." I'm talking about the informal nets. You remember the "Sergeant Bilko" TV show.[77] The theory was that there was a separate

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[77]Comedian Phil Silvers debuted as Sergeant Ernest G. Bilko in the CBS situation comedy *You'll Never Get Rich* on September 20, 1955. The popular show, renamed *The Phil Silvers Show*, focused on the ever-scheming Bilko, head of the motor pool, and his gang of enlisted accomplices at fictional Fort Baxter somewhere in Kansas. Week after week Bilko developed elaborate cons he hoped would help him leave the Army as a wealthy man. As the show portrayed life on the fort, Bilko practically ran things because the commander, Colonel Hall, proved virtually powerless to stop him. The show ran until July 19, 1959. Donald F. Glut and Jim Harmon, *The Great Television Heroes* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 141–144.

culture out there that the officers didn't know about, didn't care about, and which the system did not deal with—but you did as senior NCO leaders. You maintained it; you kept it going; and it was functional within the force. Would you talk about that?

**Harlow:** If people got drunk at the NCO club or anywhere, somebody would always take care of them, either get them back to the barracks or put them on the bus. Then that changed in the middle fifties. Nobody cared.

**Barnes:** I think there was such a culture. Senior non-commissioned officers began to appear in different organizations... recognized for taking care of situations. People would have a need, for whatever reason, so, everybody contributed each month a couple of bucks to a slush fund. If I got into trouble, then Don Harlow would give me twenty or twenty-five bucks out of it, and I had to pay it back. That was one of the things I had to do. And, yes, the commander never knew. I don't think breaches of integrity or security were tolerated. But I do think there were some disciplinary things that from time to time were handled within that informal system. It was kind of severe when we did it ourselves because the inference was, "This one is on me, but the next one is your ———," and we meant it. You got that message clearly and emphatically, and you got your act together. "If I have to deal with this with you again, you're on it." You did the correcting yourself. It really was a healthy thing. There were differences depending upon the organization and the kinds of things that took place, but I think there was an NCO system of sorts.

**Harlow:** I'll give you an illustration. I left Matagorda Island [Texas] in 1944 to go home and get married. It was wintertime, and when we came back, there was a terrific snowstorm, and we got held up in St. Louis. I was a day late, actually AWOL for a day, so I had to go and report to the commander. I told him what happened, and he said, "You have a responsibility. When you know that the weather can cause you to be late, you have a responsibility to leave earlier to make sure you don't become AWOL. I'll forgive you this time, but don't let it happen again. Just remember, you've got to plan ahead." That was it.

**Kohn:** In this kind of informal system, what was the role of the Security Police? The Security Police are a separate enlisted group that is responsible for the authority structure, and, traditionally, in military literature there is a division between the cops and other folks.

**Gaylor:** I was thinking about that as they were talking. In the late fifties, part of the key to my success as the senior cop on one base was the relationship I established with the First Sergeants and one that I enjoyed very much. It was an informal structure. I took it upon myself to call a First Sergeant and say, "I've got a person here who was in violation—traffic or uniform—but I think his intent was good. I think he meant well, and I simply wanted to turn him over to you informally." I'd do that frequently, and later, when I'd run into the First Sergeant and he'd say, "Bob, you'd never believe, that young man volunteered, insisted, on mowing the yard in the entire unit area for two weeks." That meant the kid was told, "Either do it or we process you formally." Of course, the kid chose to do it. I enjoyed that relationship.

[The system] was informal, and like Tom said, it was probably beneficial because it helped salvage a lot of people who might have gotten into trouble. Let's face it. When something gets on your record, it becomes a stigma. It might have kept somebody from eventually turning into a poor airman, so I enjoyed that. Also, it created a feeling that if I needed something from that First Sergeant, a gallon of paint or so, I could get it. Now, you have to be careful because it can become extremely political. You begin to do it for some and not for others. Eventually, it could explode and cause investigations.

**Barnes:** I want to address again the authority structure and put it in a little different perspective. There was at one time, as far as the police went, a carry-over from World War II when all of the military police forces combined to police sections of the cities. These military police forces were particularly prevalent in the "repo depo" areas in Pittsburgh and in California, as an example, where Camp Stoneman was located. You'd get an Air Force policeman working with Army and Navy cops.

**Gaylor:** It was called the Armed Services Police.

**Barnes:** The three of them went together. They kept order in the town, and they kind of started pulling together the town-base relationship. They were authority figures. When they came, they got everybody's attention.

**Gaylor:** MPs [Military Police] more than anyone. The SPs [Shore Patrol] didn't carry weapons.

**Barnes:** They'd yank you right out of a bar when the controls began on the ages for unauthorized drinking in certain places.

**Gaylor:** Off-limits establishments.

**Barnes:** Yes, they'd yank you right out. They were authority figures. The police image really got made in those settings where the guys were non-compromising in their job. I didn't like it then because they made me leave my change on the bar, and I didn't get it, but I got the picture later.

**Gaylor:** The thought was, "I'd arrest my mother if she were violating the law." There was somewhat of a blind dedication to the job. There was rather minimal tolerance. There were other things that happened that I didn't like. For example, we'd let fifty cars park at a certain place on the base for months, and then one day, we'd decide that it was an improper place to park in—maybe it was on a grassy area—and we'd write fifty tickets. Then the fifty people would come. "I've been parking there." We'd respond, "But it's wrong; it's a no-parking area." I was always opposed to that attitude—"I have the power to do it, whenever I want to do it." I always used to fight that, and sometimes my peers would take exception.

**Kohn:** Speaking of the authority structure, you explained your relationship with the First Sergeant. I want to ask Chief Airey about the perspective of the First Sergeant. You said in an earlier oral history interview that your favorite job in a long, distinguished career was being First Sergeant, and that you were a First Sergeant many times. What was your impression of this informal network from the First Sergeant's perspective?[78]

**Airey:** First Sergeant was my favorite job next to Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. I was a First Sergeant for many years. Like Bob brought out, I had a good, working relationship with the head cop, the medics, and the chaplain, because I worked with those people. I like to think we treated people, as much as possible, with fairness. We started to take on family problems and so forth. Yes, I had a good working relationship with all of those people because I knew they would help me get a job done.

**Gaylor:** A good First Sergeant was worth more than his weight in gold, a good First Sergeant who really cared about people. He'd rip your knickers if you were out of line, but if you had a problem, he was the one to go to. I was fortunate to have some of each. Matt Kronz is still one of my heroes,

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[78]Chief Airey was interviewed in March 1981 by Hugh N. Ahmann, USAF Historical Research Agency's Oral History Division. (K239.0512-1267)

and I still correspond with him at Christmas. In 1954, 1955, and 1956 Matt was a people-oriented First Sergeant before that was popular. You appreciated what a good First Sergeant was like. The other kind who just enjoyed throwing his weight around and letting you know that he was the First Sergeant just made you appreciate the good ones all the more.

**Airey:** I want to make one quick point here. Let's go back to World War II, when we talked about those leaders, the autocratic NCOs. Some of the NCOs and officers I served under in that war came out of World War I.

**Kohn:** World War I?

**Airey:** Yes, the NCOs and officers were World War I people, some of them. Keep in mind some of them were fine, outstanding, who were people-conscious too. Not as a rule, because it was a different era.

**Kohn:** Different era, different style, different culture. It's that sense of change that we're interested in investigating.

**Airey:** I just want to make a point that they weren't all totally authoritarian.

**Kohn:** I hope we make that point, and we can come back to it later. It's not a question of good or bad. It's a question of different times and different philosophies. It worked in its era.

## The 1960s and the Vietnam War

**Kohn:** When we went to war in Vietnam we were in the sixties, with all of its social turbulence. We had draftees who really resented being dragged into the war. Do you remember thinking that the war generation had an impact on what you were facing as senior NCOs?

**Airey:** We're only a segment of our society. What happens in civilian life is going, somehow or other, to rub off into the military. I can remember when I was in the Chief's job in the Pentagon—in 1967, 1968, and 1969—when the hippies were coming in and flooding the doorways, the halls, the steps, and finally Secretary McNamara chased them all outside

after several days.[79] This type of activity can't help but have an effect on some people. Someone once said the last popular war was World War II.

**Gaylor:** It'll probably be the only popular war. I think we need to go back further, so we don't miss something. The Southeast Asian War happened in the late sixties. In 1963 I was in Tachikawa, Japan, in the police field. We had green alert teams, white alert teams, and red alert teams. It was all extremely classified. They received a certain issue of clothing that they had to maintain on an alert basis. The idea was that any minute the entire team—maybe there were twenty-eight to a team—would be called up and sent out, Lord knows where. It did, in fact, happen in 1963 that a couple of these teams were sent. It was only when they came back—if your buddy was sent, he'd tell you where they'd gone. They'd gone to Vietnam or Thailand. While they were there, they couldn't communicate with their families. They couldn't send out any letters. We were there as advisors. The American public was totally unaware that this was even going on. So, we have to appreciate that American activity built up in 1962, 1963, 1964, and 1965, and it was a gradual escalation, not sudden like December 7, 1941, until eventually we were committed to it. The American people were four or five years behind. It was 1967 or 1968 before we began to see the campus activities, the riots in the streets, the protests, and the flights to Canada of those who didn't want to be drafted. I think we have to appreciate that it was very insidious.[80]

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[79]Mass demonstrations against the war began in the spring of 1965. For Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, a climax and turning point came on October 21, 1967, when 100,000 demonstrators surrounded the Pentagon. Federal marshalls used tear gas to disperse the crowd; 600 arrests followed. That dramatic episode helped nurture the seeds of doubt he had about U.S. policy in Vietnam. Alexander Kendrick, *The Wound Within: America in the Vietnam Years, 1945–1974* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), pp. 193, 243–244, 263–268.

[80]Between 1960 and June 1965, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations gradually built up forces in Vietnam. At the end of 1960 only about 900 Americans served in Vietnam; among them were 68 from the Air Force. The numbers then gradually rose over the next few years:

| | **Total** | **Air Force** |
|---|---|---|
| 1961 | 3,200 | 1,000 |
| 1962 | 11,300 | 2,400 |
| 1963 | 16,300 | 4,600 |
| 1964 | 23,300 | 6,600 |
| 1965 | 59,900 (June) | 10,700 (June) |

Following a Johnson administration decision to increase the American military commitment in Vietnam in July 1965, the numbers of U.S. servicemen in Vietnam

**Harlow:** It was during that period that the permissiveness took place. Congress put the pressure on the military to do something about it. Eventually, it filtered down that the commander had to get personally involved. That's when the NCO corps lost a lot of its authority, because the young troops could call the commander with a problem and get an answer back through one of his staff members and completely bypass the senior NCOs.

**Gaylor:** The phrase "open-door policy" came in in the early 1960s. Supposedly, you could walk in and discuss what was bothering you with the commander.

**Barnes:** It was a mirror of the social system and precisely that, and it came so quickly and in such a variety of ways, that the services were ill-prepared to deal with the kinds of things that occurred.

**Gaylor:** When it finally exploded like it did, it happened, "bam!"

**Barnes:** Unfortunately, with Vietnam ongoing, the internal turmoil, and then, the memory of the Korean commitment, it all built up to a very, very difficult situation. We had also experienced a bad budget change. We didn't get the kinds of money we needed.

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rose tremendously. By December 1965, the United States had committed 184,300 troops, 20,600 of which were from the Air Force. Peak U.S. involvement came in April 1969 with 543,400 serving, 61,400 of which were Air Force. After that time the United States began a de-escalation of forces. By December 1970 the number serving had dropped to 334,600 (43,100 Air Force); 1971, 156,800 (28,800 Air Force); 1972, 24,200 (7,600 Air Force). In 1973 total U.S. forces in Vietnam numbered less than 250. *Selected Manpower Statistics*, 1980, p. 151. Mass demonstrations against the war began with the escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1965. The 1965 march in Washington attracted between 15,000 and 20,000; the march in October 1967, 100,000; and on November 15, 1967, between 250,000 and 300,000 demonstrators converged on the nation's capital. The protests climaxed on May 4, 1970, when National Guard troops at Kent State University, Ohio, fired on students protesting the invasion by U.S. forces in Cambodia, killing four and wounding nine. Following that traumatic event, and the reductions of U.S. troops in Vietnam, protests against the war became less frequent and smaller. In 1972, in response to renewed U.S. bombing of North Vietnam (LINEBACKER I), campus protests erupted, but failed to attract much attention or support. Kendrick, pp. 193, 242–244, 263–268, 354, 368. For a recent history of the antiwar movement in the U.S., see Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1990).

**Gaylor:** You tend not to get the money in peacetime, right?

**Barnes:** That's right.

**Gaylor:** They say if you're not fighting anybody, you don't need a lot of money.

**Barnes:** We got really a little behind the power curve in a number of areas. We had a very, very bad mix of social problems and a great need for some facilities and programs for dependents. The surprise, reaction, and anger at the fact that we'd been supporting this buildup, and now we were in the war and we were committed to another conflict that the American people didn't know anything about—that really made problems for us.

**Gaylor:** In April 1966, I was teaching at the SAC NCO Academy at Barksdale. We had a student retreat, and an announcement was made by a member of the faculty, "There will be a faculty meeting immediately following the student retreat." It was in the spring of 1966, and we thought the commander was going to announce promotions. As we were going back to the building, guys were saying, "I bet you made chief." "No, I don't think so this year, I think you did." There was an excitement in the air because we thought he was going to announce promotions. We walked in, and he said, "I have a message from SAC Headquarters. I'll read it to you, and you'll then know everything I know: 'Upon graduation of this class, 66–B, the academy is closed until further notice. All those assigned will be reassigned back to their career fields wherever they can find a slot available. Further information will follow.'"

It was right then that the Vietnamese War was escalating and funds were being taken from things like academies and being diverted to the war. So, they closed the Fifteenth Air Force, Eighth Air Force, and Second Air Force NCO Academies, and I found myself back in the police career field.[81] All of a sudden it came to a head. We need the money. We're building up in Southeast Asia. The war had been going on for four years,

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[81]SAC temporarily closed NCO Academies due to budgetary and manpower requirements in March 1966. It reopened a unified academy at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, in July 1968. Lt Col Ernest M. Magee, "The Evolution of NCO Academies," *Air University Review*, Vol. XVII, No. 6 (September–October 1966), p. 57; MSgt Ken Allen, "Academies of Leadership," *The Airman* (June 1968), p. 26.

but we weren't prepared. We hadn't anticipated it. It began what became known as the seven-year crisis.

**Airey:** I don't know if this tells you something, but SAC was the only command to do that.

**Gaylor:** To do what?

**Airey:** Close its academies.

**Gaylor:** It was General John D. Ryan who did it. General Nazzaro reopened it in 1968.[82]

**Barnes:** SAC was the strongest command with the academies. Other commands didn't even have them.

**Gaylor:** We had three with 120 students each.

**Barnes:** Other commands didn't even have them, so we had an absolute absence of PME [Professional Military Education].

**Gaylor:** ATC didn't have any.

**Airey:** That was a surprise to everyone. SAC was supposed to be the leader in these academies and allegedly had the best ones. What happened? The rest of the commands, no matter how bad things got, continued to have them.

**Gaylor:** SAC was picking up what became known as an ARC LIGHT commitment, where they had to rotate flights from Barksdale over to Guam [Andersen Air Force Base] to do some bombing, and so, I guess, Ryan needed the money to do that and he simply closed the academies.[83]

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[82]Gen John D. Ryan served as Comander-in-Chief, Strategic Air Command, from 1964 to 1967. Gen Joseph J. Nazzaro served in that position from 1967 to 1968.

[83]Beginning in June 1965 and continuing until August 1973, SAC B-52 bombers modified for conventional warfare launched 126,615 sorties against targets in South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam. See Berger, pp. 149–167.

**Kohn:** Are you saying, then, that a crisis occurred within the enlisted force, beginning perhaps in 1967 and lasting to the mid-1970s, a seven-year crisis in discipline, and perhaps in effectiveness and retention? What were its causes? Earlier, you all suggested that discipline problems were partly a spill-over from society. Were there not other causes, structural problems in the enlisted force that had never been addressed and that were now surfacing? We talked earlier about the three major things that the troops were always concerned about—pay, medical care, and housing—but there were also issues of promotion, of the rank structure, of assignments, of the personnel systems.

**Gaylor:** The Korean Hump was coming down through the years, that big influx of people in 1950, 1951, and 1952. Those people were now techs, masters, E–8s, and E–9s. Here came the hump, and we didn't have the necessary numbers of one-, two-, three-, four-, and five-stripers.

**Kohn:** So you had an enlisted force with an unbalanced rank structure?

**Gaylor:** That caused TOPCAP.[84] That's when that program hit the scene to try to smooth out and even out that Korean Hump that was riding down through the years.

**Harlow:** TOPCAP was designed to enhance the promotion flow.

**Kohn:** By removing people up or out at a certain number of years?

**Gaylor:** Yes; twenty for staff, twenty-three for tech, *et cetera*. If you hadn't advanced beyond those grades, you got out. It was an attempt to smooth out the hump over a period of time as opposed to doing it all at once.

**Kohn:** Let's go back and talk about the 1967 to 1974 period. Is it fair to characterize that era as a kind of a crisis of the enlisted force, or a crisis of the Air Force?

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[84]The Air Force implemented TOPCAP [Total Objective Plan for Career Airman Personnel] during fiscal year 1973.

**Harlow:** I would say for the NCO supervisor, it was a crisis.

**Gaylor:** Suddenly hundreds of us found ourselves winging toward Southeast Asia to a place we'd never heard of. What's Thailand? We used to call it Siam. What's Vietnam? It used to belong to the French. We found ourselves thrust into situations that we didn't anticipate. That's what happened to me. I was notified in August of 1966, and in January 1967 I was on a plane.

**Kohn:** In other words, you went to war, and you were unprepared to go to war from the psychological standpoint, not from the standpoint of training or discipline.

**Gaylor:** One reason was that it wasn't being called a war. It was being called a conflict. So we were all asking, "Why are we going?" Nobody seemed to care that we were going. The American people weren't at the pier with bands playing. [They weren't] waving, "Goodbye, GI Bob." Oh, no! They were saying, "You dumb SOB. Go! I'm not going; you can go." The colleges were rising up in protest [with] the hippies, and there were marches into Washington. As I'm sailing off to Vietnam, they're wailing that we shouldn't be going. Toward the latter stages of that conflict there were many military people who questioned, "Why are we here, and what are we doing?" There was no question that we were trying to hold our heads high. But there were many, believe me, who would not wear their uniforms on leave for fear of being spat at and being called baby killers. The media had a tremendous influence. For the first time you had a war in American living rooms. Here's the 6 o'clock news; here are some Marines at Khe Sanh; let's watch them turn their flamethrowers on and burn those huts down. That had never happened in World War II; we used to get the news a week later. So, the American public just rose up against the war.

**Airey:** I'd like to make note that at this time—I'm talking about 1967, 1968, and 1969—I held the Chief's job. I got to Vietnam and Southeast Asia on four different occasions. Morale during that entire period was great—tremendous—in the entire theater. It started to deteriorate.

**Gaylor:** There was still a purpose. We guarded airplanes. The bombing was escalating. They were flying over at Korat [Air Base, Thailand]. There was a feeling that we were part of something. That escalation then began to wane. We were then told, "You can't bomb that. Draw back from that." We began to say, "Well, now wait a minute, if we're going to be here, let's

do it and do it right." Then the feeling became, "I'm not sure I want to be here. I'm not sure I should be here."

**Barnes:** We remembered the hands-tied situation in Korea—the Yalu River as a barrier—and it was the same in Vietnam.[85] Again, the return on the investment was the issue in the minds of the people required to be there. But I think some other things impacted on us, as far as the nation was concerned. We did have very marked temperature indicators about public reaction in the schools. For example, one of the strongest ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] institutions in the country, bar none, was at Brigham Young University [Utah]. Yet, it was almost suicidal to wear a uniform at Brigham Young during this period. People reacted violently. People who left the country and fled to Canada later were pardoned for that action, while returning servicemen, if they were getting out, couldn't even get their jobs back. This news spread like a plague and began really to dampen the enthusiasm for that war.

At the same time, we unfortunately began to see some very political things taking place. We began to see some trends. Morale plummeted to an all-time low, as Paul said, after he left. It did for many reasons. When we withdrew in the fashion that we did, all of the expenditure and the high state of morale that Paul talked about that was present in the early years of the war were dashed.

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