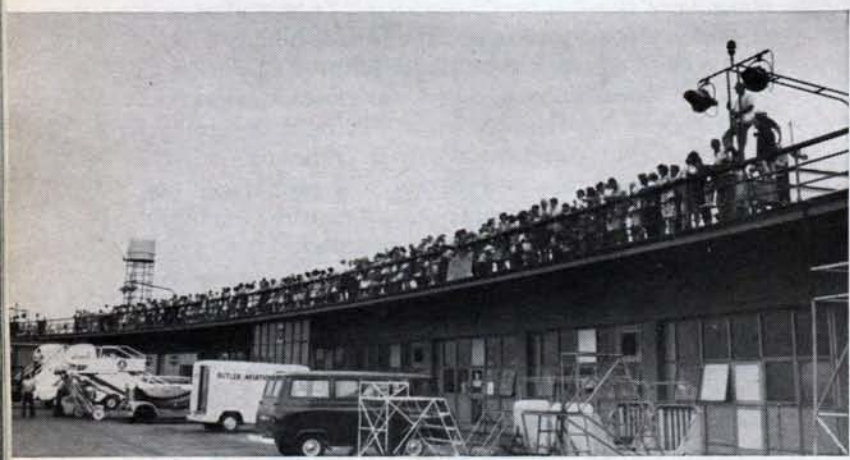


Last fall, about 27,000 Air National Guardsmen and Air Force Reservists left their homes and families as the Reserve Forces mobilized to meet the growing crisis in Berlin. Many of the men went to Europe, serving in tactical units in Germany, France, and Spain. This summer the called-up Reserve Forces were returned to civilian life. Here's the story of the redeployment of one of the Air Guard wings . . .

# THE GUARD COMES BACK

By 1st Lt. Michael V. Miller, USAF

PHOTOS BY TSGT. RICHARD MANNING, USAF (MATS)



Relatives and friends wait at Boston's Logan International Airport for new MATS C-135 to arrive from Europe with support personnel of the returning 102d Wing on unit's redeployment.

**A**T PRECISELY 8:58 a.m. last July 21, the shadowy figures of four jet fighters pierced the gray haze above Boston's Logan International Airport, and a crowd of New Englanders, gathered to await them, looked up anxiously and cheered.

In a tight, low-level formation, the sweptwing fighters—F-86H Sabrejets—roared over the historic landmarks of the city they had left nearly nine months before for duty overseas on the borders of the cold war.

Across a busy boulevard from Logan International in front of a yellow stone building, the crowd of parents, wives, children, and sweethearts laughed and cried. Boston's 101st Tactical Fighter Squadron, of the Air National Guard's 102d Wing, was coming home from France.

The jets peeled off in one, two, three, four order and circled in for the long-awaited landing. Out of the lead plane stepped Maj. James R. Ramsay, Jr., 101st Commander, to be greeted by his wife and two sons.

At forty-five-minute intervals, more F-86s with green shamrocks on nose and tail arrived over Boston in formations of four. Meanwhile, F-86s of the 102d Wing's other two tactical fighter squadrons were being welcomed at their home stations, the 131st at Westfield, Mass., and the 138th at Syracuse, N. Y.

Across the nation, in Birmingham, Knoxville, St. Louis, in South Carolina, New Jersey, and New York, other federalized Air Guard and Air Reserve units regrouped after their redeployment from Germany, Spain, and France. And in more than a dozen other states from New Hampshire to California, squadrons which had served just as valuably in the United States under the Tactical Air Command and Military Air Transport Service prepared to return to civilian life.

Operation High Top was a heartwarming success. Like Stair Step—the swift deployment of eleven tactical fighter and tactical reconnaissance squadrons to Europe last fall—High Top brought them back, without a hitch. Once again, TAC, MATS, USAFE, and supporting commands had pooled thousands of man-hours to write the success story.

But this time things were different. Tension over Berlin and sadness over leaving homes and families gripped last year's deployment. Now the men were homebound, proud of their accomplishments. And MATS, beefed up over the past several months with a fleet of new C-135 jet transports, brought the 10,000 ground-support personnel back from Europe twice as fast.

As the man on top of the redeployment, TAC's Com-



Members of 101st Squadron, in last days in France, sightsee in Vosges Mountains near Phalsbourg in northeastern France.



Airmen of the 101st Squadron, wearing their Shamrock blazers, stop off in a French shop in Sarrebourg to buy gifts to take back home.



SSgt. Mike Buscanera helps Maj. James R. Ramsay, Jr., 101st Squadron Commander, into antiexposure suit before take-off.

mander Gen. Walter C. Sweeney, Jr., called it "an altogether fitting and proper climax to the success attained by these organizations in Europe the past several months in meeting the grave responsibility of preserving world freedom. The fact that this mission was accomplished without accident or serious incident attests to the professional skill of the aircrews and support personnel who participated," said the TAC Commander.

Back in Boston, as he climbed out of his F-86, Capt. John T. Olson, 101st Operations Officer, said calmly, "It was a no-sweat operation."

The script called for a four-day redeployment beginning July 17 with stops at Prestwick, Scotland; Keflavik, Iceland; Sondrestrom, Greenland; Goose Bay, Labrador; and Loring, Me., reaching Boston on Friday, July 20. On Monday, July 16, the day before the redeployment, Phalsbourg, the base in northeastern France where the 102d Wing had been based during its overseas tour, was blanketed with low clouds and rain. Air Guard F-84Fs and RF-84Fs from other units were already in Prestwick, but a low ceiling in Keflavik threatened to hold them there the next day. If so, it would delay the departure of the 101st.

But at 6:00 a.m. Tuesday the USAFE command post

flashed the "go" sign to the 102d Wing at Phalsbourg. First squadron to leap off was the 101st, meeting take-off time practically to the second.

Led by Major Ramsay, the Sabrejets zoomed over the 615 nautical miles from Phalsbourg to Prestwick in an hour and forty minutes. The following day, supported by rescue and navigational planes, they flew the two-hour, 740 miles to Keflavik, Iceland, refueled quickly, and flew another 740 miles to Sondrestrom. Halfway home, the pilots were right with the timetable.

But in Sondrestrom they met with disappointment. Goose was flat on its back with bad weather. For a full day, the 101st, joined now by the 131st and 138th, waited impatiently for the weather to break. Fair weather on this leg was essential, for from Sondrestrom to Goose Bay there were no rescue ships or alternate landing points—nothing but arctic ice. Arrival at Boston was a day late, but the delay only heightened the anticipation. And the arrival itself was no letdown.

Brig. Gen. Charles W. Sweeney, Commander of the 102d Tactical Fighter Wing, told his men simply: "Thanks for a great job. You have a three-day pass."

"I hope everyone realizes the service you have rendered," said Massachusetts Governor John A. Volpe, (Continued on following page)

Dublin Lord Mayor Robert Briscoe, left center, receives Maj. James Ramsay and delegation from the 101st Squadron at his home. Members of the 101st Squadron presented the Mayor a plaque honoring the memory of a former Squadron Commander.



shaking hands with every officer and airman. "I know what my wife says when I'm away from home for just one night."

The full story of the 101st Tactical Fighter Squadron, like the other federalized units, is one of more than airplanes, flying hours, and crossing oceans. The 101st is an outfit with *esprit de corps* and what Major Ramsay terms "a real sincerity of purpose." It is basically a group of civilians from all walks of life who left their jobs, schools, and families to point their F-86s right down the Berlin corridor.

The 101st is composed largely of men who have fulfilled their normal military obligation but remained in the Air National Guard. Its pilots all have from three to twenty years of flying experience.

Major Ramsay is a banking executive who flew P-38s in combat over France in World War II; Captain Olson, a West Point graduate with a MIT master's degree in aeronautical engineering; Capt. Dick Kenny, TWA airline captain; Capt. Alan Graham and 1st Lts. Ted Mansfield and Russ Schweickert, former Air Force F-100 pilots; 1st Lt. Bob Boardman, Harvard graduate student and former SAC bomber copilot; 1st Lt. Jim McQuarrie, ex-Navy enlisted man; and 1st Lt. Paul C. Gay, a Boston lawyer, to name only a few.

In the enlisted ranks are men like SMSgts. Bob Ciampa and Nick Colagiovanni, Stalag 17 prisoners in World War II; MSgt. Arthur (Red) O'Gorman, first sergeant and a National Guardsman since 1930; MSgt. Hank Whelan, manager of a New England parking lot chain; TSgt. Bill Burke, veteran of Inchon in Korea; SSgt. John Sheppard, office equipment salesman; and A1C Albert W. Croft, Jr., Air Force veteran who joined the 101st when he heard it was going overseas.

"There's a little thing called pride that made this outfit go," said TSgt. Paul Judge. "It's just a tiny little word. You can't see it, but it's always there."

Off duty in France, officers and airmen of the 101st wore handsome Navy blue blazers with the shamrock emblem on the left chest. They adopted their own squadron drink and initiated other touches that may grow into squadron traditions.

The shamrock insignia—most appropriate in Boston—was adopted in respect for a former 101st Com-

mander, Lt. Col. Joseph W. Mahoney, killed three years ago in a crash.

Irish-American Colonel Mahoney had often told his men about Ireland. In June, a delegation from the 101st climbed on a C-47 in Phalsbourg and flew off to Dublin to present Lord Mayor Robert Briscoe with a plaque in Colonel Mahoney's memory. The Lord Mayor, the Irish Air Force, and the people of Dublin gave them the reception of a lifetime.

For the Shamrocks, the duty in France was an exhibit of combat-ready posture, an experience in a different way of life, and an exercise in international good will.

Phalsbourg is a tiny town of 3,000 people, nestled in a valley among the green hillsides of Alsace-Lorraine. Into this setting last year moved the 101st and other squadrons of the 102d Wing. Phalsbourg Air Base had been closed for a year. Sheep grazed off the ends of the runways, seemingly oblivious to the roar made by the jets.

Initially, there was a shortage of equipment: a handful of telephones and vehicles for 2,500 men. "I slept on the floor of a hangar for the first three nights," said Lieutenant Gay. Spare parts for the airplanes were hard to come by.

Weather was foreboding. Pilots flew indoctrination flights with minimums that would have kept them grounded in Boston. For the first eleven weeks, no one saw the sun.

"But the more hardships we met, the better job everyone seemed to do," said A2C Edward S. Heard, who missed his senior year at Harvard while he served as an aircraft mechanic with the 101st.

In the government housing areas around Phalsbourg, some wives and children who arrived almost as soon as the Guardsmen slept on canvas cots, ate off boxes, sat on crates, and considered themselves fortunate just to be with their husbands and fathers.

"The people here (France) are actually very friendly," said SMSgt. Bob Ciampa, "but they expect you to make the first move." Living next door to a Frenchman named Salvatorre, Bob and SMSgt. Nick Colagiovanni made the first move. From then on Salvatorre's children were daily visitors to their house.

"Salvatore had never seen anyone pitch horseshoes," said Bob. "We showed him how, and a week later he was throwing nothing but ringers."

When the 101st was mobilized, 1st Lt. Kenneth Brooks was a pilot for Northeast Airlines, living in Needham, Mass. The recall changed his life. Ken fell in love with Emilienne N. Steibel, a striking, jet-haired French girl. They were married in the base chapel on June 2, and Lieutenant Brooks volunteered for extended active duty in order to remain in Europe.

Lt. Col. Norman C. LaForest, 102d Wing executive officer, met with another emotional experience. One night when he went to the Heitz Hotel near Phalsbourg for dinner, the hostess, Madame Heitz, took one look at him and exclaimed, "Your name is LaForest. You've been here before."

Colonel LaForest had indeed been there before. Shot

down on a supply-drop mission in late 1944, Colonel LaForest belly-landed his C-47 into a valley behind German lines. He climbed out moments before the airplane exploded and set out to reach the French underground. His first contact was Madame Heitz.

Eighteen years later, Madame Heitz recounted to Colonel LaForest how she had fed him, washed his clothes, hidden him in the same hotel where forty-five German soldiers were living, and turned him over to other members of the underground. After five days of riding ox-carts and hay wagons, Colonel LaForest reached Allied lines.

"At the time, she wouldn't tell me who she was or where I was," said Colonel LaForest. "I never knew until I came back to Phalsbourg and happened to walk into her hotel."

*(Continued on following page)*

## THE TRANSPORTS SERVED TOO

Another aspect of the Reserve Forces recall was the contribution of the Guard and Reserve transport squadrons . . .

**Trio of C-97s from Air Guard's 146th Transport Wing fly over Los Angeles.**



The Air Guard's tactical fighter and reconnaissance squadrons, whose story is told here in terms primarily of the 102d Tactical Fighter Wing, were joined on active duty in the Berlin crisis by five Air Force Reserve C-124 squadrons and six Air Guard C-97 units.

The Globemaster units were under the Reserve's 435th Wing, Homestead AFB, Fla., and the 442d Wing, Richards-Gebaur AFB, Mo. Guard Stratofreighter squadrons were assigned to the 133d Wing, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn., and the 146th Wing, Van Nuys, Calif.

Neither the C-124 nor C-97 squadrons were operationally ready when they entered on active duty. The Guard acquired its first Stratofreighters in 1960, the Reserve its C-124s early in 1961. Thus the first objective upon recall was to gain crew proficiency. They did this with such energy and skill that both were ready for operational assignments by January 1962.

The Reserve's Globemasters operated tirelessly on TAC cargo missions, and participated in a dozen or more joint Army-Air Force exercises, airlanding heavy equipment and supplies.

Guard C-97s, meanwhile, joined the MATS fleet, the 133d Wing working primarily with the Eastern Transport Air Force (EASTAF) at McGuire AFB, N.J., while the 146th Wing operated under WESTAF from Travis AFB, Calif.

Indicative of the scope of their activities, on one day early in the year, seventeen of the 146th Wing's twenty-four Stratofreighters were out of the country—in Puerto Rico, Alaska, Germany, Newfoundland, the Azores, Bermuda, Hawaii, Okinawa, Taiwan, the

Philippines, Wake Island, Guam, and Southeast Asia.

In an otherwise highly critical report on the recall program, the Hébert subcommittee (see "Ready Room") praised the Air Reserve Forces.

President Kennedy hailed the "outstanding contribution to the cause of freedom" of all Air Reserve Forces units in a message to Secretary of the Air Force Eugene M. Zuckert.

The Commander in Chief wrote:

"I would like to express my appreciation for the outstanding performance of the Air Reserve Forces mobilized during the past year.

"The swift and accident-free deployment to Europe of several hundred jet-fighter aircraft of the Air National Guard within days after mobilization, followed almost immediately by full combat-alert posture, was a convincing demonstration of the 'Ready Now' status of the Air Reserve Forces. The quick augmentation of our forces in Europe was a powerful factor in preserving the peace during this period of crisis. In addition, the substantial Reserve Forces backup to the Tactical Air Command and the Military Air Transport Service, contributed by the mobilized units that remained in the United States, added materially to our total deterrent power.

"I am mindful of the personal sacrifices made by these Reservists during this period, including significant reductions in personal income and, in thousands of cases, prolonged separations from their homes and families.

"The Air Force is to be congratulated for the outstanding contribution to the cause of freedom made by its Reserve Forces during this critical time."—END

The Bostonians thus helped to perpetuate Phalsbourg Air Base's nickname—"The Friendliest Base in France." The French responded, taking an active interest in the base.

On Armed Forces Day, more than 30,000 turned out from the small towns and hillsides of Alsace-Lorraine to swarm over the base. The base had arranged for the French Anchor Pils brewery band to play. Parading for the visitors, airmen found it all but impossible to march to the music of the brewers. The oomp-pah-pah beat was too much.

Europe felt the presence of the men from Boston in places other than France. When 1st Lt. Ted Mansfield found his Sabrejet failing on a radar-defense test mission over Spain, he turned the F-86 toward some mountains and bailed out. Ted parachuted safely into a field near a small village. Spaniards who came to his rescue hailed Ted like a hero from outer space. Said the lieutenant, "You'd have thought it was the biggest thing to happen there since the Spanish Civil War."

A2C John J. Franovich fought through the mountain of required paperwork to travel behind the Iron Curtain and visit relatives in Yugoslavia. His parents immigrated to the Boston area from Yugoslavia thirty years ago.

Berlin itself was the common denominator to the experiences of virtually all Air Guardsmen and Air Reservists in Europe. Col. R. E. McLaughlin, Phalsbourg Base Commander, estimated that a majority of the 2,500-man 102d went to Berlin at least once. When the runways were closed for repairs, the Wing sent all pilots of the 101st, 131st, and 138th Squadrons to Berlin on a "Why We Are Here" visit. The Wing also encouraged week-end trips to Berlin for the airmen.

Some typical comments from members of the 101st:

Capt. Maurice (Mo) Powers, intelligence officer: "When you see the serious problem in Berlin, it explains things you never understood before. I think the Berlin example is one reason the Stair Step forces didn't complain."

A1C Bialas: "It was an important personal experience for me. It answered the question, Why are we here? In East Berlin people look to see if anyone is watching before they wave at you. I stood on the West Berlin side and saw bars on the windows across the border, and an old woman looking out from the third floor crying."

On his visit to Berlin, A1C Ronnie Butler stood on the border and politely argued politics with an East German Vopo. "I pointed out the futility of the utter serfdom of communism, evidenced by the contrast between East and West Berlin," said Ronnie. "The Vopo finally ended the discussion by admitting he wasn't at liberty to express his views."

On Bastille Day, the 102d Wing bade its official farewell to France. A delegation of 400 officers and airmen paraded through the town square to the music of the Phalsbourg fire department band.

In a ceremony at city hall, a plaque from the 102d Wing's General Sweeney was presented to the mayor of Phalsbourg. The plaque bore a significant message for the forces mobilized for the Berlin crisis. It said the

mobilization was "representative of an ancient tradition shared by France and America alike: that patriotic citizens will rally eternally to the Republic when Liberté, Egalité, and Fraternité are menaced by despotism."

Among the units mobilized for the Berlin crisis, there were a lot of men like Major Ramsay, Captain Olson, Sergeant Ciampa, Airman Bialas, and the rest of the Shamrocks from Boston. Their experiences and accomplishments were similar and equally significant.

South Carolina's 157th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron made friends quickly in Spain by aiding families left homeless by severe floods. At Toul-Rosieres AB, France, headquarters for St. Louis 131st Tactical Fighter Squadron, the Armed Forces Day show drew more than 40,000. Stories were similar in Chambley, Chaumont, Dreux, and Etain.

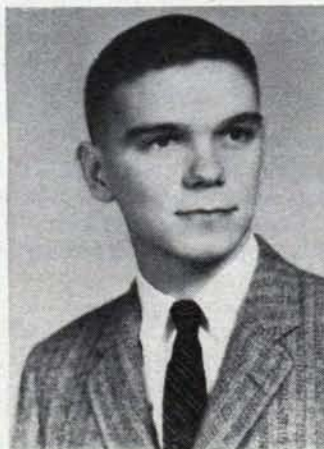
And in Ramstein, Germany, Tennessee's 151st FIS of Knoxville flew its eighteen F-104 Starfighters 835 hours in one month, an Air Force record for F-104s and a USAFE record for all types of single-engine jet aircraft.

In the United States, the other ANG tactical fighter and tactical reconnaissance squadrons also made a name for themselves. Those squadrons achieved an advanced state of combat-readiness, underwent intensive training and participated in numerous maneuvers.

More significant was the contribution to maintaining the peace. If war had flared, the Air Guard pilots had the airplanes, the weapons, and knew their assigned targets. At the conclusion of the recall period, Berlin remained a center of tension, but the show of force and professional skill by the 27,000 Air Guardsmen and Air Reservists in TAC, MATS, and USAFE had silenced many Communist threats.

Assessing the recall, General LeMay said: "The quality of Air National Guard participation and the safe return so capably supported by all personnel will long be remembered as a truly professional job, accomplished by a team of which I am justly proud."

Said Maj. Jim Ramsay, leader of Boston's 101st Flying Shamrocks: "It took some positive citizenship for most of my men to join the Air National Guard in the first place. We have accomplished some very positive results."—END



The author, 1st Lt. Michael V. Miller, was called to active duty last year as a member of the Tennessee Air Guard's 151st Fighter-Interceptor Squadron of Knoxville. During the ten-month recall period, he was assigned to the Office of Information at Hq. TAC, Langley, AFB, Va. He holds a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University. Now back in civilian life, Mr. Miller is a reporter for the Knoxville News-Sentinel.