

The US Air Force asked a group of artists to take a different look at the force. The rest is history.

## History on Canvas

In 1954, Gen. Nathan F. Twining, Air Force Chief of Staff, formally established the USAF art program. Many of the better known artists and illustrators of the day were asked to use their creative talents to take a fresh look at the service, record their impressions, and contribute the result to what would, in time, become an amazing store of art. By 1963, the USAF Art Collection contained more than 700 works. A selection of 50 paintings traveled from base to base, sometimes in the form of a metal box of slides, as shown at left. What follows is a small part of that first traveling collection.



Artist Reynold Brown created this painting, called "Green Light—Go," after visiting an F-102 alert base in Japan. Here he shows some of the tension as the crew chief and pilot wait for the signal for the aircraft to take off. An artist for North American Aviation during World War II, Brown also assisted Hal Forrest with the popular comic strip "Tailspin Tommy."

Today, Keith Ferris is one of the best known artists in the field of aviation art. This painting, "B-52 Air Refueling," was the first in a long line of work he has created for the program.





Claude Coats portrayed a serene landscape of rice paddies near Beppu, Japan, and included the jets as a way of showing airpower as a protector of postwar Japan. Coats got started as an illustrator at Walt Disney Studios in 1935. He created some of the background pieces for "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," "Pinocchio," and "Cinderella."



Carl Bobertz was known for his corporate advertising art and children's book illustrations. Here he captures the drama of an air rescue mission in Alaska in 1957. On submitting the painting he noted, "Nine men jumped. Jumpmaster (in white cap) was first to go. Man with earphones relayed information from pilot to jumper. After putting on parachutes, two or three quietly bowed their heads."

Homer Hill graduated from the Parsons School of Design in New York City. He commented, "I should like to feel that this painting, by its color and design, conveys to the viewer a feeling of complete isolation and the problem of survival in the jungle." Hill portrayed a scene from an Air Force jungle survival training program held in Panama at the time.





Attilio Sinagra admitted to being impressed with these Boeing BOMARC surface-to-air missiles standing ready as a line of defense against enemy bombers. These weapons were an important part of USAF's Cold War arsenal.



Charles J. Kuderna captured the rush of rescue forces racing to Nagoya, Japan, flooded in the aftermath of Typhoon Vera in September 1960. It was just one of countless humanitarian missions Air Force crews have conducted. Kuderna attended the Art Institute of Chicago and was a corporate Illustrator.



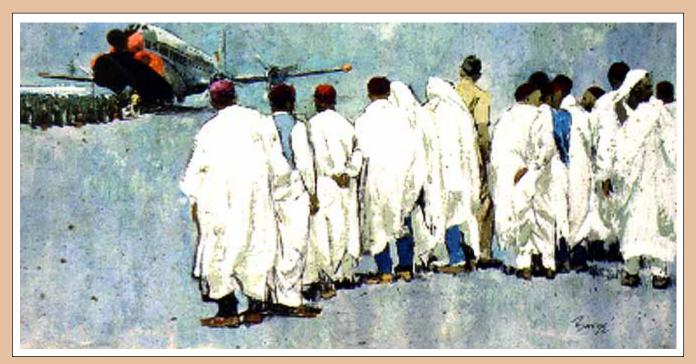
Robert Lavin portrayed the scene inside a climate control hangar, which is still in operation today at Eglin AFB, Fla. Lavin chose to depict this B-52 undergoing a wintry subzero test. He commented that "in this enormous structure all conceivable forms of weather can be reproduced in testing planes under any condition." A Marine fighter pilot during World War II, Lavin was a commercial artist.



The Cold War couldn't get much colder than duty on the DEW Line. In this landscape of a remote radar site in Alaska, artist Robert Fawcett shows the kind of lonely vigil that Air Force crews routinely endured.

Robert McCall is probably best known for his futuristic illustrations for the movie "2001: A Space Odyssey" and the two huge murals at the entrance of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington. When he saw the then-new C-133 Cargomaster he noted how large the aircraft was. He chose to show the airplane on the ground at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, to "best dramatize the great globe girdling range of this magnificent airplane."





"The Spectators," by Barye W. Phillips, depicts the fascination with airplanes shown by the natives near Wheelus AB, Libya. The painting contrasts a group of people in the foreground with a mass of troops boarding the C-124. Phillips was an editorial artist.



This beautiful cloudscape by Ren Wicks depicts the midair recovery of the Discoverer 14 satellite. The recovery crew flew Wicks on an additional mission so he could complete the research for the painting. Wicks' works hung in the corporate offices of several aircraft companies.