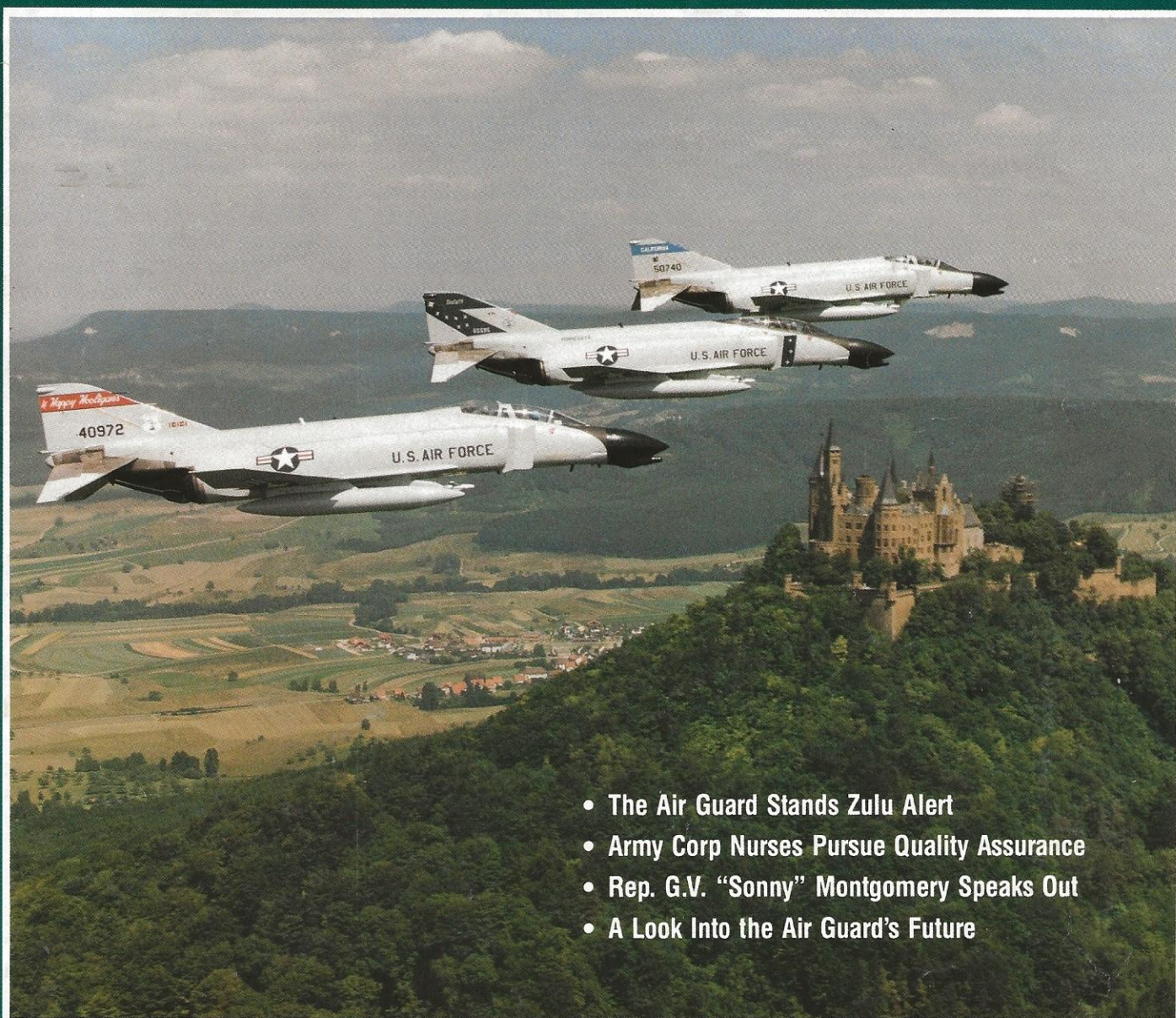


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The Air National Guard Stands Zulu Alert In Europe

The castle on the Rhine River is overshadowed by the F-4Ds of the Air National Guard as Guardsmen pull the NATO alert mission in Germany. (Inset) These maintenance personnel are just five of more than 800 who support the F-4Ds based at Ramstein. (Photos, LTC Don Borowski, NGB-PAO)





"This is an example of the Total Force Policy as a way of life and not just a concept." With these words, Gen Charles A. Gabriel, then chief of staff of the Air Force, and CMSgt James Armstrong, the first sergeant of the Air National Guard Support Center Detachment 11, cut the ceremonial ribbon in front of the Zulu Alert facility at Ramstein Air Base, West Germany. Eight Air National Guard F-4Ds and a rotating crew of Air Guardsmen from as many states would now be on five-minute alert status, 24-hours a day along with active Air Force F-16s at Bitburg Air Base and Royal Air Force F-4s at Wildenrath, West Germany.

Already into the middle of its year-long commitment, Detachment 11's origins actually began in December 1984. It was then that U.S. Air Force-Europe (USAFE) came to the Guard with the request: Can the Air Guard support the active alert mission in Europe with its own F-4s and its own manpower while the 526th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Ramstein, whose primary responsibility was Zulu Alert, converted to the F-16s.

Maj Gen John B. Conaway, director of the Air National Guard, and his staff determined the Air Guard could support the mission. The answer was yes. The plans took shape midsummer 1985.

It was determined that a single Guard F-4 unit could not support the year-long, real world mission; it would have to be conducted by a composite of F-4 units so that the Air Guard units could continue doing their missions in the United States. To accomplish this, a 10-man cadre was selected to be the com-

mand and control for the composite unit not only in Ramstein, but also at the Air Guard Support Center at Andrews Air Force Base to coordinate the many details between units in the States. Lt Col David Cobb with the 144th Fighter Interceptor Wing (FIW), Fresno, was chosen the detachment commander, based at Ramstein. Maj Bill Hall is the Air Guard Support Center liaison officer.

Aircraft from the 144th FIW, Fresno, California Air Guard; 148th Tactical Fighter Group (TFG), Duluth, Minnesota Air Guard; and 119th Fighter Interceptor Group (FIG), Fargo, North Dakota Air Guard, are being used. One aircrew from each of these units and from five other F-4 air defense units: the 154th Composite Group, Hickham Air Force Base, Hawaii; the 127th TFG, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan; the 107th FIG, Niagara Falls, New York; the 142d FIG, Portland, Oregon; and the 147th FIG, Ellington Air Force Base, Texas, fly the missions.

The numbers have grown into more than the Air Guard had ever dreamed they could. The opportunity to have as many Air Guardsmen as possible work the Zulu Alert mission, from maintenance to pilots and weapon systems officers, was too good to be true. Right now there are Guardsmen from 23 F-4 Air Guard units spread across the United States serving on the CREEK KLAXON Zulu Alert mission.

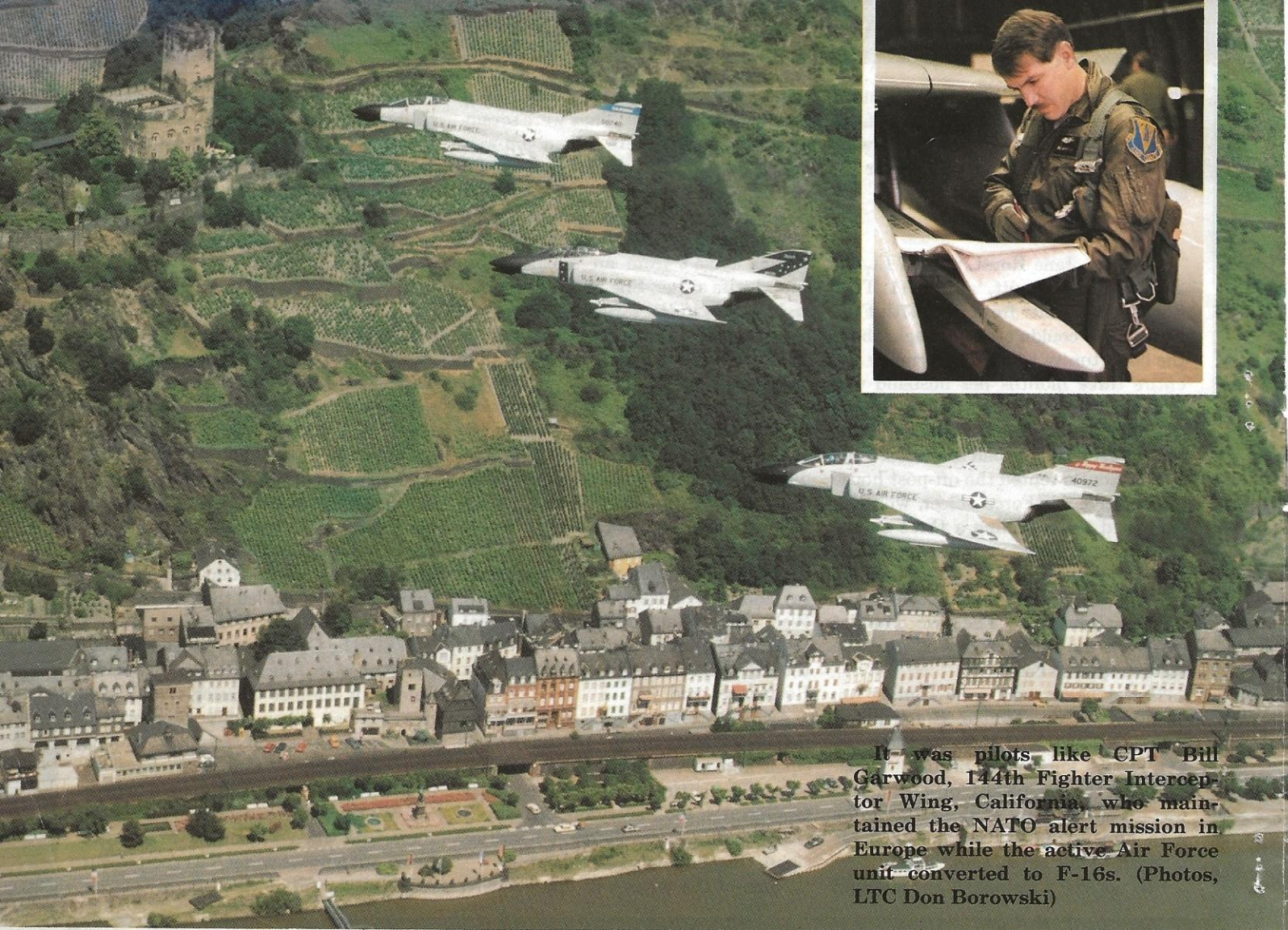
From the support side of the house, 72 maintenance Guardsmen on the ground and 16 aircrew members at any one time support the eight aircraft. Hall explained that by the time this mission is completed the Air Guard will have had

52 aircrews on 90-day tours and an estimated 800 maintenance guys on TDY in Europe. "By the end, close to 1,000 Guardsmen will have served, if you look at the other support type guys who pulled two-weeks or so to get hands on experience with CREEK KLAXON," Hall said.

"Once we said we could do the mission, USAF said it would foot the entire bill, so the Air Guard is not only pulling a real world mission, but we aren't taking any of this from our O&M or any other accounts to accomplish the active alert mission," Hall said. However, that doesn't mean the Air Guard isn't trying to save dollars to get the personnel over to Europe and while the personnel are staying in Europe.

Air National Guard Strategic Air Command KC-135 tanker units also play a key role in supporting Det 11. Nearly every week a Guard KC-135 flies from the States to Ramstein. The tanker crews meet their over-water navigational training requirements while carrying replacement personnel and needed supplies to the unit. While in Germany, the KC-135s fly local missions, refueling USAFE and Air Guard aircraft. When the F-4s approach the time for major home-state inspections, they'll return to the States along with a KC-135 tanker, refueling enroute.

As for quarters and living arrangements, Hall said the Air Force leased an entire dorm/barracks at Landstuhl Air Base to Det 11. "We're our own landlords, and it's just worked out great.



It was pilots like CPT Bill Garwood, 144th Fighter Interceptor Wing, California, who maintained the NATO alert mission in Europe while the active Air Force unit converted to F-16s. (Photos, LTC Don Borowski)

Larson answered his own questions. He said the other pilots were outstanding. The Guardsmen are flying against F-15s, F-18s and F-4Es, and there was no question they learned different flying techniques while training over there.

"Outside the cockpit skills increased tremendously. We didn't have the radars that we would like to have. It became imperative that the visual aspect of flying became a big player in our ACTs. We were looking outside the cockpit more to find out where they were before our radar would tell us where the enemy was."

This was the first time he had flown against the F-4E. "The F-4E is a tough adversary. They have four eyeballs just like we do plus they have the more advanced radar. In the States we fly against the same type of airplanes, the F-4Cs and Ds. We know what their capabilities are; we can second guess them. And the single-seat fighters the F-106, the 15 and the A-7s—well, we can beat them as well. A good F-4 pilot can beat an F-15. But these guys were use to

the air-to-air role over there. They were excellent," Larson said.

For him the key to volunteering was that he could bring his wife, Donna, and two small children with him for the three months. The TDY pay he received was just enough to pay for the round-trip fare for his family to come over and the rent for the house. "I went over there to spend money. We went over there to do everything we could while we were there. We didn't waste a single weekend. We went to Austria, Lichtenstein and all throughout Germany. We even took a cruise to Sweden, (where Larson still has family)."

Lt. Col. Boehringer, the full-time director of operations for the 144th, said the "cross-tel" or cross-intelligence shared between the Guardsmen of the many states and then between the Guard and the active Air Force was a critical benefit of the Zulu Alert mission. "The Guard went over with an experience level that the Air Force hasn't seen. It was hard for them to comprehend the senior lieutenant colonels flying as much as we did.

We've got a bunch of experience over there and the Air Force is learning a lot about the Air Guard," Boehringer said.

"Before going over there, I thought the Air Force officers would be well-versed on the Guard—but the Guard is still a mystery to them. So we learn from them and they in turn learn from us."

He said there didn't appear to him to be a marked difference in the number of sorties flown each month compared to stateside sorties. However, there were more low-level missions than what the Fresno unit normally flies. Because of environmental differences, Fresno can clear space over the Pacific; whereas in Germany the mountains and the heavy civilian air traffic make it mandatory to fly low-level missions. He said this was good for the Guardsmen because they did not get the low-level flying experience they needed.

As you read this remember, "This is not training. This is not an exercise. We're pulling the United States commitment to NATO," Hall said of CREEK KLAXON. "We're meeting the mission."

National Guard

Because of the billeting arrangements, a lot of the guys have brought their families over there to visit or stay with them. It's been a good experience for the spouses as well," Hall said.

Mrs. Jane Routt, wife of Lt. Col Doug Routt, a Det 11 TDY Flight commander from the 107th FIG, New York, couldn't say enough about the opportunity to live in Germany the entire three months her husband was TDY at Ramstein. "I loved it. It was fabulous. This was the first experience that either one of us had to see Europe."

The Routts rented the off-post house of an active Air Force officer, who just happened to be pulling a three-month tour in the States the exact same time that Routt and his WIZZO, 1st Lt Kurt Larson, were pulling the Zulu Alert mission at Ramstein. The two families stayed in the house in one of the little villages next to base.

"I watched a new crew coming on. Watched them scramble. Got a lot of experience watching them do their job. I've always known my husband's mission and the complexity of it. But this was an opportunity of a lifetime to be with him day-to-day as he pulled his mission," Jane Routt said.

She noticed a change in her husband

while overseas. "He felt so much more important over there. They were scrambled for real over there. When you were on alert, you were on five-minute standby. It became a real thing to them. So when he came back he brought that seriousness with him," she said.

This wasn't from an inexperienced Guard wife either. She pointed out that he had been in the service for years and had flown in Vietnam. He had the experience that a lot of the younger men didn't have.

Sheila Boehringer and her husband, Lt Col Robert "Bo" Boehringer of the 144th FIW have two grown children, a daughter in college, who could not go over, and 16-year-old Scott, who was lucky enough to spend a month in Europe with his parents.

"I noticed how much this impressed my son. When we were at the Berlin Wall museum (at Check Point Charlie), I noticed he took some time to read all the signs next to the exhibits," Mrs. Boehringer said.

Also, Scott is a tennis buff and had the opportunity to go to the French Open and to the Wimbledon Tournament. The entire family, just as all the families did, took every opportunity to travel to the many different historical sights they had only read about.

None of the wives was apprehensive

about her husbands' mission. "I wasn't really nervous. He is an excellent pilot. I knew the circumstances of his job before this mission. When he had his five-day breaks after pulling his missions, we had our family trips planned, and we would be off for those five days," Boehringer said.

For the younger, less experienced Guardsmen like Kurt Larson this was a side of the Total Air Force that he will never forget. "When I got back to my unit I told the guys that I took advantage of everything over there. But it was a real mission. It was hard work. I can say it was the toughest thing I had done since RTU training. This was every bit as intense. I said make sure you are ready to work when you go over there. I wanted to let them know they will earn every day off they get."

While the Guardsmen pulled the Zulu Alert mission, they also flew their required air combat training (ACT) sorties against other active component units, as well as the Germans, French and Canadians. "The ACT missions over there were so much more demanding. We were running a 50-50 ratio over there, and when we landed we couldn't figure out why we weren't as good in our ACTs as we were in the States."



(Inset) Mrs. Jane Routt stayed with her husband, LTC Doug Routt, a 107th Fighter Interceptor Group, New York Air Guard, pilot throughout his 90-day tour.

Officers at US air base lived good life on taxpayers' money

By MARK THOMPSON
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON — Top officers at the biggest U.S. Air Force base in Europe, eager to pump up troop morale, engaged in an improper, free-spending frenzy on lavish parties, lobster and crab legs and chartered flights to football games from 1984 to 1987.

According to an unreleased report by the Pentagon inspector general and other documents, accounting rules were ignored at West Germany's Ramstein Air Force Base, home to 10,000 U.S. airmen, including the Air Force's top European-based general.

Under Gen. Charles L. Donnelly Jr., who headed the Air Force European command from late 1984 to early 1987, Ramstein's clubs for officers and non-commissioned officers became little more than taxpayer-subsidized slush funds, losing millions of dollars in the process, the reports say.

During that time, between 80 and 100 Fresno Air Guardsmen stood in for regular Air Force crews at Ramstein on a rational basis, said Lt. Col. Harvey Clement of Fresno.

Clement — who is a mission sup-

port officer for the Fresno-based 144th Fighter Interceptor Wing and was stationed at Ramstein for 45 days in 1987 — said that local guardsmen were "only guests" at the base and would not be the subject of any inquiry.

He added that Fresno-area flight crews and support personnel sent to Germany to fly F-4D Phantom jets for U.S. NATO forces usually were stationed at the huge base for two to six months.

The Pentagon report, obtained Tuesday from a government official who declined to be named, said that "beginning in late 1984, U.S. Air Forces in Europe policy appeared to be that it wanted the NCO club to take care of the morale of the troops without concern for the profitability of operations.

"To accomplish this purpose, NCO club funds were spent without proper controls over the next four years."

During one three-month period in 1986, the NCO club gave away more than a ton of crab legs and lobster worth nearly \$30,000. The food and drink was served on \$12,000 worth of crystal and china bought in violation of Air Force rules, the report said.

Pentagon and congressional in-

vestigators believe the funds should have been earmarked for improved living conditions. "We still have guys in Germany living in World War II barracks and stables that Hitler used," one Pentagon official said. "This type of spending shows a total disregard for the troops."

Ramstein officials told Congress they planned to spend \$4.5 million on renovating their officers' club — and then demolished it and paid \$12.8 million to rebuild it, improperly shifting funds from other accounts to pay for the overrun, the report said.

"They just wanted a totally new club, and that's basically what they got," one Air Force official said.

Parties and special events at Ramstein "contributed significantly to the large losses," the report said.

The House Armed Services Committee's readiness subcommittee, which requested the investigation, plans to hold hearings after the report is formally released, a committee aide said. The report contained no estimate of the total amount of misspent funds.

Bee Metro staff also contributed to this report.