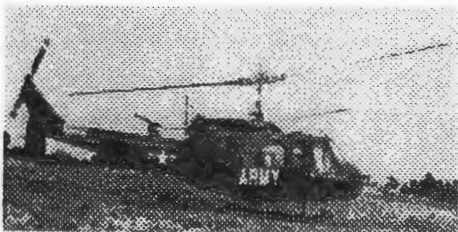


History
of
Army Aviation
in
Mississippi
1948 -1995

Col. Hugh W. Ketchum, MSARNG, Ret.



PREFACE

EARLY HISTORY OF ARMY AVIATION

1861 - 1948

First recorded use of army aviation was for observation of enemy troops by hot air balloons in 1861.

The Army purchased its first airplane in 1909.

During World War II, the Army had 89 balloon companies and 39 air squadrons.

In June 1942 the Army authorized two aircraft, two liaison pilots and one mechanic to each Artillery battalion and higher headquarters.

In 1943 the Army transferred about 2,000 liaison pilots to the Air Corps Commando units.

In 1945 the Army authorized the Cavalry, Infantry, Engineer, Armor and Tank Destroyer units the same organic aviation as the Artillery units

In 1946 the Army purchased its first helicopters.

On July 26, 1947, Congress passed the National Security Act that changed the Army Air Corps to the U. S. Air Force, a separate branch of service.

The Act authorized the Army to create its own aviation program within ten specified mission assignments, and with a beginning inventory of only 250 light aircraft.

In February, 1948, Mississippi initiated its first Army Aviation program at Grenada through the National Guard

FOREWORD

The History of Army Aviation in Mississippi is done in a chronological format from the beginning of Army Aviation in Mississippi until the end of Fiscal Year 1995 on September 30, 1995.

It is done in six chapters as follows:

Chapter I - The Formative Years - 1948 - 1951

Chapter II - The Korean War Years - 1951 - 1952

Chapter III - Post Korea Reorganization - 1953 - 1959

Chapter IV - The Separate Aviation Company Era - 1959 - 1968

Chapter V - The Separate Aviation Battalion Era - 1968 - 1986

Chapter VI - The Separate Aviation Group Era - 1986 - 1995

The source of materials was from micro film files in the National Guard headquarters, copies of orders from various individuals and personal interviews with individuals involved in Army Aviation over the years. There will be some mistakes. Readers are encouraged to make notes of needed corrections and mail them to the author. It is hoped a revised edition can be published in 1998 - the 50th anniversary of Army Aviation in Mississippi.

My personal thanks go to all who contributed information, materials and pictures, and my special thanks to my daughter and son-in-law, Becky and Tom Brown, who pushed me into a computer and scanner instead of the electric typewriter, which I started out using.

Hugh W. Ketchum
Army Aviator 1948 - 1976

PREFACE

EARLY HISTORY OF AVIATION AT THE ARMY LEVEL 1861 - 1948

- 1861 History records hot air balloons were used during the Civil War to observe the movement of enemy ground troops. It was on September 25 that the Army established a Balloon Corps, with Professor Thaddeus S.C. Lowe as the commanding officer.
- 1909 The Army purchased its first fixed wing aircraft from the Wright Brothers.
- 1912 In November the Army first used an aircraft to observe and adjust artillery fire. At that time the Army had 12 pilots, 39 enlisted men and 12 aircraft.
- 1914-1918 During World War I the Army utilized 89 Balloon Companies and 39 Air Squadrons.
- 1918-1942 The War Department established the Army Air Corps as a separate branch of the Army on July 2, 1926, with jurisdiction over single and multi-engine air missions. The Artillery continued to test the use of light aircraft for artillery fire adjustment missions at Ft Sill, Oklahoma, and during Army-wide maneuvers. It was during those tests that light aircraft pilots were dubbed "Grasshopper Pilots" because of the way they hopped from field to field and road to road.
- 1942 As the U.S. became directly involved in World War II, there was only one Army Air Training site, other than the Air Corps programs. It was a Test Group at Ft Sill - later to be known as the "Class Before One" - to train light aircraft pilots for the Artillery. On June 6, based on the success of those tests, the War Department authorized organic aviation for Artillery battalion and higher headquarters. Each HQ was authorized 2 aircraft, 2 pilots and 1 mechanic.

Some military historians recognize the June 6, 1942, authorization as the birthdate of Army Aviation.

In August, the Air Corps authorized Post Field at Ft Sill to become the Department of Air Training for the Artillery. The facility was authorized to train pilots in L 4 Piper Cubs, L 2 Taylorcrafts, and L 3 Aeronacs. The ratio of the trainees was to be 80% "Flying Sergeants" and 20% officers.

The Air Corps also authorized the aeronautical rating of Liaison Pilot and approved the awarding of Liaison wings for those who completed the training. The Liaison Pilot wings were the same as those awarded to graduates of the Air Corps Aviation Cadet program, except an "L" was on the emblem.

Soon after the training program was approved for Ft Sill, the Air Corps was directed to supply 100 trained pilots per month to the facility. The future Liaison Pilots were to come from the Air Corps Glider Training program, the Air Corps contract Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program, and from the Air Corps Primary Flight Training program.

In order to meet the quota, the Air Corps added primary flight training programs at Denton, Texas, Pittsburg, Kansas and Sheppard Field in Wichita Falls, Texas.

1943 In April, the Army changed the format of the Liaison Pilot Training program to provide that officers only were eligible to participate. This ruling caused the Air Corps to disband its Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program, which had been supplying "flying sergeants."

As part of the changes in 1943, the Army allocated some 2,000 Liaison pilots and most glider pilots to Air Corps Air Commando Groups. Most of those pilots served in Italy, other European military actions, and in the China-Burma-India actions. Other Liaison pilots went to the Artillery.

1945 In August, the War Department officially authorized organic aviation for Cavalry, Infantry, Engineer, Armor, and Tank Destroyer units on the same allocation basis as previously allowed the Artillery - two aircraft, two pilots, and one mechanic per Battalion/Regiment. In December Ft Sill was redesignated the Army Ground Forces Air Training School.

There are others who contend the August 1945 authorization of organic aviation to most ground forces represents the birthdate of Army Aviation.

Also, it was during 1945 that the Army trained its first helicopter pilots under contract with the Air Corps at Scott Field, Illinois, Sheppard Field, Texas, and at the Bell Corporation headquarters.

1946 The Army purchased its first helicopters - 13 YR 13's.

1947 July 26, 1947, is generally accepted as the beginning of Army Aviation. On that date Congress passed the National Security Act that changed the Air Corps to the U.S. Air Force - a separate branch of service on an equal level with the Army and Navy.

The Act officially gave the Air Force jurisdiction over all single and multi engine tactical and long range air missions, but allowed the Army to develop its own Aviation program to provide close support to the ground troops. The aircraft to be used in the program could not exceed 2,500 pounds for fixed wing planes and 4,000 pounds for helicopters.

Under the Act, the Air Force retained the responsibility to provide primary flight training, research, design and procurement of aircraft, depot maintenance, air medical evacuation, transportation of troops, tactical recon and aerial photography, for both rotary and fixed wing aircraft.

The new law limited the Army Aviation program to the following specified missions:

- *Surveillance of enemy forward areas*
- *Aerial route reconnaissance*
- *Control of march columns*
- *Camouflage inspection of troop positions*
- *Local courier services*
- *Emergency medical and non-medical evacuation*
- *Wire laying between units*
- *Limited aerial photography*
- *Limited resupply activities*
- *Air observation and adjustment of artillery fire*

To carry out the authorized missions, the new Army Aviation program continued the concept of placing two pilots, two aircraft and one mechanic under the direct command of battalion/regiment and higher headquarters units.

From a World War II high of 3,000 Army Air Corps aircraft, the Army inventory was down to about 250 by mid-1947.

1947 The Army developed an agreement with the Air Corps/Air Force to provide primary flight training at Gary Air Force Base in San Marcos, Tx., and maintenance mechanic training at Keesler AF Base in Biloxi, Miss.

1948 An advanced helicopter school was established at Ft Sill to provide advanced tactical training to the graduates of the contract rotary wing training schools. Later in the year Walters Air Force Base in Mineral Wells, Texas, was added as a primary rotary wing training school.

In February 1948, action was initiated through the National Guard to begin an Army Aviation program in Mississippi.

Chapter 1

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

1948 - 1951

First Army Aviation Program in Mississippi established in early 1948 at the Grenada Airport to serve Artillery units in North Mississippi and Hattiesburg.

Ten former Army Air Corps pilots comprised the program by late 1950.

The program had five L 16 Aeroncas, two L5 Stinsons, one L 17 Navion and one L 13 “goony bird.”

In December, 1950, all personnel and equipment was ordered to active duty, effective in mid-January, 1951.

HISTORY OF ARMY AVIATION IN MISSISSIPPI

CHAPTER I - THE FORMATIVE YEARS: 1948 TO 1951

It is generally agreed Army Aviation was born with the passage of the National Security Act on July 26, 1947, when the Air Corps became a separate branch of service along with the Army and Navy.

As the Army began the task of developing its own aviation program within the 10 specified parameters set forth in the National Security Act, it was necessary to tap the nucleus of trained Air Corps pilots, Liaison Pilots and maintenance personnel from World War II, and to expand its own training facilities at Ft. Sill.

The concept for organizing the new Army Aviation program was a departure from that of operating under a separate branch of the Army, as had been the case under the Army Air Corps. It was agreed aviation personnel and equipment would be attached and assigned under the direct command of battalions or regiments and higher headquarters. However, it was recognized equipment and training would have to be located at a common airfield where maintenance, security and other necessary services could be provided. The allocation of 2 aviators, 2 aircraft and 1 mechanic per headquarters unit was continued. Officer pilots would have to attain and maintain education requirements for the branch to which they were assigned.

MISSISSIPPI ARMY AVIATION BEGAN IN 1948



Gen. Pat Wilson

Organization of Army Aviation in Mississippi had its beginning in early 1948 under the direction of Gen. William "Pat" Wilson, adjutant general of the Miss. National Guard. The program was to support the state's part of the 31st Division, which was headquartered in Alabama, and the 631st Field Artillery Battalion, headquartered in Hattiesburg.

National Guard units in the Division that were authorized aviation included Hq 31st Div Artillery in Greenville, Hq 114th Field Artillery Battalion in Greenwood, Hq 932nd Field Artillery Battalion in Starkville, and the 198th Tank Battalion in Amory.

Since most of the Mississippi units with organic aviation were located in the north part of the state, it was agreed a maintenance support facility would be located in that geographic area if an airport site could be negotiated and already-trained pilots and maintenance technicians could be recruited from that area.

The Grenada Airport, which had been a glider and twin engine training base during World War II, was selected as the site for Mississippi's first aviation maintenance

support facility. Located less than three miles north of Grenada, the airport was already being used as the municipal airport. The facility had more than adequate hangar and ramp space and three concrete landing runways.

THE AVIATION PROGRAM'S FIRST PILOTS

Three former Air Corps pilots from Grenada - 1 Lt Fred Theisman and 2 Lts Benton Keeton and Hugh Ketchum - agreed to transfer from the Air Force Reserve to the Mississippi National Guard and to help recruit the necessary pilots and maintenance technicians to form the aviation program.



Benton Keeton



Hugh Ketchum



Fred Theisman

They met with State Adjutant General William Wilson and U. S. Army Advisor Colonel Thomas Oliphant at the War Memorial Building in Jackson on February 3, 1948, per the following order:

HEADQUARTERS
MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD
JACKSON, MISS.

5 February 1948

SPECIAL ORDERS

NUMBER 27

6. The following-named candidates will report to Col Thomas G. M. Oliphant, 0-3123, FA (RA), President of Examining Board #18, appointed by Par 13 SO 57, Hq Third Army, Ft McPherson, Ga., dated 4 June 47, at 1300 hours 8 February 48, at the office of the USP&DO for Mississippi, War Memorial Bldg, Jackson, Miss. for the purpose of taking examinations for appointment in the National Guard as required by Section 75, National Defense Act:

KEETON, Benton T.
KETCHUM, Hugh W
THEISMAN, FREDERICK W.

BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR:

WILLIAM P WILSON
Brig Gen Miss NG
Adjutant General

Their appointments to the National Guard were approved on March 1, 1948 per the following Special Order:

HEADQUARTERS
MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD
JACKSON, MISS.

1 March 1948

SPECIAL ORDERS

NUMBER 49

1. The following named candidates, having been examined and found qualified under Section 75, National Defense Act, are appointed in the Mississippi National Guard, to rank from this date, in the grade, branch, and with organization and position assignment as follows:

NAME	RANK	BRANCH	ORG ASSMT	DUTY ASSMT
THEISMAN, FREDERICK W.	1 Lt	FA	Hq 31st Div Arty	Liaison Pilot
KEETON, BENTON T.	2 Lt	FA	Hq 114th Fa Bn	Liaison Pilot
KETCHUM, HUGH W.	2 Lt	FA	Hq 932nd FA Bn	Liaison Pilot

Position assignments are to fill original vacancies. These appointments are subject to Federal recognition by the War Dept and such recognition has been requested from the National Guard Bureau.

BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR:

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM P. WILSON
Brig Gen, Miss NG
Adjutant General

HILTON R. VANCE
2 Lt AGD MNG
Asst to the Adj Gen

LT THEISMAN FULL TIME SUPERVISOR

1 Lt Theisman was employed, effective March 1, 1948, as the full time supervisor of the support facility at the Grenada Airport. An office and a maintenance shop were located in the hangar, which was shared with the Grenada Municipal Airport, managed by 2 Lt Keeton, and as an armory by A Battery of the 114th Field Artillery Battalion.

Two maintenance technicians, both former Air Corps mechanics, were hired, also effective March 1, by Lt Theisman. They were Sgts Robert Christopher and Sydney Perry. Sgt Christopher operated a private aircraft maintenance business in the hangar.

Cpt Jack Langley was assigned to the facility as Mississippi's first Army Advisor for Aviation.

PROGRAM'S FIRST AIRCRAFT AN L 17

Mississippi's aviation program received its first aircraft during the first week of March - an L 17 Navion. Before Cpt Langley could check out the pilots in the aircraft, it was involved in a crash on the parking ramp of the Grenada Airport on March 10 during a night mission under moonlight conditions.

Cpt Langley was using the ramp of the airport as a landing site when the aircraft struck a tow tractor, totaling the aircraft and injuring Sgt Sid Perry, who was manning the tractor with a light indicating the boundary between the landing site and the main hangar. Sgt Perry subsequently received a medical discharge as result of injuries to both arms. Cpt Langley was not seriously injured and was transferred out of state. Meanwhile, Mississippi's aviation program was without an aircraft until further equipment was assigned to the facility.

MORE PILOTS RECRUITED

By April 25, three more former Air Corps pilots were recruited - Lts Robert Barker and Leonard Alford of Grenada and Lt James Reed of Starkville. The six pilots in the program at the time were ordered to take qualifying check rides by Maj Gene Vinson of Meridian per the following Special Order:

HEADQUARTERS
MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD
JACKSON, MISS.

23 April 1948

SPECIAL ORDERS

NUMBER 89

2. The following named officers, Miss NG, will report to Major Eugene Vinson, A0384248, AF, Miss ANG. Sr member of Exam Bd apptd by Par 3 SO 68, Hq Miss NG, dated 26 March 48, at 1230 hours, 25 Apr 48, at the Grenada Municipal Airport, Grenada, for the purpose of taking flight examinations to determine their fitness for rating of Liaison Pilot in accordance with AF Reg 50-7. 9 Oct 47:

1st Lt THEISMAN, Frederick W.	0-814590	FA	Hq 31st Div Arty
1st Lt BARKER, Robert S.	0-789040	FA	Hq 198th Tank Bn
2nd Lt KETCHUM, Hugh W.	0-840504	FA	Hq 932nd FA Bn
2nd Lt KEETON, Benton T.	0-2059537	FA	Hq 114th FA Bn
1st Lt REED, James W.	0-2044722	FA	Hq 932nd FA Bn
1st Lt ALFORD, William L.	0-757146	FA	Hq 631st FA Bn

BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR:

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM P. WILSON
Brig Gen Miss NG
Adjutant General

HILTON R VANCE
1st Lt. AGD, Miss NG
Asst to the Adj Gen

Lt. Reed did not take the flight examination and failed to pursue his requirements to become a Liaison Pilot. He subsequently resigned from the National Guard in June. The other five officers passed their flight examinations, were designated Liaison Pilots and assigned to the units noted in the special order above.

Shortly after being approved as a Liaison Pilot for the Mississippi National Guard, Lt Keeton was seriously injured in a private plane crash. The injuries forced him to resign from the National Guard, leaving the program with only four pilots.

Within another month, Lt William McMasters of Greenwood and Lt Robert Raper of Duck Hill, both former World War II Air Corps pilots, joined the National Guard and were designated Liaison Pilots. Lt McMasters was assigned to Hq 31st Division Artillery. Lt Raper was assigned to Hq 114th Field Artillery Battalion, replacing Lt. Keeton. A few months later, 1 Lt Thomas Bell of Grenada, also a former World War II Air Corps pilot, joined the program, and was assigned to Hq Division Artillery.

SEVEN PILOTS IN THE PROGRAM LATER IN 1948

Below are the other five aviators who joined Lt Theisman and Lt Ketchum in the program in 1948, and Army Advisor Larry Loos, who replaced Cpt Langley.



Leonard Alford



Robert Barker



Thomas Bell



Billy McMasters



Robert Raper



Larry Loos

PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM BEGAN LATE 1948

Since the newly-organized aviation program's aircraft had not arrived, aviation support was not available during summer field training at Ft Benning, Ga., in 1948. The aircraft did arrive by late 1948 and the seven aviators began a training program under Maj Larry Loos, who had replaced Cpt Langley as the Army Advisor.

He established a concerted training program that carried through 1949 and 1950. It included barrier landings and take-offs, resupply procedures, message drops and pickups, wire laying, artillery fire adjustment and dead reckoning navigation.

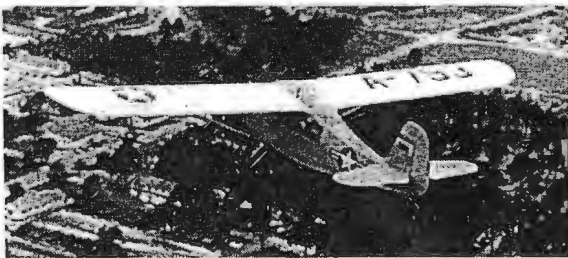
The pilots and mechanics were required to perform Monday night armory drills with their units, or perform equivalent training for the two-hour sessions with the 114th FA Bn in Grenada. All flight training was performed on the non-paid time of the pilots and mechanics. The branch educational requirements for the pilots were waived indefinitely.

During the latter part of 1948 and early 1949, there were several changes in the full time maintenance technicians. Sgt Perry received a medical discharge and Sgt Christopher resigned in late 1948. New mechanics hired included Sgts Allen Anderson, Robert Minge, Homer Taylor, Thomas Adams, Lansford "Butch" Marcum and Jesse Strider.

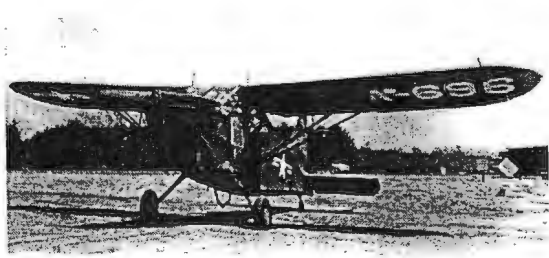
Full aviation support was available during summer field training at Ft Benning, Ga., in 1949. The aircraft were flown from the Grenada facility to Ft. Benning. It took two days for the flight because of the 65-mile per hour airspeed and the small fuel capacity of the L 16's. Each of the ground units utilized aviation capabilities during the training period.

AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED TO THE PROGRAM

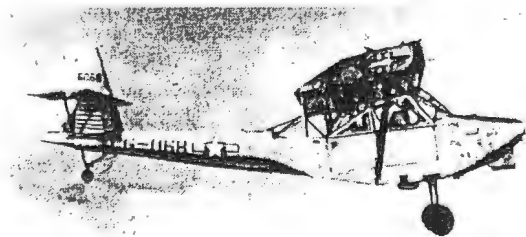
Below are pictures of the aircraft assigned to the various units and maintained at the Grenada maintenance support facility during 1948-50:



L 16



L 5



L 13



L 17

The facility serviced one L 17 Navion, two L 5 Stinsons, one of which was an ambulance type aircraft, one L 13 "Goony Bird", which had a full instrument panel, and five L 16 Aeroncas. The L 16 was the primary support aircraft for artillery fire adjustment. The L 17 Navion was used for VIP missions for Hq Division Artillery and its two battalions, the 198th Tank Battalion and Hq Detachment in Jackson.

THREE MORE PILOTS JOINED IN 1950

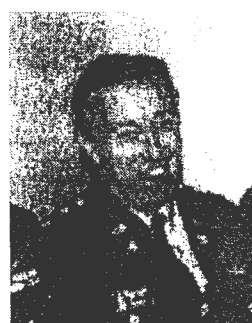
Two more former World War II Air Corps pilots - Lt Joel Varner of Senatobia and Lt Harry Morrow of Vardaman - and former World War II Army Liaison Pilot Lt James Gentry of Meridian - joined the program in 1950. Lt. Varner was assigned to the 631st Field Artillery Battalion with Lt. Alford; Lt Morrow joined Lt. Raper in the 114th Field Artillery Battalion; and, Lt Gentry joined Lt. Ketchum in the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion. Lt. Barker continued with the 198th Tank Battalion, while Cpt Theisman and Lts. McMasters and Bell continued with Hq Division Artillery.



James Gentry



Harry Morrow



Joel Varner

The addition of the new pilots brought the strength up to ten, just one short of the full authorization at that time of two pilots per authorized unit, plus the Division Artillery Air Officer.

All of the pilots and supporting personnel trained with their units during annual field training at Ft McClellan, Ala., during the summer of 1950 amid rumors that National Guard troops would be used for combat duty in Korea.

AVIATION UNITS TO ACTIVE DUTY

The 631st Battalion was alerted for active duty even before reporting to summer field training in August. The unit, including Lts Alford and Varner, and Maintenance Technician Lansford Marcum, was ordered to Ft Sill., Okla., immediately after completing annual field training on September 1. Lts Alford and Varner flew one L 16 and one L 5 from the Grenada support facility to Ft Sill.

The remaining pilots in the 31st Division units were alerted for active duty in December, with an effective reporting date of January 16, 1951 at Ft Jackson, S. C. At that time the aviation support facility in Grenada was disbanded.

ARMY AVIATOR RATING ADOPTED IN 1950

In still another major change in the overall Army Aviation program during 1950, the Liaison Pilot designation was eliminated. All Liaison Pilots in the program at the time were redesignated Army Aviators, the aeronautical rating that would be given to all future graduates of expanding Army training facilities.

At the time the Army adopted the new Army Aviator rating, it also established a new aeronautical badge to replace the Liaison Pilot wings. The new badge resembled the Air Force wings, except the tip of the wings curled slightly upward and the emblem in the middle of the wings was more of a modified heart shape. Also, the badge was smaller than the Air Force wings, but continued to provide for a star over the emblem to indicate a Senior Army Aviator, and the star circled with a wreath to indicate a Master Army Aviator. Aeronautical wings were also designated for crew members and a flight surgeon.

Below are pictures of the Liaison Pilot wings and the aviator wings approved by the 1950 change:



Liaison Pilot



Army Aviator



Senior Army Aviator



Master Army Aviator

MAJOR CHANGES AT ARMY LEVEL 1948 - 1950

ARMY MOVED PRIMARY FLIGHT TRAINING: In early 1949 the Air Force moved its primary army pilot training program from Gary AF Base in San Marcos, Tex., to Connally AF Base in Waco, Tex., and its maintenance mechanic training to Keesler AF Base in Biloxi, Miss. However, later in the year the Army was given authority to train its own pilots and mechanics for organic aircraft. The Air Force retained its control to train both rotary and fixed wing aircraft pilots and mechanics for aircraft that were common to both services. The Air Force also continued its responsibility for research, design and procurement of equipment.

ARMY HAD 1,155 FIXED WING AIRCRAFT: When the Korean War officially began in June 1950, the Army had 1,155 fixed wing aircraft as compared to only 250 in mid-1947. They were mostly L 16 Aeroncas, L 17 Navions and L 5 Stinsons, but there were some L 4 Cubs, L 21 Super Cubs and U 8 Twin Beech Bonanzas. The program's inventory included only 56 OH 13 Bell helicopters and no cargo helicopters

ARMY PLANNED TO TRAIN CARGO HELICOPTER COMPANIES: The Army initiated plans in late 1950 to train five Helicopter Transportation companies to replace ambulances and trucks for tactical and logistical support in the forward areas of combat zones. Because of Air Force opposition to any expansion of Army Aviation's control over close combat tactical and logistical support, and because the Air Force controlled the procurement of aircraft, the Army was able to begin training only one Cargo Helicopter Company at Ft Sill, using UH 19 Sikorsky helicopters.

ARMY AVIATION HEADED CALL

History records that Army Aviation, including the Mississippi program, was forced to heed a call for combat duty in less than three years after the programs began. For the Mississippi aviators and supporting personnel it was the second time in less than a decade that they had to disrupt their personal and business lives to serve their country in time of war.

THE LAST SUMMER CAMP BEFORE ACTIVE DUTY



Ft McClellan 1950 Summer Camp, Front row, left to right: -----, -----, Bass, Weeks, -----, Windham, -----, Charley Moore; Second row, Raymond Forehand, Trumbo, Hugh Ketchum, -----, -----, Helton, Martin, Nichols; Third row, Larry Loos, Gilbert Jones, Tommy Bell, Robert Barker, John Fex, Brandon, Peterson, Aubrey Bishop, Emmett Davis, Schwartz. Rear, Russ White.

1948-50

THREE OF THE FULL-TIME MECHANICS IN MISSISSIPPI'S FIRST AVIATION PROGRAM WERE:



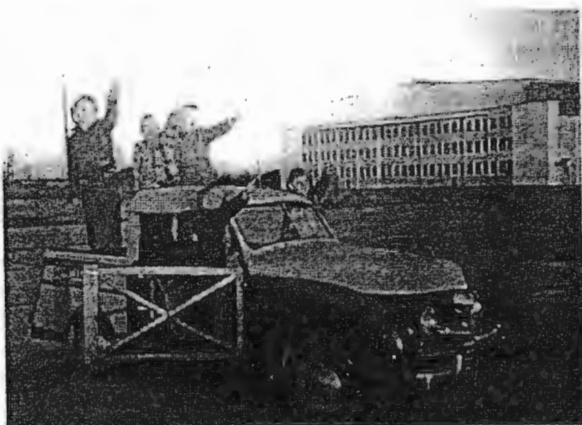
Butch Marcum



Jesse Strider



Homer Taylor

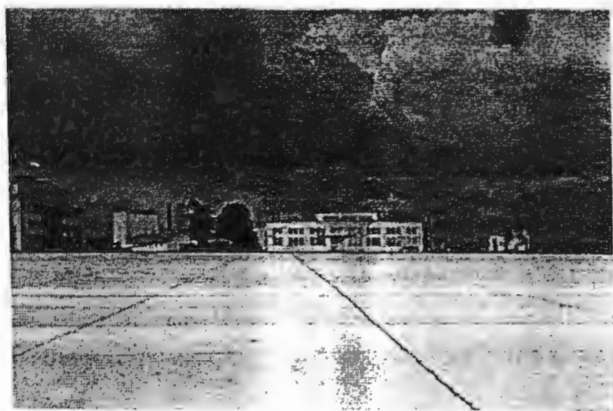


At left is the Grenada Airport, site of the state's first Army Aviation Support Facility.

Three of the children's parents are former State Senator and Mrs. John Keeton of Grenada. Parents of the other two children are Mr. and Mrs. Benton Keeton. Benton was one of the three pilots in the original aviation program.

At right is another picture of the Grenada Airport, showing the building to the right of the hangar.

The building was used as an armory for the Headquarters Battery of the 114th Field Artillery Battalion, the unit with which the aviators performed equivalent training during Monday night drills.



CHAPTER II

THE KOREAN WAR YEARS

1951 - 1952

All pilots, mechanics and aircraft reported to Ft. Jackson, S. C., in mid-January to two years of active duty during the Korean War.

All aviators sent to Ft. Sill, Okla., for basic artillery training.

Six of the ten aviators in the original Mississippi program saw combat duty in 1952. Three of the aviators were sent to Germany for border patrol duty there. The other aviator in the original program had transferred to the Judge Advocate General branch.

In late 1952 one L 19, one aviator and one mechanic were based at Hawkins Field in Jackson. All of the original aviators and mechanics were released from active duty by the end of 1952.

HISTORY OF ARMY AVIATION IN MISSISSIPPI

Chapter II - THE KOREAN WAR YEARS - 1951 - 1952

Since all of the Mississippi units that were authorized organic aviation were called to active duty for the Korean War, the Grenada Aviation Support Facility was disbanded in January 1951 when all personnel and equipment accompanied their 31st Division units to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. The call to active duty came less than three years after army aviation was organized in Mississippi.

Lts Leonard Alford and Joel Varner had flown one L 16 Aeronca and one L 5 Stinson from the Grenada facility to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, when the 631st Field Artillery Battalion was activated on September 1, 1950. Sgt. Butch Marcum, one of the full time maintenance technicians at the Grenada Support Facility, also accompanied the unit to Ft. Sill. The 631st FA Battalion served as "school troops" at Ft. Sill until it was transferred to Germany in mid-1951.

The remaining aviators who were supported by the Grenada facility ferried four L 16's, one L 5 and one L 17 to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina to join the 31st Division at its active duty station per 3rd Army General Order # 512, dated December 18, 1950, with an effective reporting date of 16 January 1951. An L 13 "Goony Bird" had already been turned back to the U.S. Army.

Upon reporting to Ft. Jackson, Cpt Fred Theisman was assigned as the Division Artillery Air Officer. Lt. Billy McMasters continued with Hq Division Artillery. Lt. Thomas Bell, who had been with Hq Division Artillery, transferred to the Judge Advocate General Section. He was replaced in Hq Division Artillery by Lt. Robert Barker, who had been with the 198th Tank Battalion before the unit was activated.

Lts. Harry Morrow and Robert Raper continued with the 114th Field Artillery Battalion and Lts. Hugh Ketchum and James Gentry continued with the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion. Two full time maintenance technicians, Sgts. Jesse Strider and Homer Taylor, who had accompanied the units to Ft. Jackson, were assigned to the Hq Division Artillery. The other full time maintenance technicians who had served at the Grenada Support Facility had resigned before the Division was activated.

All of the Mississippi aviators, who were assigned to artillery units, joined the Alabama aviators in operating from a common Division airfield at Ft. Jackson. Ltc James Fex of Alabama was the Division Aviation Officer in charge of the airfield operations and Cpt. Emmett Davis of Alabama was the Operations Officer. The 31st Division aviation personnel shared the airfield with the 8th Division, also headquartered at Ft. Jackson at that time.

AVIATORS UNDERWENT BRANCH TRAINING

Soon after reporting for active duty at Ft. Jackson, the seven 31st Division aviators from the original Mississippi program were sent to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma for Basic Artillery training per the following letter order from Ft Jackson:

HEADQUARTERS
FORT JACKSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

18 February 1951

LETTER ORDER
NUMBER B-216

SUBJECT: TRAVEL ORDERS
TO: OFFICERS CONCERNED

I. Fol officers orgn indicated 31st Inf Div WP o/a 30 Jan 51 to Ft Sill, Okla., on TDY for aprx fifteen (15) weeks for the purpose of attending the Associate Field Artillery Battery Officer Course at the Artillery School, Ft Sill, Okla., 21 Feb 51. Upon completion of TDY rt to proper sta. Three (3) DDALV auth upon compl of course:

CPT FREDERICK W. THEISMAN, Hq & Hq 31st Div Arty
CPT DELBERT H. WILSON, Hq Btry, 117th FA Bn
1st LT ROBERT S. BARKER, Hq Btry, 31st Div Arty
1st LT RAYMOND FOREHAND, Hq Btry, 933rd FA Bn
1st LT ROSCOE B. HALL, Hq Btry, 117th FA Bn
1st Lt GREY W. HARRISON, JR., Hq Btry, 114th FA Bn
1st LT HUGH W. KETCHUM, Hq Btry, 932nd FA Bn
1st LT WILLIAM C. McMASTERS, Hq 31st Div Arty
2nd LT ROBERT E. RAPER, JR., Hq Btry, 114th FA Bn

2nd LT THOMAS E. BARTON, Btry C, 932nd FA Bn
2nd LT JAMES GRAHAM, Hq Btry, 114th FA Bn
2nd LT JAMES O. GENTRY, Hq Btry, 932nd FA Bn
2nd LT GUY A. GREEN, Hq Btry, 114th FA Bn
2nd LT THOMAS H. KELLY, JR., Btry B, 117th FA Bn
2nd LT HARRY L. MORROW, Hq Btry, 114th FA Bn
2nd LT WILLIAM A. OGGs, Hq Btry, 933rd FA Bn
2nd LT MARLIN D. RANDLE, Btry A, 932nd FA Bn
2nd LT DALLAS N. VICKERS, Btry B, 933rd FA Bn

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL COLLINS:
E. E. EWING
WOJG, ASST ADJ GEN

Upon completing the branch training school, Lt. Raper was enrolled in the Army Flight Training School, which had been established at Ft Sill. Lt. Gentry was transferred to Ft. Benning, Ga., where he joined the 41st Field Artillery Battalion, which was serving as "school troops" at the Infantry Center. The remaining 31st Division aviators from Mississippi were enrolled in a six-weeks refresher flight training course in L 21 Super Cubs and L 19 Birddogs per the following Letter Order:

HEADQUARTERS 31ST INFANTRY DIVISION
FORT JACKSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

7 July 1951

LETTER ORDER
NUMBER 731

SUBJECT: TRAVEL ORDERS
TO: OFFICERS CONCERNED

I. Fol Off orgn indicated upon completion of the Associate Field Artillery Battery Officer Course, the Artillery School, will remain at Ft Sill on TDY for aprx four (4) weeks for the purpose of attending the Army Aviation Refresher Course, the Artillery School, rpt 21 June 51. Upon completion of TDY or unless sooner reld by proper authority will rtn to proper sta.:

CPT FREDERICK W. THEISMAN, Hq 31st Arty
1st LT ROBERT S. BARKER, Hq 31st Div Arty
1st LT HUGH W. KETCHUM, Hq Btry 932nd FA Bn

1st LT WILLIAM C. McMASTERS, Hq 31st Div Arty
1st RUSSELL C. WHITE, Hq Btry 117th FA Bn
2nd LT HARRY L. MORROW, Hq Btry, 114th FA Bn

BY ORDER OF MAJOR GENERAL PAXTON:
CLINTON L. ADAMS
Lt Col AGC, Adjutant General

Lts Leonard Alford and Joel Varner, were still at Ft Sill, serving with the 631st Field Artillery Battalion as school troops. Cpt Jack Langley, who was the first Army Aviation Advisor in Mississippi, was an instructor at the Air Training Center in Ft Sill at the time.

AVIATORS PARTICIPATED IN READINESS TESTS

During the remaining months of 1951, the aviators provided aerial support for their units as they underwent combat readiness tests at Ft Jackson, Division-wide maneuvers at Camp McCall, N.C., and artillery field exercises at Ft Gordon, Ga..

When the readiness tests were completed some of the aviators attended an Instrument Flight Training School at the Atlanta International Airport in late 1951 and early 1952. The school, one of the first established by the Army, was operated under a civilian contract, using Beechcraft Bonanza and Cessna 198 aircraft. The latter aircraft was unique in that it had a cross wind landing gear that allowed the nose of the aircraft to crab into the wind without changing the ground path both in landing and taxiing.

In early 1952 most of the aviators received overseas assignments as fillers for units in Korea and Europe. However, when the 31st Division was designated as a participant in the Army-wide Operations Longhourn maneuvers in Texas, the overseas orders were delayed long enough for the individuals to complete the maneuvers and to accompany the Division to its new station assignment at Camp Atterbury near Indianapolis, Indiana.

From Camp Atterbury the remaining Mississippi 31st Division aviators were immediately assigned to Korea, except Lt. McMasters who was sent to the European theater. Replacement aviators were assigned to the Division during the remainder of the Division's stay at Camp Atterbury, and later at Camp McCoy, Wisc., before being deactivated in late 1952.

SIX OF TEN AVIATORS IN COMBAT

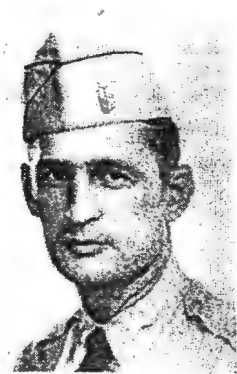
Six of the ten aviators from the original Mississippi Army Aviation program who went on active duty during the Korean War saw combat duty in Korea.



Robert Barker



James Gentry



Hugh Ketchum



Harry Morrow



Robert Raper



Fred Theisman

Lt. Gentry was the first to go, leaving Ft Benning, Ga., in February 1952 to join the 987th Field Artillery battalion in the western sector of Korea near the 38th parallel. He also served as an aviator for other units during the latter months of his 1952 tour in Korea.

Cpt Theisman served with a Corps Aviation headquarters in central Korea.

Lts Ketchum and Raper first served with the 40th Division Artillery Air Section in support of a Republic of Korea division on the front line near Kumwha in central Korea. Cpt John Dekker was the airfield commander. The three became known among aviators for the oddity of their names - Ketchum, Dekker and Raper. Later Ketchum and Raper joined the 40th Division Air Section when the Division was moved to front line duty in the Punch Bowl area near the 38th parallel on the East Coast.

Lt Morrow served with the 4th Division Air Section in the Punch Bowl area.

Lt Barker served with the 7th Division Air Section on the front line near the Kumwha area.

THREE AVIATORS SERVED IN EUROPE

Three of the original ten aviators in the Mississippi Aviation program served in the European theater during the Korean War.

Lts Leonard Alford and Joel Varner served with the 631st Field Artillery Battalion when the unit was shipped to Germany to perform border patrol duties in mid-1951. When their two-year tour of duty was completed in late 1952, Lt Alford remained on active duty and Lt Varner was deactivated.

Lt McMasters, the remaining 31st Division aviator from the original group, also was assigned to border patrol duty in Europe in 1952 after completing instrument training school at Atlanta.



Leonard Alford



Joel Varner



Billy McMasters

OTHER MISSISSIPPI AVIATORS ON ACTIVE DUTY

Other Mississippi aviators, who were not in the original State Aviation program, saw active duty during the Korean War years. Three of them were involved in combat in Korea, along with the former Army Advisor to Army Aviation in Mississippi.



Lt. Paul St. John, left, of Columbus, a former Air Corps pilot, went on active duty with the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion. In the latter part of 1951 he was assigned to the Army Aviation Flight Training School at Ft. Sill.

Upon completion of training there, he was shipped directly to Korea where he saw combat duty with the 9th Corps Aviation headquarters.

When he completed his front line duty, he extended on active duty for three more years, including an additional tour flying administrative and VIP missions in Korea

Lt George Schumpert, right, of Amory, a former Army Air Corps pilot in WW 2, also went on active duty in 1951, serving with the 198th Tank Battalion as part of the 31st Division's call to active duty.

While at Ft Jackson, S. C., he was assigned to the Army Flight Training School at Ft Sill. Upon completion of the flight refresher course, he was immediately shipped to Korea where he served with the 24th Division during the latter part of 1951 and early 1952. Upon completion of his front line tour of duty with the 24th Division, he was assigned to the Pentagon's 5th Regimental Combat Team before being released from active duty in late 1952.



Cpt J. T. Cox, left, of Pontotoc, a former World War II Army Liaison Pilot with combat experience, went on active duty with Battery C of the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion when the 31st Division was activated. He attended the Basic Artillery Course at Ft Sill, and upon his return to Ft Jackson, he was placed on flight status and assigned as Aviation Officer for the 8th Division.

He completed the Army Fixed Wing Instrument Course at the Atlanta Airport then served the remainder of his tour of active duty at Ft Jackson as the Aviation Officer for the 8th Division before being released in late 1952.

2 Lt Shepherd Hamner of Jackson was employed in the Selective Service Section of Hq & Hq Detachment of the National Guard for two years before going on active duty to attend the Army Aviation School at Ft Sill. Upon completing the flight training he went directly to Korea with the 25th Division Air Section in August 1949.

Not only was he involved in combat in Korea during late 1950 and 1951, but he was the key figure in an international crisis while serving a three-year tour in Europe. In 1955 he was detained by the Communist Forces for an alleged violation of their air space. The detainment created quite a furor between the U.S. and Communist officials over a two-week period before he was released. He returned to the U.S. with the 9th Division and served with that unit in Ft Carson, Colo., until his release from active duty in 1958.



Maj Larry Loos, left, the second Army Advisor for the Mississippi Aviation program during the formative years in Grenada, also served in Korea.

When the Mississippi program was disbanded in January 1951 following the 31st Division's call to active duty, Maj Loos was sent to Korea where he saw combat duty in 1951 and early 1952.

He was killed in action while on a combat mission in North Central Korea.

MAJOR EVENTS AT ARMY LEVEL IN 1951-1952

During the Korean War years there were several major changes as the Army Aviation program continued to expand and to take its place as a full member of the combat arms team.

FIRST USE OF HELICOPTERS: The Korean War marked the first time rotary wing aircraft were used on a regular basis under combat conditions. The primary use of the OH 13 and OH 23 helicopters in the Army inventory at the time was for the evacuation of wounded personnel from the front lines to hospitals (MASH units) in the combat zone. Approximately 25,000 wounded soldiers were evacuated during the three-year conflict.

ANOTHER AIR FORCE-ARMY AGREEMENT: Early in 1951, as the Air Force continued its strong opposition to any expansion of Army Aviation missions that had any relationship to tactical and logistical combat missions, another "Memorandum of Agreement" was issued that intended to clarify limitations on Army Aviation missions.

The agreement retained virtually all of the specified missions of the 1947 National Security act, but it did authorize the Army to transport supplies, equipment and small units within the combat zone - normally about 75 miles forward and behind the main line of resistance with enemy forces. It also eliminated the weight limit on Army aircraft and agreed Army Aviation missions would be defined solely by "function."

ARMY TRAINED FIRST CARGO HELICOPTER COMPANY: Training of the Army's first Cargo Helicopter Transportation Company was completed in December 1951, which also marked the first graduation class of warrant officer aviators. The Company was later redesignated as the 6th Helicopter Transportation Company and participated in several Army-wide exercises during 1952. One of the exercises in which the Helicopter Company was involved was the joint Air Force-Army Operation Longhorn maneuvers in Texas during March and April 1952. Most of the 31st Division aviators also were a part of that exercise. The Helicopter Company was sent to Korea in December 1952 and became operational in March 1953, just a few months before fighting ended in July.

HELICOPTER INVENTORY INCREASED: The Army's inventory of cargo helicopters increased from zero in June 1950 to 85 in 1953, including 72 UH 19's and 13 UH 25's. The inventory when the fighting ended also included 460 OH 13's and 262 OH 23's.

ARMY AVIATION PROVED ITS WORTH

Although pressed into combat duty in Korea within two years after it was formed, Army Aviation proved its worth far beyond expectations. In quick order the Army established its own aviation program to provide trained aerial support to front line ground troops. Under combat conditions, the aviators served as the "eyes of the Artillery," the original mission of light aircraft, but went much further to provide wire laying missions, aerial photography, resupply missions, evacuations and served ably in performing command transportation for front line unit commanders.

Three other valuable missions evolved. One was the evaluation of Air Force bombing, strafing and napalm missions on front line targets and providing surveillance reports to the Air Force forward controller in the Division G 2 section. Another was the aerial distribution of propaganda leaflets over front line enemy forces. It was also under Korean combat conditions that Army Aviators pioneered the use of helicopters for medical evacuation.

In addition to flying combat missions, Army Aviation performed yeoman services with courier, VIP transportation and other administrative-type flights that otherwise would have taken many hours to perform with ground transportation over the rugged Korean road system,

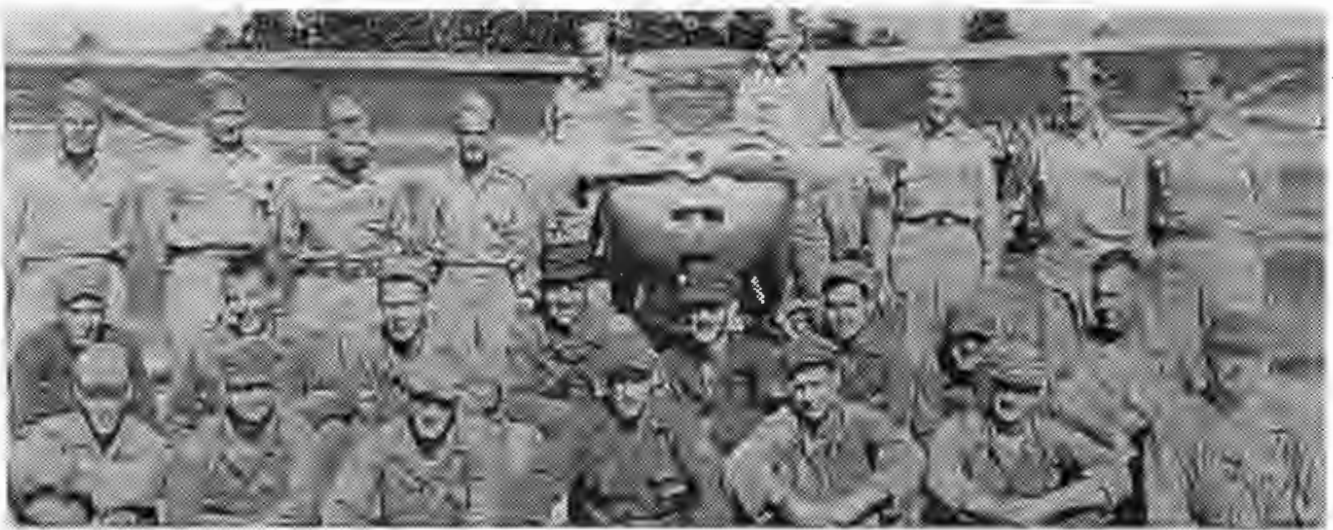
Historians have already recorded that Army Aviation "came of age" during the Korean War. Most of the aviators in Mississippi's original Aviation program were a part of that "coming of age." Though the success of aviation in Korea had been established, there was still a question about the original concept of assigning aviation personnel and equipment under the direct command of unit commanders of ground units that often would be operating in areas remote from landing sites of the aircraft. From the early days in Korea, it became evident the aircraft, aviators and supporting maintenance and technical personnel would have to be based at a considerable distance from the front lines and from their units for refueling, maintenance, supply and security reasons.

Most Army Aviation sections performed as separate units during the Korean War, assuming the same command, logistics, security and operational responsibilities as if they were a company or higher headquarters. The ad hoc set-ups worked well as Army Aviation proved to be a major player along with all types of ground forces.

MISSISSIPPI READY TO REORGANIZE

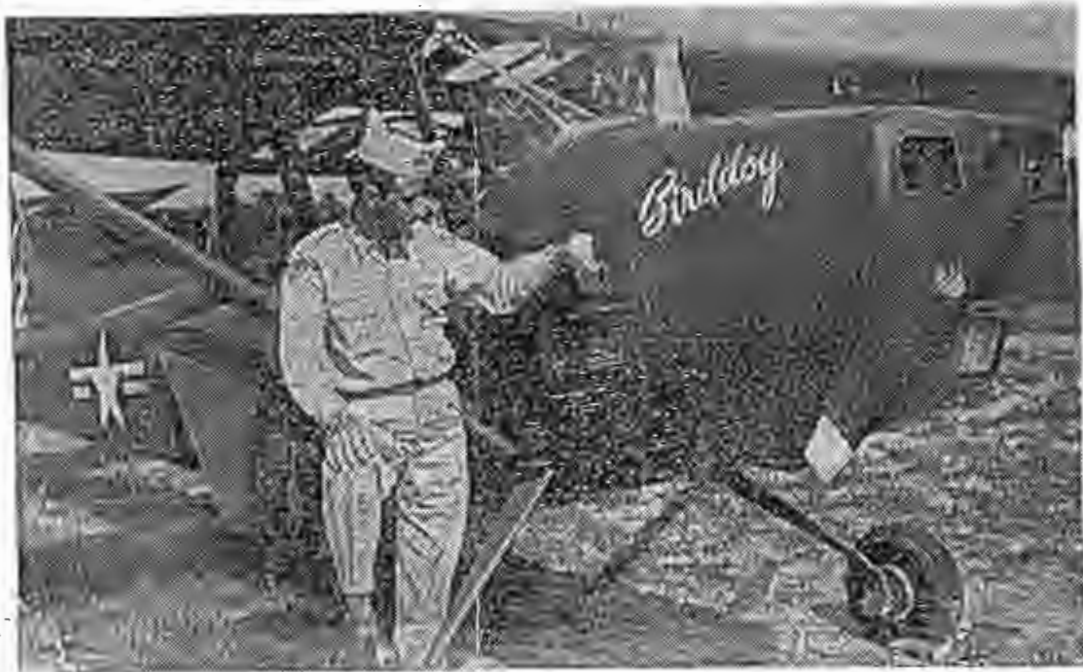
There was no Army Aviation in Mississippi during 1951 and until July 1952. At that time the 168th Engineer Battalion was assigned one L 19 Birdog aircraft. 1st Lt. John O'Keefe, a full time employee of the Adjutant's General Staff and former "Flying Sergeant" Liaison Pilot in World War II, was assigned as the aviator for the Battalion. Sgt Alfred McLendon was employed as a full time maintenance technician to service the L19, which was based at Hawkins Field in Jackson. Upon return of most troops from active duty by January 1953, reorganization was begun.

1951 / 1952



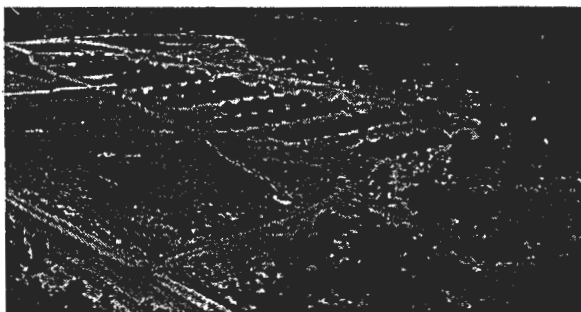
SOME OF THE AVIATORS AND MECHANICS IN THE 31ST DIVISION AVIATION SECTION AT FT JACKSON IN 1951

Front Row, left to right, -----, -----, Pastoris, Bass, Bearden, -----, and Moore. Middle Row, left to right, Roby, Murry Maxwell, -----, Windham, Homer Taylor, -----, ----- and Jesse Strider. Third Row, left to right, Russ White of Alabama, Robert Barker, Harry Morrow, Hugh Ketchum, Col. Fex of Alabama, the Division Aviation Officer, Sauls, and Schwartz, the latter two also from Alabama. Standing at rear, Raymond Forehand and Emmett Davis, both of Alabama.



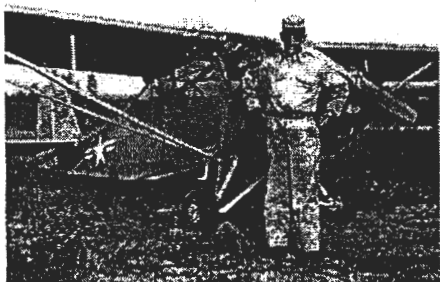
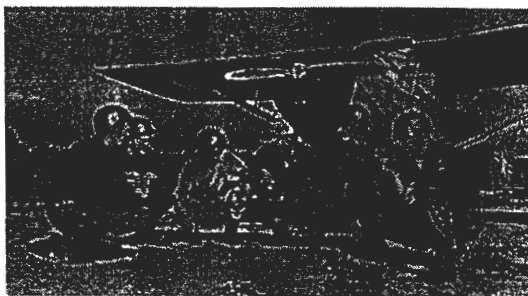
First Lt. William C. McMaster of Greenwood, Miss., pilot for the Thirty-first division's air section, checks an external power supply unit of an L-19 "Birddog" prior to takeoff at the division air strip at Fort Jackson. Lieutenant McMaster flew the "Birddog" from its Wichita home after name contest ceremonies at the Cessna Aircraft company there. Gen. Mark W. Clark, chief of the United States army field forces, was Cessna's guest of honor and judge of the name contest. (United States army photo.)

1951-52



An air view of a field artillery battalion area at Camp Gordon, Georgia during a training exercise.

1-LT Hugh Ketchum briefs the mechanics on the day's activities during training at Fort Jackson, S. C. in 1951.



1-LT Billy McMasters, with his Dixie Rebel cap, is ready for an L-16 flight from Ft. Jackson in 1951.



Sgt Murray Maxwell of Starkville was a mechanic for the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion during the time the 31st Division was on active duty in 1951-52.



At left is Ellis "Scotty" Self, of Starkville, who went on active duty with the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion and completed aircraft and engine mechanic school while on active duty.

1951, 52



Above is a picture of a typical airstrip near the front lines in Korea. The landing area was a graded dirt strip along the road in central Korea, about ten miles from the front lines. The operations office and living quarters are at lower right.



At left, an L 19 Birddog flies over the mountains of Korea in 1952.

The L 19 was the primary aircraft for artillery observation and fire adjustment during the Korean War.

CHAPTER III

POST KOREA REORGANIZATION

1953 - 1959

The Mississippi Aviation program was reorganized in early 1953 at Hawkins Field in Jackson, with Cpt Fred Theisman, who had been the full time director of the Grenada facility, as the maintenance support director.

Six of the ten aviators in the original Mississippi aviation program rejoined during the reorganization.

During this period of time, the program utilized L 19 Birddogs, L 20 Beavers, L 17 Navions and OH 13 Bell helicopters. The first helicopter in the Mississippi program arrived in 1954.

In 1955 Cpt. Theisman returned to active duty and Cpt John O'Keefe took over as director of the Hawkins Field facility.

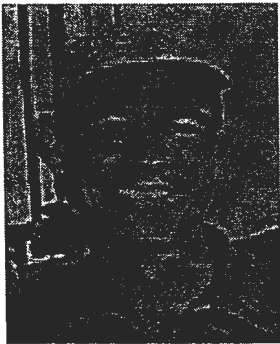
By 1958, 40 aviators had joined the program and six were helicopter qualified.

HISTORY OF ARMY AVIATION IN MISSISSIPPI

CHAPTER III - POST KOREA REORGANIZATION - 1953 - 1959

The Mississippi Part of the 31st Division and other National Guard units were reorganized in early 1953 following their release from active duty during the Korean War. The Mississippi Army Aviation Support Facility was also reorganized to service the aircraft for the various units authorized organic aviation.

CPT THEISMAN DIRECTOR OF REORGANIZED SUPPORT FACILITY



Fred Theisman



Jesse Strider



Alfred McLendon

Cpt Fred Theisman, who had been the director of the Support Facility in Grenada prior to activation of the National Guard units for the Korean War, returned as the full time director of the reorganized facility in Jackson. Sgt Alfred McLendon, who had been the full time maintenance technician for the one L 19 aircraft since mid - 1952, and Sgt Jesse Strider, who had been one of the full time mechanics with the aviation program in Grenada and who had served with the 31st Division Air Section on active duty, were employed as the full time technicians.

FACILITY LOCATED NORTH SIDE HAWKINS FIELD

Mississippi's Aviation Program, originally organized at the Grenada Airport in 1948, was reorganized in early 1953 at Hawkins Field in Jackson. The facility used a metal building located in the northwest corner of the field.



The metal hangar is shown in the top right corner of the picture to the left.

Aircraft parking space is shown to the right of the hangar. Taxi access from the parking area was available to the north-south runway.

SIX OF TEN PRE-KOREA AVIATORS REJOINED PROGRAM

Pre-Korea Mississippi Army Aviators rejoining the program, along with Cpt. Theisman, were Lts Hugh Ketchum, Grenada; James Gentry, Meridian; Robert Raper, Duck Hill; William McMasters, Grenada; and Joel Varner, Senatobia. 1 Lt John O'Keefe, who became a full time employee of the National Guard in 1952, also remained in the program. Lt Thomas Bell of Jackson continued in the National Guard with the Judge Advocate General Section. Lts. Robert Barker of Brandon and Harry Morrow of Vardaman remained inactive. Lt William Alford stayed on active duty.

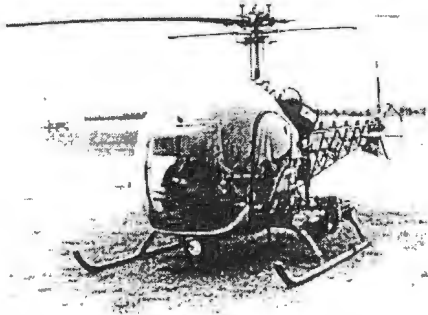
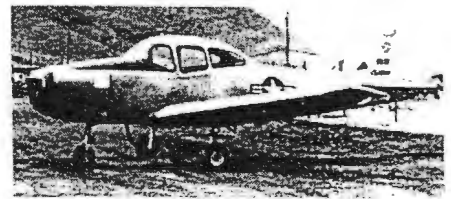
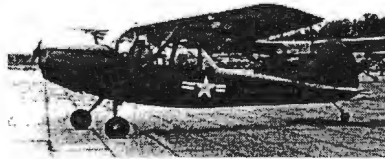
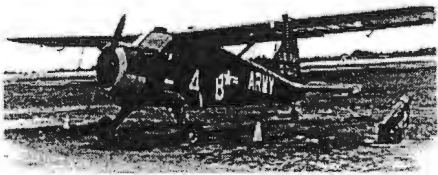
Paul St. John of Columbus, who became an Army Aviator during the Korean conflict, remained on active duty. Cpt. J. T. Cox of Pontotoc, who also served as an Army Aviator during that period, remained inactive after his release from active duty, as did Cpt George Schumpert of Amory. Lt Shepard Hamner, the other Mississippian who served as an Army Aviator in Korea, remained on active duty until his retirement in 1958.

Under the reorganization, there were only two non-full time aviation slots authorized the rank of Captain at this time. Cpt Hugh Ketchum was assigned as the Division Artillery Aviation Officer, headquartered in Greenville, and Cpt. Joel Varner was assigned as Aviation Officer for the 215th Field Artillery Group, headquartered in Columbus. By 1956 other 1st Lt aviators were authorized promotion to Captain if otherwise qualified.

AVIATION PROGRAM GOT FIRST HELICOPTER IN 1954

In 1954 Mississippi received its first helicopters - two OH 13 Bells. Cpt Theisman and 1 Lt John O'Keefe were the first two aviators in the state's army aviation program to become rotary wing qualified, both finishing training the same year just prior to the arrival of the helicopters in the state.

Following the arrival of the two helicopters, the aviation program was utilizing four types of aircraft as shown below:



The L 20, above left, later designated the U 6, was used for utility and command missions. It had a controllable pitch propeller and full instrument panel.

The L 19, above center, later designated the O 1, was the workhorse of the aviation program from 1953 until 1972. There was also a TL 19, which had a controllable pitch propeller and had an instrument panel in the rear seat.

The L 17 Navion, above right, had a controllable pitch propeller, a retractable landing gear, and instrument flight capabilities.

At left is the OH 13 helicopter used from 1954 until being replaced in 1962 with OH 23 Hillers.

O'KEEFE NAMED DIRECTOR SUPPORT FACILITY IN 1955

Beginning in 1955, Army Aviation in Mississippi experienced steady growth. More aircraft were received at the Jackson Support facility and more aviators joined the various units authorized organic aviation. In another major change, the Division Artillery headquarters was moved from Greenville to Columbus in January 1955.



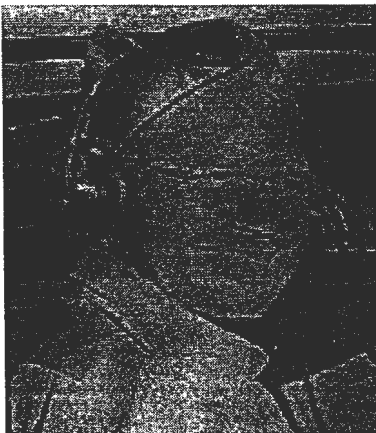
John O'Keefe

During 1955 Cpt Theisman returned to active duty. He was replaced as the full time director of the Jackson Support Facility by 1st Lt John O'Keefe, who was a member of the Adjutant General's staff at the time.

Under his direction the facility was supporting eight L 19's, one L 20 Beaver, one TL 19 instrument trainer and two OH 13 helicopters by the end of 1958.

Additional maintenance technicians were employed - Sgts Shelbon Cotton, Wiley Isbell, Duane Townley, R. V. Wells, Bert Welch, Phillip Cramer, Grady McDonald, William Thorn, Thomas Lucky, Ellis Self and Bobby Ball. Sgt Robert Dreding was employed as the clerk for the facility.

CHANGE IN ARMY ADVISORS



Another change of importance during this era was in the Army Advisor position.

Maj Gene Chase, left, who had been the Advisor since reorganization in 1953, was replaced by Maj Bill Hoge, right, in 1956.

Maj Hoge remained in the Advisor position until 1961.



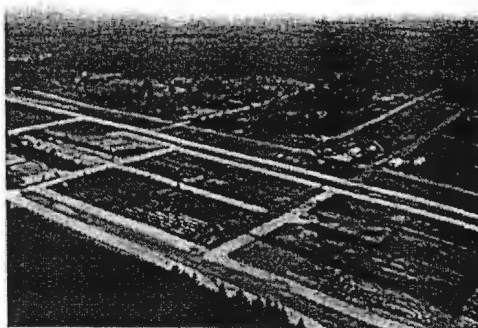
ANNUAL FIELD TRAINING BEGAN AT CAMP SHELBY

During 1953 and 1954 the 31st Division Aviation sections participated in annual field training at Ft McClellan, Ala., with their assigned units. Aviation personnel functioned as part of the Division Air Section, using Reilly Field on the main post as the base of operations.

Non-divisional air sections performed their two weeks of training at Camp Shelby, using a street adjacent to the parade field as the landing strip for training missions, and using Hattiesburg Municipal Airport for VIP and inclement weather missions.

In 1955 all aviation sections held field training at Camp Shelby, operating off a make-shift airfield set up in the motor pool/tank park area near the main post, shown at the right.

The airfield utilized one east-west paved street and the sod area between it and another paved strip as landing areas. A ditch separated the paved strip and the parking area for the fixed wing aircraft. There was one small operations building and a supply tent. Maintenance and training classes were conducted in the open or under shade trees.



Above is the airstrip used at Camp Shelby during the late 50's

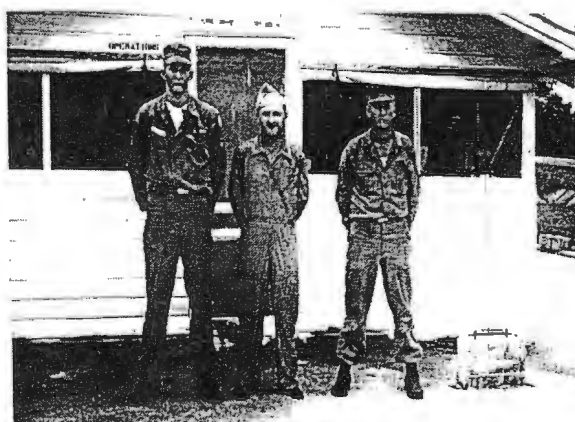
The aviation sections supported their units with recon missions, camouflauge detection, "flour sack" bombing during troop movements and with artillery fire adjustment exercises. When in the field, the aircraft operated off a sod field at Barron near the range control headquarters, a road strip near Red Hill and a sod strip near Peret Tower in the southeast part of the range. Road landings near unit headquarters were also used to pick up observers and to plan missions with staff personnel during field exercises.

In 1956 the Division aviation sections went back to Ft. McClellan and operated as part of a Division Air Section off Reilly Field. Non-divisional units continued to use the make-shift airstrip at Camp Shelby for their two weeks of training.

ALABAMA & MISSISSIPPI ARTILLERY AT SHELBY

In 1957 and 1958 the Alabama and Mississippi 31st Division Artillery Aviation Sections jointly trained at Camp Shelby, again using the make-shift airfield in the motor pool/tank park area. The Division Aviation Section trained at Ft. McClellan.

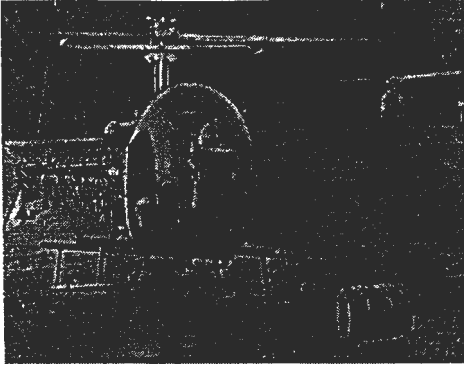
At right, Cpt Hugh Ketchum, the Division Artillery Air Officer, center, is shown with Sgt Bert Welch, left, one of the Mississippi full time maintenance technicians, and Sgt Harold Galloway, a full time mechanic with Alabama. They are in front of the small frame building used as an operations office



during the time the make-shift airstrip at Camp Shelby was being used during the mid and late 50's.

Note the flight suit being worn by Cpt Ketchum. This was the first year that any type of flight equipment was issued to the aviators. This brought about a situation whereby the aviators had to change back to the uniform of the day when returning to the post area, but the aviator could still fly in Class A or fatigue uniforms if he so desired. Within the next few years, aviators were issued flight suits, gloves, jackets and helmets.

BARREL ROLL WITH AN OH 13 HELICOPTER WAS A HIGHLIGHT



One of the highlights of the state's aviation program during the late fifties was a barrel roll routine performed in an OH 13 by Cpt John O'Keefe, the Jackson Support Facility Director. The routine was performed at parades that concluded annual field training at Camp Shelby and at some county fairs and special events over the state.

The routine, considered one of the most difficult exercises of helicopter flying skill, consisted of turning over a barrel, rolling it to various points, then resetting the barrel on end.

ARMY AVIATION SCHOOL TO FT RUCKER IN 1954

One of Army Aviation's most important events occurred in 1954 when the Army Aviation School was moved from Ft Sill to Ft Rucker near Ozark, Ala.

The new school was located on an established base that already had adequate post, housing and training facilities, an airfield with three 5,000-foot runways, adequate hangar and maintenance facilities and plenty of parking area for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

The new Aviation School absorbed the warrant officer aviator training program, which had begun at Ft Sill in 1951. Ft Rucker graduated its first warrant officer aviator class on April 30, 1955.

OTHER STATE ACTIVITIES DURING 1953-1958

DISASTER DUTY: Army aviators and supporting personnel were used for recon and evacuation assistance after a tornado in Vicksburg in 1954, and during the Tombigbee River flood in the Columbus area in 1955. It was during the flood duty that an OH 13 helicopter was "dunked" in the water during an emergency landing and an L 19 settled in the bleachers of the Mississippi State University baseball field during an aborted landing in that area.

In 1956 several aviators and supporting personnel assisted in recon and evacuation missions during the Leaf River flood in the Hattiesburg area. In one instance Cpt O'Keefe rescued a man, his son and their dog from the Leaf River swamp area.

TRIP TO THE SMITHSONIAN: In 1955 two L 19's, piloted by Cpt John O'Keefe and Lt James Gentry of Meridian, accompanied the "Ole Miss" aircraft to Washington, where the "Ole Miss" was placed on permanent display in the Smithsonian Institute. The single engine aircraft, piloted by Al and Fred Key of Meridian, had set a world's flight endurance record of more than 27 days aloft in 1935 to earn its place in the Smithsonian.

The mission, which attracted much attention, both in Mississippi and in Washington, went off without incident, except for a precautionary landing in Atlanta because of a fuel leak by "Ole Miss."

NUMBER OF AVIATORS CONTINUED TO GROW

By 1958 the following aviators, only six who were helicopter qualified, had been involved in or were still in the state's Army Aviation program since it was reorganized in 1953, and served with the units indicated:

Hq & Hq Detach., Miss NG
Cpt John O'Keefe, Jackson*

Hq 31st Division Artillery
Cpt Fred Theisman, Grenada*
Cpt Hugh Ketchum, Grenada
Cpt Paul St John, Columbus
1 Lt William Irwin, Tupelo
2 Lt Loring Tharpe, Jackson
1 Lt Marshall Duncan, Jackson
2 Lt Earl Koop, Jackson
2 Lt William Thorn, Jackson*

Hq 108th Armor Cavalry Regiment
Cpt William Lewman, Summitt
Cpt Harold Godbold, McComb
Cpt Leonard Tingle, Meridian
1 Lt Winfred Moody, Meridian
1 Lt Richard Hill, Philadelphia
1 Lt Charles Nelson, Jackson
1 Lt Johnny Matthews, Meridian

Hq 215th Field Artillery Group
Cpt Joel Varner, Edwards*
Cpt James Gentry, Meridian
1 Lt Jesse Rogers, Tupelo
2 Lt Robert Ayers, Columbus
2 Lt Martin Hollis, Amory

Hq 750th Tank Battalion
1 Lt James Coleman, Senatobia
2 Lt Lee Hamberlin, Hernando

Hq 932nd Field Artillery Battalion
1 Lt John Brady, Columbus
1 Lt Arthur Shaefer, Jackson*
2 Lt Ralph Bourne, Starkville

Hq 155th Infantry Regiment
Cpt Ernest Mallory, Natchez
1 Lt William Palk, Natchez*

Hq 631st Field Artillery Battalion
Cpt Hugh Garraway, Hattiesburg
1 Lt Richard Peel, Hattiesburg

Hq 234th Field Artillery Battalion
Cpt William McMasters, Grenada
1 Lt Robert Raper, Memphis

Hq 114th Field Artillery Battalion
1 Lt Gordon Casey, Greenwood
1 Lt Julius Windham, Hattiesburg
1 Lt Harry Phillips, Benton

Hq 114th Engineer Battalion
1 Lt Edward Neal, Jackson
1 Lt Arthur Buckley, Rolling Fork

Hq 106th Engineer Battalion
1 Lt Clarke Ammons, Monticello
2 Lt James R. Johnson, Jackson

Hq 168th Engineer Battalion
Cpt Raymond Ray, Vicksburg

* Helicopter qualified

MAJOR CHANGES AT THE ARMY LEVEL 1953-58

While army aviation was in the reorganization process in Mississippi, it also was undergoing many growing pains at the Army level, particularly in efforts to assume more control over its training and procurement from the Air Force.

FIXED WING INSTRUMENT TRAINING: The Army fully implemented fixed wing instrument training at Ft Sill in 1953, taking over such training from contract civilian schools which had been on-going since 1951. TL 19 and L 20 aircraft were mostly used for the training.

ARMY GIVEN MORE CONTROL OVER HELICOPTER TRAINING: By the end of 1954 Ft Sill became the advanced training center for all single rotor helicopters and the Ft Riley, Kansas, airfield became the training center for all tandem rotor helicopters. However, primary training for rotary wing aircraft was still the responsibility of the Air Force.

ARMING HELICOPTERS FOR COMBAT: In 1955 the Army began serious testing of the concept of arming helicopters for combat assault, an experiment which had begun at Ft Sill in 1950. By September the Sky Cap Platoon had been formed to conduct the tests, which led to formation of an Aerial Combat Recon Platoon. Five years later armed helicopters became a reality.

STILL ANOTHER ARMY-AIR FORCE AGREEMENT: The Army and Air Force came up with still another "Memorandum of Agreement" related to the clarification of Army Aviation missions in March of 1956. The agreement gave the Army considerable more control over its aviation program and its missions. The most important changes gave the Army full responsibility for all phases of aviator training and transferred depot maintenance for Army aircraft from the Air Force to the Army Transportation Corps.

Other clarifications in the agreement included: The Army would perform all air missions within a combat zone 100 miles forward and behind the main line of resistance with enemy forces; the Air Force would be responsible for all air missions into and out of a combat zone; empty weight limits would be established on Army aircraft of 7,000 pounds for fixed wing and 20,000 pounds for rotary wing; and, the Army agreed to use existing types of aircraft where suitable, rather than developing and procuring new types.

ARMY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL AVIATOR TRAINING: In assuming the responsibility for all aviator training, the Army took over Camp Wolters in Mineral Wells, Texas, and made it the primary rotary wing training facility for warrant officers. Gary Airfield in San Marcos, Texas, became the training site for fixed wing aviators and enlisted maintenance personnel and the primary rotary wing training course for officers. All advanced training courses were established at Ft Rucker.

1953-1958



The full time personnel at the Jackson Support Facility in the mid-50's included: Front row, left to right, Sgts Alfred McLendon, Ellis Self, Wiley Isbell, Thomas Lucky and Phillip Cramer, and back row left to right, Sgts Robert Dreding, Shelbon Cotton, Duane Townley, Bert Welch and R. V. Wells, and Cpt John O'Keefe, the facility director.



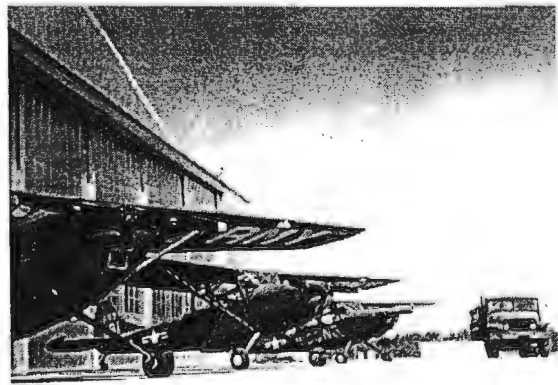
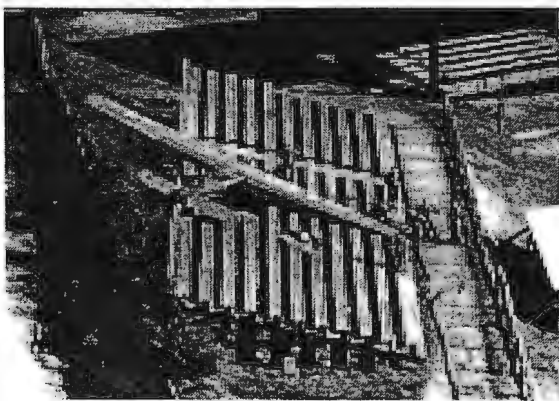
At left is Cpt John O'Keefe of Jackson, Cpt James Gentry of Meridian, Cpt Hugh Garraway of Hattiesburg and 1st Lt Richard Peel of Hattiesburg during annual field training at Camp Shelby in the mid-50's

1953 - 1958

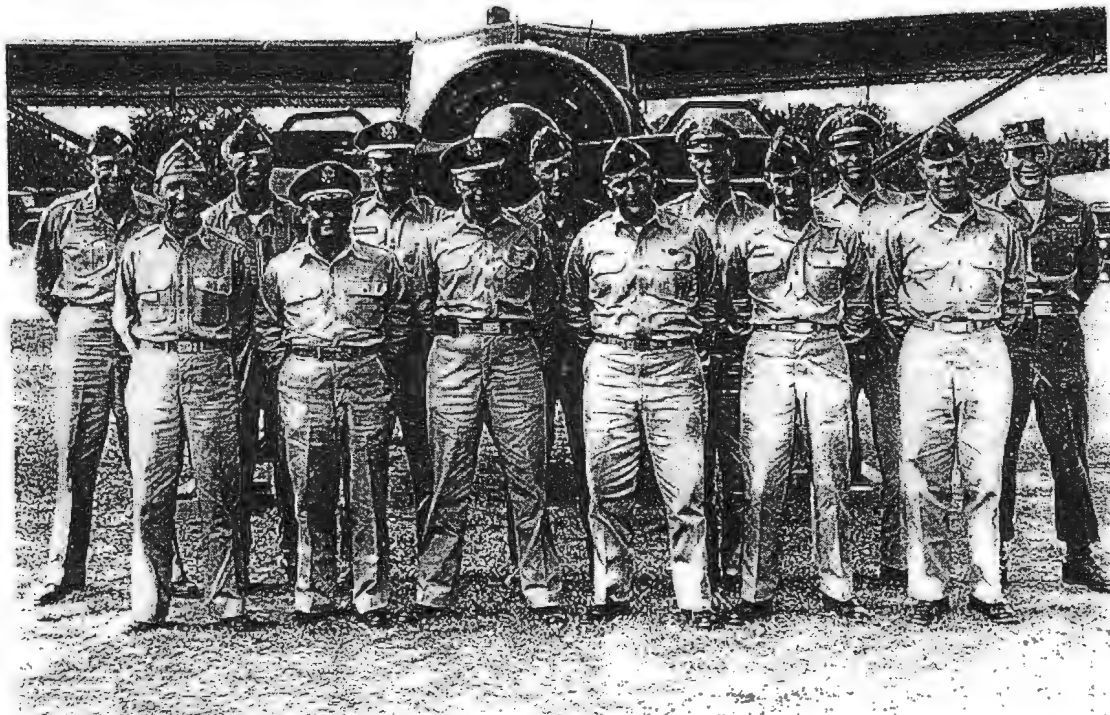


Shown above is a group preparing to monitor the river races near Vicksburg in the late 50's. They include, left to right standing, Lt Arthur Shaefer, Cpt Travis Parker, Sgt Robert V. Wells, Sgt Bert Welch, Sgt Bob Dreding and Cpt Raymond Ray. Seated, left to right, are Maj Bill Hoge, Cpt Hugh Garraway and Cpt James Gentry.

Below left is a picture of the L 19 that landed in the bleachers of the Miss. State baseball field during a go-around effort after a landing attempt. Below right is a picture of three L 19's parked at the metal hangar at Hawkins Field in the late 50's.



1953 - 1958



Camp Shelby Annual Field Training - 1957

Front row, left to right, Cpt Hugh Ketchum, Maj William Hoge, Cpt Paul St John, 1Lt John Brady, 1Lt Robert Ayers and 2Lt Earl Koop. Back row, left to right, Cpt John O'Keefe, 1Lt Jesse Bruton (Ala), 1Lt Rufus Moorner (Ala), 1Lt Emil Day (Ala), 1Lt Tommy Shelton (Ala), 1Lt Domingo Casey and 1Lt Arthur Shafer.



***Mechanics at Joint Alabama-Mississippi Field Training
1957***

Front row, left to right, Sgt Edgar Galloway (Ala), _____, Sgt Haywood Watkins (Ala), Sgt Ellis Self (Ms), and Sgt Phillip Cramer (Ms)

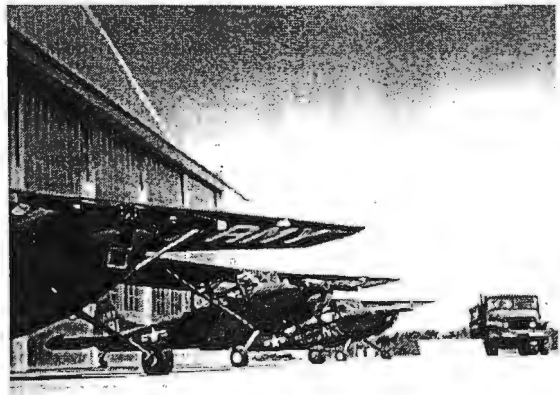
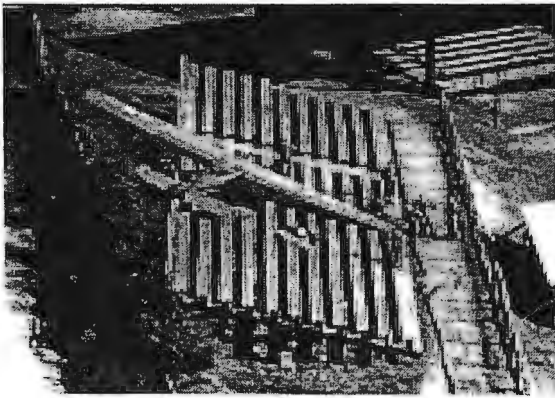
Back row, left to right, Sgt Shelbon Cotton, (Ms), _____, Sgt Bert Welch (Ms), Sgt Ervin (Ala), Sgt Oswald (Ms), and Sgt Gorman (EM Army Advisor).

1953 - 1958

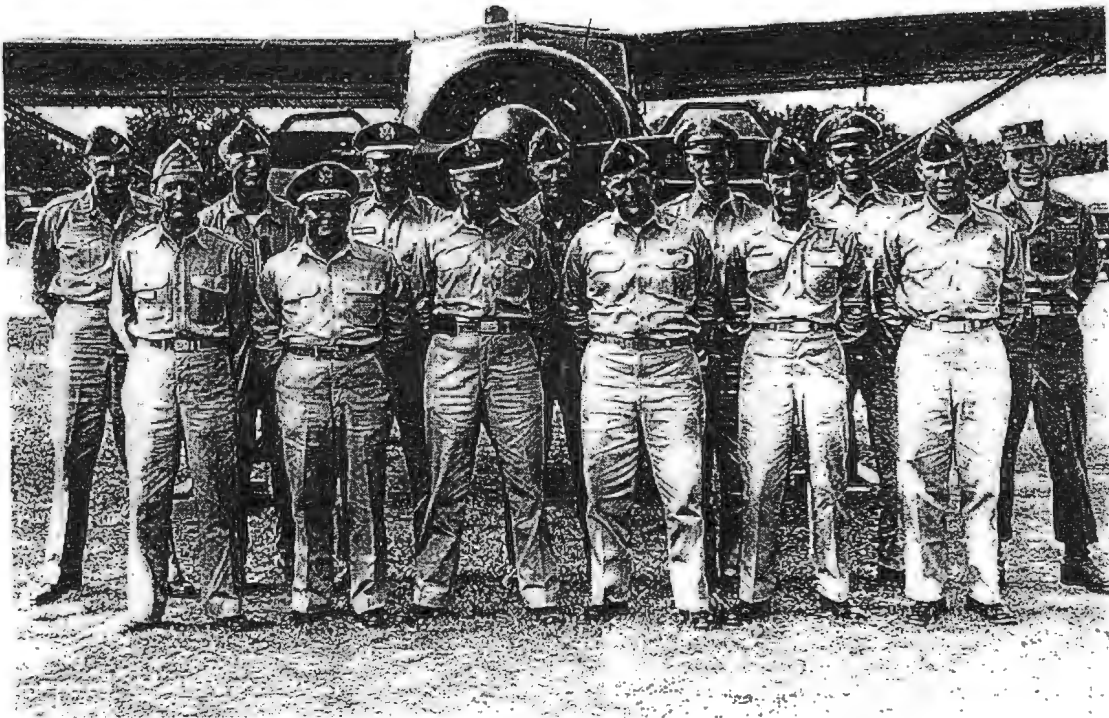


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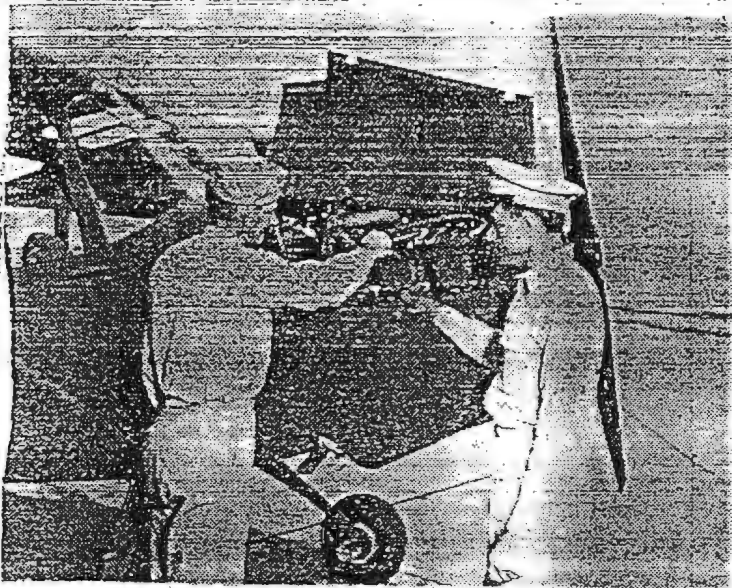
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SUNDAY, JULY 27, 1952

ASSIGNED TO JACKSON



Sgt. Alfred D. McClendon, Jr., left, and Lt. John T. O'Keefe, right, make a pre-flight inspection on the new L-19 aircraft just received by the Mississippi National Guard Aviation Section in Jackson. The plane will be based at the Jackson Air Base along with some 20 other planes when they become available. With the arrival of the new aircraft openings now exist for pilots, mechanics helpers and light truck drivers. Interested individuals are requested to contact Lt. O'Keefe at 5-9361, Ext. 465. (National Guard Photo).

FROM FOUR ENGINES TO ONE



Lt. John T. O'Keefe (left), commanding officer of the Army Aviation Section of the Mississippi National Guard, assists Lt. Edward Neal in learning to fly the single engine L-19 Cessna used by Army Engineers. Lieutenant Neal is a former B-17 pilot.

Jackson Fliers
Slightly HurtStarkville Scene
Of Plane Crash 1953

STATE COLLEGE, Miss. — National Guard L-19 liaison aircraft, was damaged during a landing on the baseball field at State College about 6 p. m. Thursday.

The pilot and passenger, received minor injuries.

The pilot was Lt. Ralph Bourne, of Jackson. His passenger was Sgt. Ellis D. Self, of Jackson.

The plane was engaged in search and rescue mission in the Columbus flooded areas.

Lt. Bourne and Sgt. Self were released from State College Hospital after being treated for minor cuts and bruises.

Lt. Bourne had earlier led ground parties to several stranded residents trapped by the angry flood waters of the Tombigbee.

NG Pilot Goes
From B-17 to L-19
In Three Lessons

1953
Changing from a B-17 four engine bomber to an L-19 single engine Cessna in three easy lessons is quite a problem but 1st Lt. Edward F. Neal, 904 Euclid Avenue, Jackson is happy with his new assignment as a pilot of one of the Mississippi National Guard grasshoppers.

An architect in civilian life, Lt. Neal is a former B-17 pilot who has joined the aviation section of the Mississippi National Guard. Assigned to 114th Engineer Combat Battalion, he will fly the "Bird Dog" L-19, known as the eyes and ears of the engineers.

During World War I, Lt. Neal flew 22 missions in his Italy based Flying Fortress, making several raids on Berlin.

"In a B-17 you pull the stick and wait for the airplane to make up its mind to turn, but in the L-19 you no sooner pull the stick and you have turned", says Lt. Neal.

It was the tail-gunner of Lt. Neal's plane who shot down the first German jet, an experimental model being used by the Germans near the close of the war. For his efforts in the Mediterranean Theater, Lt. Neal earned the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters.

DAILY NEWS

STATE FINAL

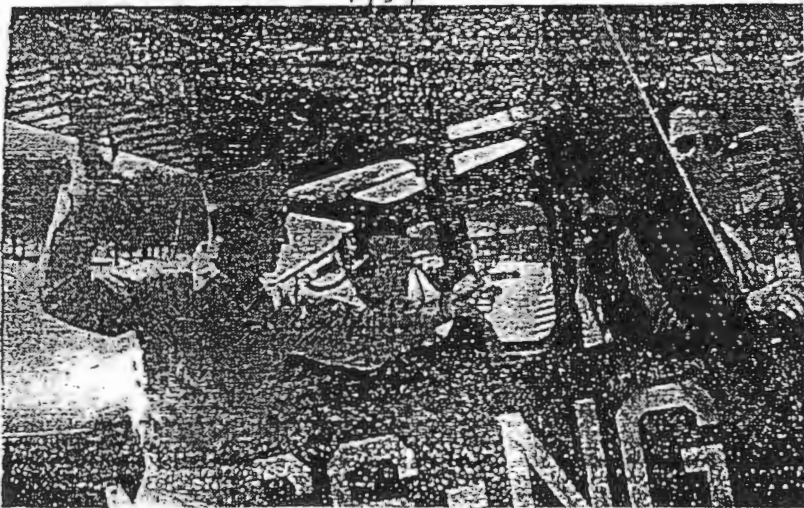
JACKSON, MISS., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 1955

Flooded Family Rescued By Daring Guard Pilots

By W. C. SHOEMAKER
ABERDEEN, Miss. (Special) — Two National Guard reconnaissance pilots today were credited with saving a family near Aberdeen yesterday just before they were swept into overflow floodwaters of the raging Tombigbee. They were rescued after Capt. John O'Keefe spotted members of the isolated family standing in front of their water-surrounded farmhouse three miles north of Aberdeen waving clothing as he flew state officials over the area on an inspection tour. O'Keefe, flying a light reconnaissance type airplane, was transporting the group, including Acting Governor Carroll Gartin and Adjutant General W. P. Wilson, over the stricken area about 4 p. m. when he noticed the family. Seven persons stood in front of the red painted farmhouse waving articles of clothing at the passing

over the area and rescued Paul St. John who was 10 miles away in another airplane. Together the two searched the area for a boat capable of carrying the members of the family to safety. Four miles upstream a boat was tied near another flooded house. Pilots dived dangerously near the ground several times before attracting the attention of two men in the house. Finally, when all efforts had almost been exhausted, the two men climbed into their boat and following the route down river which the aircraft pointed. An hour later, the destitute family was safely on higher ground. They had abandoned the house just as waves licked at the doorsteps. They left behind all personal belongings.

State Army Pilots at Summer Camp



Capt. E. V. Mallory of Natchez (left), talks with Capt. John T. O'Keefe of Jackson and First Lt. D. G. Casey of Greenwood (right), before they take off during two weeks summer training with the 31st Infantry Division at Fort McClellan, Ala.

Jackson Aviator Receives Praise For Daring Feat

Special to The Commercial Appeal
 JACKSON, Miss., Feb. 17. — A Mississippi National Guard pilot who helped save the life of a fellow aviator during a recent night training flight from Fort Sill, Okla., has received a letter of commendation from the commandant of the Army Aviation Tactics School there.

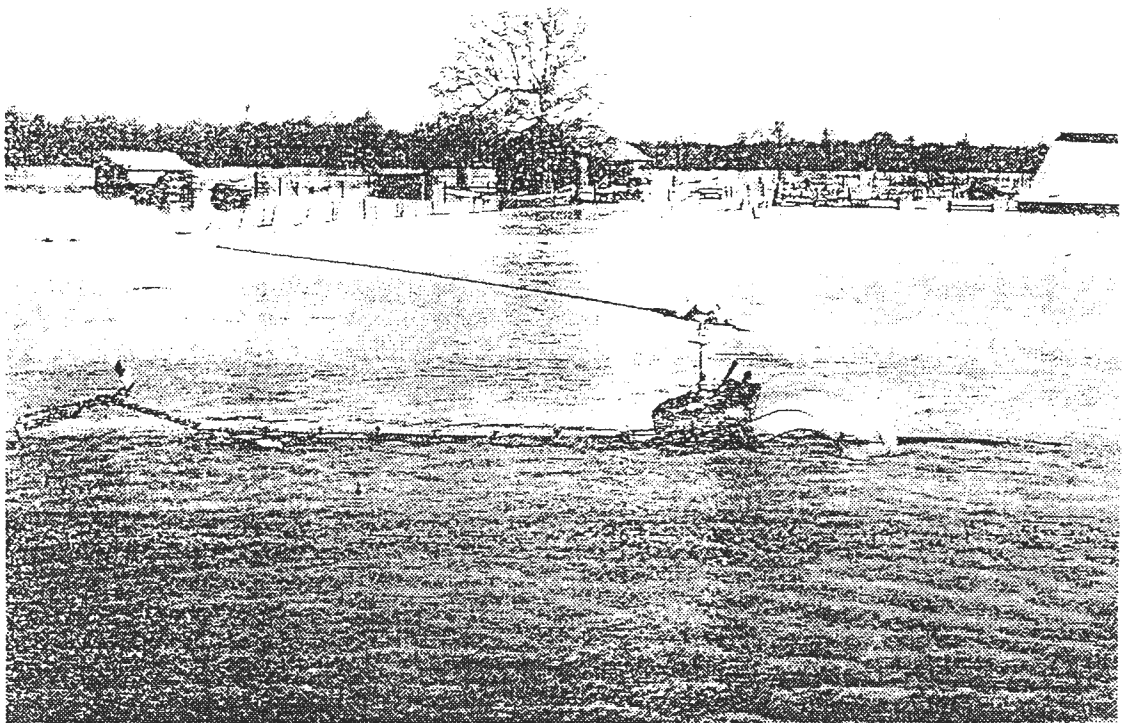


Lt. O'Keefe

Lt. John T. O'Keefe of Jackson and other fliers were moving across country into Texas when the engine of the plane flying near the Mississippi quit. In answer to the distress signal, Lieutenant O'Keefe flew to the disabled plane's side at an altitude of about 8,000 feet. They circled the black Texas terrain together until the pilot of the powerless plane decided he must ride his plane down. The Lieutenant O'Keefe flew over the area at a low altitude, using his landing lights to search for a suitable landing place. He found a small road, flew back alongside the wing of the disabled plane and guided the pilot to a safe landing. Lieutenant O'Keefe was commended for his "quick thinking and heroic action without regard for his own personal safety in flying dangerously low over high wires at night." However, that experience failed to surpass the more harrowing thrills the Mississippi pilot had on 358 hours of combat missions in the China-Burma-India Theater during World War II. Then a technical sergeant, he flew L-5 observation planes. His experiences included a trip over the "Hump" at 13,000 feet in the tiny plane. He also dropped arms and ammunition to guerrillas fighting the Japanese in the jungles and mountains and flew secret agents in and out of enemy territory. At the end of the war he flew Japanese officers to Allied headquarters to surrender the Japanese forces in China.

Helicopter Takes A Dip

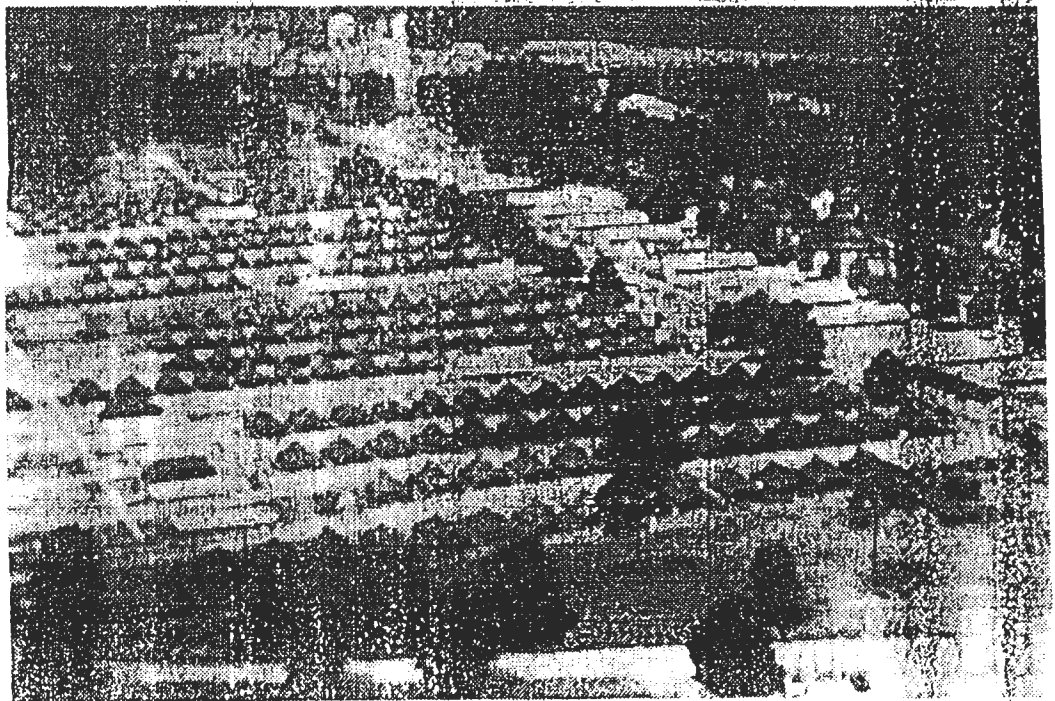
1955



Two Jacksonians got wet but swam and waded to safety when their helicopter went kerplunk in flood water near Columbus Thursday. The pair had a wet journey to the farm in the background.

Camp Shelby As Seen From a Helicopter

MID-SO'S



Thousands of Mississippi National Guard men were housed in this tent area at Camp Shelby for two weeks summer field training. This photograph was taken at a low altitude from a helicopter flown by Capt. John O'Keefe. A new type aluminum army barrack is being tested at Shelby for the first time, as a replacement for the old canvass tent, familiar to GIs from here to eternity. (Photo by Phil Stroupe).

CHAPTER IV

THE SEPARATE AVIATION COMPANY ERA

1959 - 1968

The Army Aviation program began the concept of operating as a separate company instead of assigning two aviators, two aircraft and one mechanic to each unit

Mississippi reorganized into parts of two companies within the 31st Division in Jackson, the 108th Aviation Company in Tupelo, and the 123rd Aviation Company and the 1066th Transportation Aircraft Maintenance Company in Meridian.

Full time maintenance support facilities were organized at Tupelo and Meridian, in addition to the one at Jackson.

The 123rd Aviation Company in Meridian was called to active duty during 1961-62 as part of the Berlin crisis. All National Guard units in the state were federalized for several days during an integration uprising at Ole Miss.

In 1963 the Mississippi part of the 31st Aviation Company became a full sized company.

The Mississippi aviation program experienced its first fatal crash in the Summer of 1966.

Seven pre-Vietnam aviators in the Mississippi program saw combat duty in Vietnam. Two were killed in action.

HISTORY OF ARMY AVIATION IN MISSISSIPPI

CHAPTER IV - THE SEPARATE COMPANY ERA - 1959 - 1968

This eight-year era represented the "coming of age" of Army Aviation in Mississippi as the separate aviation company concept was authorized. The new company structure replaced the previous concept of assigning two aviators, two aircraft and one mechanic to each battalion or higher headquarters units.

It began in May 1959 with the reorganization of the 31st Infantry Division, jointly composed of troops from Alabama and Mississippi. The reorganization resulted in the authorization of two separate aviation companies in the Division. Although Mississippi did not get a full separate Division aviation company, it did get part of two companies, as did Alabama. They were the 31st Aviation Company, (Ms Part) and Company E (Ms Part) of the 731st Transportation Aircraft Maintenance (TAM) Battalion. Both units were located in Jackson.

Under the 1959 reorganization of non-divisional units, three separate aviation companies were also authorized. They were the the 108th Aviation Company in Tupelo, to support the 108th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 123rd Air Ambulance Medical Aviation Company in Meridian to support the 213th Medical Battalion, and the 1066th Transportation Aircraft Maintenance Company in Meridian.

Other non-divisional units were authorized aviation sections. They were the 198th Armored Regiment in Tupelo, Hq 631st Field Artillery Group in Jackson, The 2nd, 4th and 5th Battalions of the 114th Field Artillery located in Starkville, Newton and Hattiesburg, the 168th Engineer Group in Vicksburg and the 106th Engineer Battalion in Monticello. Aviators assigned to those units were still under the direct command and control of the individual units, as in the past. The reorganization eliminated aviation from the 114th and 139th Engineer Battalions in Jackson and the 750th Tank Battalion in Greenville.

Aircraft maintenance support for the five aviation companies and the non-divisional aviation sections was still performed by the Jackson Support Facility.

31ST RECON PERSONNEL TO AVIATION COMPANIES

Personnel to round out the state's part of the two Division aviation companies came from the 31st Reconnaissance Company, which was disbanded during the reorganization. (Thus the 31st Recon Company became the nucleus that later evolved into a separate aviation battalion, then a separate aviation group).

The two units were headquartered in an old warehouse building just south of the

metal hangar in the northwest corner of Hawkins Field in Jackson. Other areas of the building were converted into supply and class rooms. The maintenance facility's hangar was used for flight-related training.

For the first time aviation units became responsible not only for aerial support, but for their own training, administration and security as separate companies. Non-divisional aviation sections were still under the command and control of their units. However, all aviator officers still had to fulfill educational requirements of their branch in addition to minimum flight requirements, the same as regular Army aviators.

Only two non-full time aviator slots with the rank of major were authorized under the 1959 reorganization, both on the Division staff. Maj Hugh Ketchum, who had been serving as the Division Artillery S4 in an excess aviator capacity, was named the Aviation Officer for the Mississippi Part of the Division. Cpt Joel Varner, who had been serving as the Aviation Officer for the 215th Field Artillery Group, was promoted to major and named the Division Aviation Operations Officer. The two officers were responsible for the organization and training of the Mississippi parts of the Division aviation companies.

LT NELSON COMMANDER OF 31ST AVIATION COMPANY



Charles Nelson

1 Lt Charles Nelson of Jackson, formerly with the 108th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Senatobia, assumed command of the Miss. Part of the 31st Aviation Company, which was authorized 37 officers, one warrant officer and 63 enlisted personnel.

Sgt James Beck of Jackson was employed as the Administrative Service Technician for the unit.

Other aviators and officers assigned to the company along with Lt Nelson to form the original Miss. Part of the 31st Division Aviation Company included:

Cpt Ernest Mallory, Natchez	Cpt Billy McMasters, Grenada	2 Lt David Evers, Jackson
1 Lt Richard Hill, Philadelphia	1 Lt William Palk, Natchez	2 Lt Lee Hamberlin, Hernando
1 Lt Robert Raper, Memphis, Tn.	1 Lt Bobby Welch, Jackson	2 Lt Jimmy Howell, Jackson
2 Lt William Irwin, Tupelo	2 Lt Earl Koop, Jackson	2 Lt Joe Strong, Jackson

Following the organization of the unit and prior to a 1963 reorganization, the following officers/aviators joined the company:

Cpt Edward Gross, Jackson	Cpt Albert Johnson, Pascagoula	Cpt Elmon Thomas, Hollandale
1 Lt Boots Blanks, Jackson	1 Lt Arthur Buckley, Roll. Fork	1 Lt James Burns, Jackson
1 Lt George Clarke, Jackson	1 Lt Willian Fanning, Jackson	1 Lt Charles Gore, Vicksburg
1 Lt Henry Harvey, Tylertown	1 Lt Glynn Kirkland, Jackson	1 Lt Loring Tharpe, Jackson
1 Lt Thomas Truitt, Florence	1 Lt Julius Windham, H'burg	2 Lt Bobby Costilow, Grenada
2 Lt Herbert Marshall, Louisville	2 Lt Don Michel, Jackson	2 Lt Albert Turnage, Monticello

THREE MORE COMMANDERS OF 31ST AVIATION COMPANY

Prior to the Mississippi Part of the 31st Aviation Company becoming a full-sized company in 1963, the unit had three more commanding officers.



Glynn Kirkland



Bobby Welch



James Burns

1 Lt Glynn Kirkland, above left, a non-rated aviator, was named commander of the unit in 1960. The following year Cpt Bobby Welch, center above, replaced Lt Kirkland as the commander when Lt Kirkland transferred to the 113th MP Company as that unit's commander. Cpt James Burns, above right, replaced Cpt Welch as commander of the unit just before the 1963 reorganization.

LT THARPE COMMANDER CO E TAM



Loring Tharpe

1 Lt Loring Tharpe of Jackson, who had been with Hq 31st Division Artillery, was named commander of the Mississippi Part of Co E of the 731st Transportation Aviation Maintenance Battalion, which was authorized eight officers and 34 enlisted personnel. Other officers or warrant officers assigned to Co E TAM included: Lts Richard Finch, Jesse Martin, William Merritt and David Traxler, and W/O Alfred McLendon and Billy Lowell, all of Jackson.

Sgt Martin Bass was employed as the full time Administrative Technician of the unit, followed by Sgt William Clark in 1962 and Sgt James Ingram in 1964.

Cpt Bobby Welch assumed command of the unit in 1965 and remained in that capacity until the unit was disbanded in February, 1968.

108TH AVIATION COMPANY IN TUPELO



Paul St John

The 108th Armored Cavalry Regiment was authorized a separate aviation company in the 1959 reorganization, located at the Fairgrounds Armory complex in Tupelo. Cpt Paul St John of Columbus, who had been serving as Aviation Officer for the 31st Division Artillery, was named commander of the new company.

Aviators/officers assigned to the company along with Cpt St John, per Special Orders #116, and those who joined later in 1959, included:

Cpt Jack Davis, Jackson	Cpt Bruce McElroy, Baldwin	Cpt James Livingston, Tupelo
Cpt Travis Parker, Drew	Cpt George Schumpert, Amory	Cpt Elmon Thomas, Hollandale
1 Lt John Brady, Columbus	1 Lt James Burns, Baldwin	1 Lt James Coleman, Senatobia
1 Lt James Ingram, Tupelo	1 Lt Rufus Martin, Tupelo	1 Lt Edward O'Neil, Tupelo
1 Lt Jesse Rogers, Tupelo	1 Lt Lester Tubb, Tupelo	2 Lt Robert Ayers, Columbus
2 Lt Marcus McClamrock, Grenada		



John Rasberry

Soon after the company was organized, Maj John Rasberry of Tupelo, a non-aviator officer from the 108th Armored Combat Regiment, was assigned to the unit as the company commander.

In October of 1960 Cpt Bruce McElroy of Baldwin was named company commander and held that position until the company was disbanded in early 1968.



Bruce McElroy

Sgt Cecil Hankins was employed as the AST for the company until his death in the mid-60's. Sgt Donald Fox filled the position until the company was disbanded in 1968. Those officers/aviators who joined the 108th Aviation Company between 1960 and 1968 included:

Cpt Jesse Akers, Greenville	Cpt Dwight Spearman, Ala.	2 Lt Bobby Hutson, Jackson
Cpt Fred Franks, Saltillo	Cpt Victor K. Welch, Oxford	2 Lt Hilton Richey, Tupelo
Cpt James Gentry, Meridian	1 Lt William Howard, Tupelo	2 Lt Billy Stewart, Tupelo
Cpt Lee Hamberlin, Hernando	1 Lt James Lawson, Tupelo	2 Lt George Walker, Coldwater
Cpt William Hendrix, Memphis	1 Lt Lawrence Little, Macon	CW2 Olen Kelley, Columbus
Cpt Martin Hollis, Tupelo	1 Lt Charles McNair, Tupelo	CW2 Sergeant Mullen, Tupelo
Cpt William Irwin, Tupelo	2 Lt John Asters, Tupelo	CW2 Edwin Stafford, Tupelo
Cpt John Patrick, Tupelo	2 Lt John Barrett, Tupelo	WO Ray Carroll, Grenada
Cpt Howard Richardson, Tupelo	2 Lt James Collum, Tupelo	WO Sterling Mays, Grenada

123RD AVIATION COMPANY IN MERIDIAN

One of the other separate aviation companies authorized under the 1959 reorganization was the 123rd Air Ambulance Medical Aviation Company, located at Key Field in Meridian, to support the 213th Medical Battalion. Personnel to staff the new company came from the former Battery A, 115th Anti-Aircraft Artillery, which had been disbanded.



James Gentry

Cpt James Gentry of Meridian, a WWII Army liaison pilot and one of the original ten aviators in the Miss. Army Aviation program, was named commander of the new company. He had been serving with the 215th Field Artillery Group.

W/O Robert Richardson was employed as the full time Administrative Service Technician of the company, which was authorized 28 officers and 127 enlisted personnel.

Other aviators/officers assigned to the original 123rd Company included:

Cpt Harold Godbold, McComb	1 Lt William Lewman, Summitt
1 Lt Julius Windham, Hattiesburg	1 Lt Winfred Moody, Meridian
2 Lt Arthur Shaefer, Jackson	

Other aviators/officers who joined the 123rd Aviation Company prior to its call to active duty in 1961 included:

Cpt John Persons, Meridian	Cpt Leonard Tingle, Meridian	1 Lt William Bell, Meridian
1 Lt Julian Bomar, Meridian	1 Lt Huey P. Lang, Meridian	1 Lt Edward Lowry, Meridian
1 Lt George Messer, Meridian	1 Lt Winfred Moody, Meridian	1 Lt Harry Phillips, Jackson
1 Lt Ken Townsend, Meridian	1 Lt John Williams, Meridian	2 Lt Thomas Adams, Meridian
2 Lt William Bush, Meridian	2 Lt Billy Conlee, Meridian	2 Lt Glaston Ford, Meridian
2 Lt Wiley McCoy, Meridian	2 Lt Raymond Newell, Meridian	2 Lt Jack O'Leary, Meridian
2 Lt John Permenter, Meridian	2 Lt Ernest Ross, Meridian	2 Lt Arnold Simmons, Meridian

The new company was authorized one L 19 and 4 OH 13's, representing five of the state's 26 aircraft.

In 1961 Cpt Gentry was transferred to the 108th Aviation Company and Cpt Leonard Tingle, who joined the unit as maintenance officer in 1960, assumed command of the 123rd Aviation Company.

TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE COMPANY IN MERIDIAN



John Parker

Another separate aviation company was established in Meridian when personnel from Company C, 223rd Engineers and Btry A, 115th Anti Aircraft Artillery was transferred to the 1066th Transportation Aircraft Maintenance Company, located at Key Field (S.O. 116, dated 25 April 59)

Cpt Morris Kidd, who had commanded Battery A, 115th Anti-Aircraft Artillery, was named commander of the new company. However, within a few months he was transferred out of state and 1 Lt John Parker, who also had been with the 115th, assumed command of the 1066th Company.

CW2 Wayne Wahrendorf, who had been with the 223rd Engineers, was employed as the full time AST.

Other officers, all from Meridian, assigned to the new company, or who joined the company within the next three years, included:

2 Lt Walter Ivey, formerly with the 115th	2 Lt Raymond Rogers, formerly with 115th
WO Bill Hagler, formerly with the 223rd	WO Roy Price, formerly with the 223rd Engrs
2 Lt Robert Richardson (1960)	WO Billy Lovell (1963)

None of the officers or warrant officers were rated aviators, but Lts Parker and Richardson and WO's Haglar and Lovell did qualify as aviators within a short time.

Non-Divisional Aviation Sections Formed

Under the 1959 reorganization, the non-divisional units authorized aviation, had the following aviator assignments:

631st Artillery Group - Maj Robert Pickens, Jackson; Cpt Marshall Duncan, Jackson; and, 2 Lt Lawrence Pierce, Gulfport

114th FA Battalion - 1 Lt Asa Bryant, Hattiesburg; 1 Lt Teddie Dale, Wiggins; 1 Lt Hugh Garraway, Hattiesburg; and, 1 Lt John Graves, Laurel.

168th Engineer Group - Cpt Raymond Ray, Vicksburg.

106th Engineer Battalion - Cpt Clarke Ammons, Monticello.

198th Armored Regiment - WO George Perdue, Jackson. The assignment of WO Perdue to this aviation section is the first record of a warrant officer aviator in the Mississippi program since it was organized in 1948.

TRAINING FORMAT CHANGED TO INCLUDE SUNDAY DRILLS

As part of the 1959 reorganization, training of the newly-formed aviation units was carried out under a new format. Instead of the four two-hour week-night drills per month, the new format included two week-night drills per month and one all day drill on a Saturday or Sunday each month that counted as two drill periods.

The aircraft to support the unit drills and to help the aviators meet their minimum flight requirements were still "farmed out" to airports near the homes of the various aviators. Aviators were still required to fly at least 100 hours per year, including 15 hours at night, 20 hours of hood time and 20 hours of cross country, the same as the minimums required of regular Army aviators. In addition the officer aviators had to maintain educational requirements relative to their Army branch.

LT BURNS REPLACED CPT O'KEEFE AS FACILITY DIRECTOR IN 1960

In late 1959, Cpt John O'Keefe resigned as director of the Jackson Support Facility to join the Mississippi Manufacturers Association, and was assigned to Hq & Hq Detachment on the Adjutant General's staff as the non-full time state aviation officer.



James Burns

In January 1960, 1st Lt James H. Burns, who had been with the 108th ACR Aviation Company, took over as director of the Jackson Support Facility.

The facility had grown to ten full time technicians and was maintaining 26 aircraft for aviators throughout the state.



John O'Keefe

TWO ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FACILITIES AUTHORIZED IN 1961

1961 saw a major change take place in Mississippi's Army Aviation program - a change that resulted in substantial growth in the overall program. Two additional full time maintenance support facilities were authorized - one in Tupelo and another in Meridian. The change was necessitated because of the magnitude of the maintenance support program being furnished by the lone facility in Jackson.

The facility was servicing 31 aircraft, thirteen L 19's, ten OH 13 helicopters, seven L 20's and one TL 19 instrument trainer. By this time the facility had lost Maintenance Technicians Bert Welch and Shelbon Cotton, but had employed Robert Westbrook, Jack Williams, Harold Lane, Donald Ryals and Charles Winwright.

54 AVIATORS IN PROGRAM BY 1961

According to a report from 1 Lt James Burns to the Adjutant General on April 18, 1961, the following aviators were being served by the Jackson Support Facility:

Hq & Hq Detachment Maj John O'Keefe, Jackson	168th Engineer Group Cpt Raymond Ray, Vicksburg
31st Aviation Company (Miss. Part) Maj Hugh Ketchum, Grenada Maj Joel Varner, Jackson Cpt Ernest Mallory, Natchez Cpt Robert Raper, Memphis Cpt Edward Gross, Jackson Cpt Bobby Welch, Jackson Cpt William McMasters, Grenada 1st Lt Charles Nelson, Jackson 1st Lt George Clarke, Jackson 1st Lt Loring Tharpe, Jackson 1st Lt William Fanning, Jackson 1st Lt Thomas Truitt, Florence 1st Lt William Irwin, Tupelo 1st Lt Henry Harvey, Tylertown 1st Lt William Palk, Natchez 1st Lt Charles Gore, Vicksburg 2nd Lt Bobby Costilow, Grenada 2nd Lt Donald Michel, Jackson 2nd Lt Herbert Marshall, Louisville 2nd Lt Albert Turnage, Monticello	Hq 106th Engineer Bn Cpt Clarke Ammons, Monticello 108th ACR Avn Company Cpt James Gentry, Meridian Cpt Bruce McElroy, Tupelo Cpt Jesse Rogers, Tupelo Cpt Paul St John, Columbus Cpt James Coleman, Senatobia Cpt Travis Parker, Drew Cpt Elmon Thomas, Hollandale Cpt George Schumpert, Amory 1st Lt Robert Ayers, Columbus 1st Lt James Burns, Jackson 1st Lt Lee Hamberlin, Hernando 2nd Lt Fred Franks, Tupelo
Hq 631st Artillery Group Maj Robert Pickens, Jackson Cpt Marshall Duncan, Jackson 2nd Lt Lawrence Pierce, Gulfport	123rd Air Ambulance Medical Company Cpt Leonard Tingle, Meridian Cpt John Persons, Meridian Cpt Harry Phillips, Jackson Cpt Harold Godbold, McComb Cpt William Lewman, McComb 1st Lt William Bell, Meridian 1st Lt Winfred Moody, Meridian 1st Lt Wiley McCoy, Meridian 2nd Lt Glaston Ford, Meridian 2nd Lt Ernest Ross, Meridian
Hq 5th Bn, 114th Field Artillery 1st Lt Asa Bryant, Hattiesburg 1st Lt Teddie Dale, Wiggins 1st Lt Hugh Garraway, Hattiesburg	1066th TAM Company 1st Lt John Parker, Meridian 2d Lt Robert Richardson, Meridian
Hq 4th Bn 114th Field Artillery 1st Lt John Graves, Laurel	

123RD COMPANY CALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY IN 1961

Before the full time maintenance support facility could be established at Key Field in Meridian, the 123rd Aviation Company was called to active duty in September 1961, reporting to Ft Bragg, N.C., as part of the Berlin Crisis call-up.



Leonard Tingle

Maj Leonard Tingle, of Meridian, who had replaced Cpt James Gentry as commander of the unit, and who had been employed as the full time director of the new support facility, served as commander of the 123rd Aviation Company during the eleven months the company was on active duty at Ft Bragg.

During the period of active duty the Mississippi aviators and the 14 fillers assigned to the company supported the 82nd Airborne Division in medical and other evacuation type missions, earning a commendation for their services. The unit was released from active duty in August 1962.

The 123rd Aviation Company aviators joining Maj Tingle on active duty included:

Cpt Harold Godbold, McComb	Cpt William Lewman, Summitt
Cpt John Permenter, West Point	Cpt John Persons, Meridian
1 Lt Winfred Moody, Meridian	1 Lt Kenneth Townsend, DeKalb
1 Lt William Bell, Macon	1 Lt Julian Bomar, Meridian
1 Lt Glaston Ford, Meridian	1 Lt George Messer, Meridian
1 Lt Huey Lang, Meridian	1 Lt Edward Lowry, Meridian
2 Lt Thomas Adams, Yazoo City	2 Lt Ernest Ross, Toombs
2 Lt John Williams, Meridian	

123RD COMPANY REORGANIZED IN 1962

Following the 11-month tour of active duty, the 123rd Aviation Company was reorganized in late 1962 at Meridian, with Maj Leonard Tingle as the company commander. All of the aviators who were on active duty rejoined the company, except Cpt John Persons, 1 Lt Glaston Ford and 2 Lt Huey Lang. They remained on active duty.

Sgt Edward Fuller was employed as the AST for the company, until he was replaced by CW2 Wayne Wahrendorf in a 1963 reorganization.

In 1963, the 1066th Transportation Aircraft Maintenance Company, which had been operating at Key Field in Meridian since 1959, was merged into the 123rd Aviation Company.

Officers/aviators joining the 123rd Aviation Company after the August, 1962, reorganization, including the 1066th Company personnel, until the end of the 1959-1968 era included:

Cpt Joseph Hans, Moss Point	Cpt John Parker, Meridian	Cpt P. S. Garner, Pascagoula
1 Lt Walter Ivey, Meridian	1 Lt William Wilson, Louisville	1 Lt Robert Richardson, Meridian
1 Lt Larry Knight, Jackson	2 Lt Ira Morgan, Meridian	2 Lt Lee Walters, Meridian
2 Lt Charles Chisolm, Meridian	CW2 Wayne Wahrendorf, Mer.	WO Billy Lovell, Meridian
WO Bill Hagler, Meridian	2 Lt George Godwin, Meridian	

NEW SUPPORT FACILITIES READY IN 1962



William Irwin

Both the Tupelo and Meridian full-time support facilities, which were authorized in 1961, began operations in 1962.

Cpt William Irwin, formerly an aviator with the 31st Aviation Company, and four technicians - Sgts Robert Wells, Thomas "Gat" Palmer, Frank Wade and Ed White - began operating the Tupelo facility in October, servicing four L 19's, one L 20 Beaver and one OH 13 helicopter.

The facility was created to support the aviators in the 108th Aviation Company, and other aviators in the area.



Martin Hollis

In 1964, Cpt Martin L. Hollis, who had been in the Mississippi Army Aviation program in the late 50's before moving to Alabama and joining the aviation program in that state, replaced Cpt Irwin as commander of the Tupelo support facility. Cpt Irwin moved to California, and later to Texas, becoming a test pilot in single engine jet planes, mainly the F 16.

Following the August release of the 123rd Aviation Company from active duty, Maj Leonard Tingle began the operation of the Meridian support facility at Key Field. He was assisted by Sgts Robert Westbrook and Jack Williams in servicing the UH 19 and OH 23 helicopters assigned to the 123rd Aviation Company. The facility also supported other aviators in the Meridian area.

OH 13 HELICOPTERS REPLACED BY OH 23'S IN 1962

During the time the two new support facilities were being organized in 1962, the OH 13 Bell Helicopters, which had been in the Mississippi program since 1954, were replaced by OH 23 Hillers. Cpts James Burns and John Parker, 1Lt Robert Richardson and Sgt Duane Townley were assigned to pick up the first three OH 23's at the Ft Worth, Tx Depot. Two forced landings and four days later they made it back to Jackson.

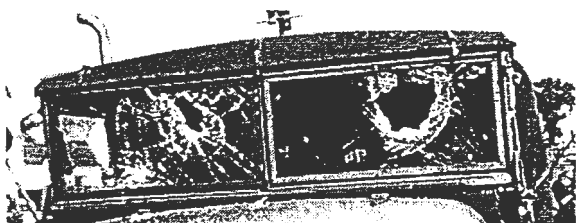
ALL UNITS ON ACTIVE DUTY IN 1962

While the process of restructuring and organizing the additional maintenance support facilities in Tupelo and Meridian was going on, all Mississippi National Guard units were placed on active duty on September 30, 1962, by President John Kennedy. The call-up was to remove the Guard units from state control when the Federal Government took over the effort to enroll James Merideth as the first black at the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

The 108th Armored Cavalry Regiment, composed of North Mississippi units, was in the forefront of the effort to contain the rioting in Oxford even before the Guard was placed on active duty. The unit continued to bear the brunt of the riot containment even after the Federal Government took charge of the situation.

The 108th Aviation Company was involved in a week-end drill at the Fairgrounds Complex in Tupelo and at the Tupelo Airport when the Regimental headquarters ordered the company to move to Oxford on Sunday morning, October 1. The company reported to the Oxford armory while the aircraft and supporting personnel moved to the Oxford airport.

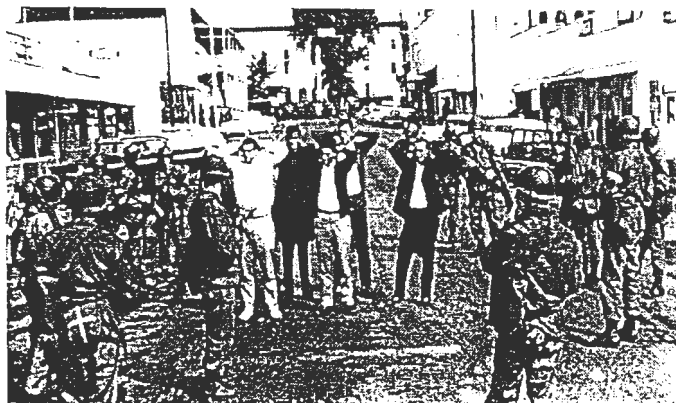
108TH AVIATION COMPANY HELPED CONTAIN RIOTERS



Later in the afternoon, members of the aviation company were ordered to contain rioters at an intersection near the Ole Miss campus. Each member of the task force was issued three rounds of ammunition since the situation had gotten out of hand as the rioters hurled bricks, bottles and other objects at all military personnel and vehicles, injuring many individuals and causing considerable damage to military equipment, as shown above left.

The aviation company was successful in containing the rioters at the intersection assigned to the unit.

Aviators and supporting personnel who had moved from Tupelo to the Oxford airport were unable to get to the armory and did not become involved in the containment of the rioters



near the campus. Later in the day, as Federal troops took over the airport, all aviation troops and equipment were moved to the former Oxford airport south of the city. The

company's base operations were set-up at that site and courier missions and riot control training were carried out during the 26 days the company was on active duty as part of the crisis.

Following the 108th Aviation Company's involvement in the Ole Miss rioting, Cpt McElroy issued this letter report to his parent unit:

AVIATION COMPANY
108TH ARMORED CAVALRY
OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

3 October 1962

At approximately 1600 hours on 1 October 1962, my company, along with another unit, was given the mission to capture a large number of rioters at an intersection. This mob had been throwing bricks, bottles and other objects at every military vehicle that passed, breaking glass and injuring the occupants. As we dismounted, prior to reaching the intersection, bricks and bottles were hurled at us. The mob then began to form in depth and was going to make a stand.

My men were not armed with bayonets, this the mob could see. My commander, Colonel Martin, had given us orders to fire if it became necessary to protect my men from bodily harm. Upon approaching the mob, dodging the objects, it became evident that my men were in danger without means to protect themselves. I gave the order to Lt Howard to fire a round in the air. This he did and approximately 15 rounds were fired.

Thus we were able to take in custody 42 of the mob without a single injury to them.

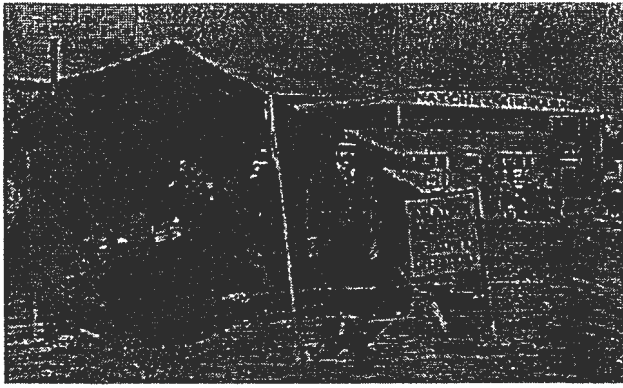
Upon interrogation, it was found that only two were from Oxford. The remainder were from other points of this state and adjoining states

BRUCE McELROY
Capt, Armor
Commanding

ARMY AVIATION HELPED IN "OPERATION CHLORINE" IN 1962

No sooner was the "Ole Miss crisis" over when another crisis developed. Five days after most units were released from the Ole Miss federalization, Adjutant General William Wilson issued a call to Guard troops for state duty in Natchez. The mission was to devise and operate a warning system to all residents within a 25-mile semicircle east of the Mississippi river near Natchez where the Corps of Engineers would be attempting to remove four sunken barges containing nearly two and one-half million pounds of chlorine gas liquified by pressure. The aviation mission was part of an overall plan to evacuate about 80,000 residents of the area in event there were gas leaks during the removal of the tanks.

By October 13 "Operation Chlorine" was in full swing, including army aviation's role. Maj John O'Keefe, the state aviation officer, was placed in charge of the aviation mission at the Natchez Air Park, a small private sod strip at the east edge of the city. The 31st Aviation Company (Miss. Part) provided the bulk of the aircraft, aviators and support personnel for the round the clock operation, however other volunteers came from the 123rd Air Ambulance Aviation Company, the 1066th Transportation Company, the aviation sections of the 114th Field Artillery, and even from the 108th Aviation Company after it was released from the Ole Miss duty. Aircraft utilized were 10 L 19 Birddogs, two L 20 Beavers and five OH 23 Hiller helicopters.



During the 22-day mission, the army aviators rehearsed and finalized an air warning system in pre-established sectors of the area, operating from a field headquarters tent shown at left.

Loudspeakers and sirens were bolted to the wings of the L 19's. Brackets also were available to carry and release one million candle power flares to aid in evacuation during the hours of darkness. One helicopter was assigned to the river bank near the removal site to trigger immediately the air warning system in event there was a leak.

"Operation Chlorine" came to an end November 4 when the four tanks were removed from the bottom of the Mississippi river without any leakage.

PLANS BEGAN TO DEVELOP AIRFIELD AT CAMP SHELBY

In a December 1962 letter, General Pat Wilson named a committee to develop plans for an airfield at Camp Shelby to replace the make-shift airstrip in the motor pool/tank park area near the main post.

Ltc Haskell Vance was named chairman of the committee. Other members of the committee were: Ltc Julius Ervin, Maj John O'Keefe, Cpt Rea Stribling, Cpt E. V. Coombs, Cpt James Burns and Army Aviation Advisor Donald Prim.

Construction of the airfield was to be an Engineer unit training project, with a scheduled completion date of 1969.

DIVISION GOT FULL AVIATION COMPANY IN 1963

Still another reorganization of National Guard units occurred in early 1963, including a reorganization of the 31st Infantry Division units. The 31st Aviation Company, which had been a split unit between Alabama and Mississippi, was assigned to Mississippi, giving the state a full separate Division aviation company. Co E TAM remained as a split company between the two states.

The two units moved from the old warehouse building to a quonset type building behind the hangar housing the Jackson Maintenance Support Facility at Hawkins Field. The building provided adequate space for headquarters offices, supply rooms, classrooms and a motor pool on the north side of the building.

MAJ JOEL VARNER COMMANDER FULL SIZED COMPANY



Joel Varner

Maj Joel Varner, who had been on the 31st Division staff as the Aviation Operations Officer, assumed command of the full-sized 31st Aviation Company.

He was one of the ten original pre-Korea aviators in the Mississippi Army Aviation program and served as Aviation Officer for the 215th Field Artillery Group from 1953 to 1959, prior to serving on the Division staff.

Sgt Slator Taylor was the full time AST for the company.

Other aviators assigned to the full-sized 31st Aviation Company per Special Order #114, dated April 24, 1963, included:

Cpt James Burns, Jackson	Cpt Robert Raper, Memphis	1 Lt Arthur Farmer, Cry. Spgs.
Cpt Jack Davis, Jackson	Cpt Elmon Thomas, Hollandale	1 Lt Bobby Krohn, Corinth
Cpt Charles Gore, Vicksburg	Cpt Thomas Truitt, Florence	2 Lt James Davis, Starkville
Cpt Henry Harvey, Tylertown	Cpt Bobby Welch, Jackson	2 Lt Vince Mullin, Belzoni
Cpt Ernest Mallory, Natchez	1 Lt George Clarke, Jackson	2 Lt James Norman, Jackson
Cpt William Palk, Natchez	1 Lt Bobby Costilow, Grenada	CW2 Harold Godbold, McComb

Other officers/aviators who joined the company between 1963 and 1968, when the company was disbanded, included:

Maj James Coleman, Clinton	CW2 Winfred Backstron, Jackson	W/O Wade H. Berry, Jackson
Cpt Robert Gardner, Jackson	CW2 Marshall Duncan, Jackson	W/O Harold Butler, Jr., Jackson
Cpt William Hodnett, Vicksburg	CW2 Henry Hawes, Tennessee	W/O Robert Caldwell, Ft Rucker
Cpt Loring Tharpe, Jackson	CW2 Paul Kelly, Jackson	W/O Henry Cauthen, Clarksdale
1 Lt Robert Taylor, Greenville	CW2 Walter Miley, Monticello	W/O Roy Matthews, Jackson
1 Lt Albert Turnage, Monticello	CW2 Grady Sargent, Natchez	W/O Thomas Methvin, Jackson
2 Lt William Bolling, Jackson	2 Lt Jerry Hooks, Jackson	CW2 Billy Sexton, Slidell, La.
W/O Tommy Bolling, Jackson		

CO E TAM CONTINUED AS A SPLIT UNIT

Co E TAM, which had been one of the two aviation companies split between Mississippi and Alabama since 1959, continued to be a split unit with Alabama in the 1963 reorganization. 1 Lt Loring Tharpe continued to be the company commander until 1965, when Cpt Bobby Welch took over as commander. Cpt Welch continued as the unit commander until 1968, when the company was disbanded.

REORGANIZATION INCREASED MAJOR SLOTS

The 1963 reorganization authorized four instead of two non-full time major aviator slots in the program. They were the commanders of the three aviation companies and the Division Artillery Aviation Officer. With Maj Varner's move to commanding officer of the 31st Aviation Company, the other non full time major slots were filled as follows:

Cpt Bruce McElroy, commander of the 108th Aviation Company in Tupelo was promoted to major and continued to command the company.

Maj Leonard Tingle, commander of the 123rd Air Ambulance Aviation Company, and full time director of the Meridian Support Facility, had been promoted to major in 1962. He continued to command the company.

Maj Hugh Ketchum, who had been serving as the 31st Division (Miss. Part) Aviation Officer since 1959, became the 31st Division Artillery Aviation Officer with the Grenada headquarters unit. The following year he transferred to 31st Division Artillery S4 slot in an excess aviator status and Cpt Robert Raper was promoted to major and became the Division Artillery Aviation Officer.

1963 REORGANIZATION BEGAN WEEK-END DRILLS

The 1963 reorganization also marked the beginning of a major change in the manner that all National Guard units were trained. Instead of two week-night two-hour drills per month and one all day Sunday drill, the training format was changed into one Saturday and Sunday drill per month, equivalent to four drill periods.

Effective July 1, 1964 the Army authorized 24 additional flight training periods (AFTP's) to assist aviators in meeting their annual flight minimum requirements. The additional periods, which were voluntary, enabled aviators to accumulate 72 paid drills during a year. Each period had to include at least two hours training.

Two years later, in a letter dated November 3, 1966, the Adjutant General's office ordered an end to the practice of "farming out" aircraft. The letter required all aircraft to be returned immediately to the appropriate support facility except: (a) aircraft could be pre-positioned by units requiring aviation support during multiple training assemblies; and (b) aviators could remain over night to accomplish cross country training missions.

CPT WELCH NAMED STANDARDIZATION OFFICER

Cpt Bobby Welch was employed as a full time standardization officer at the Jackson Support Facility in 1963 and in 1966 Cpt John Parker was employed in a similar position with the Meridian Support Facility. Cpt Albert Turnage was employed at the Jackson Facility in 1966.

AVIATION PROGRAM EXPERIENCED FIRST FATALITY IN 1966



Bill Hagler

After 18 years of flying under all types of conditions, the Mississippi Aviation program experienced its first fatality as result of a crash on June 30, 1966.

During annual field training at Camp Shelby, the 123rd Medical Aviation Company was assigned a mission to transport some soldiers to the Keesler Air Force hospital in Biloxi. WO Bill Haglar was the pilot of the UH 19 helicopter that delivered the soldiers to Keesler Field. Upon the return flight to Camp Shelby after dark, the pilot encountered severe weather.

About 14 miles north of Gulfport, the aircraft became involved in a thunderstorm and crashed into power lines, causing the aircraft to burn. WO Haglar was able to clear himself from the crashed aircraft and to rescue Lt Charles Chisolm, who was occupying the co-pilot seat. He then re-entered the burning aircraft twice to rescue Medical Specialist SP5 Richard Blackwell and Crew Chief SP5 Billy Guy. All four crew members were hospitalized, two in Gulfport and two in Keesler Field, but only Lt Chisolm survived.

WO Haglar died on July 2, three days after the accident, as result of the burns and inhalation of heat and fumes.

The fatal accident occurred two days after the news item at right appeared in the Meridian Star.



READY FOR A PATIENT — A UH-1C evacuation helicopter stands by to receive a "patient" during practice for the 123rd Medical Company's annual summer drills at Camp Shelby now under way. CWO Bill Hagler (left) supervises loading of the patient into the 'copter, which is piloted by Capt. Bob Richardson.

Later the Camp Shelby airfield was named Haglar field in honor of the Meridian aviator. Lt Chisolm, who was waiting to go to flight school when the accident occurred, did not recover from his injuries sufficiently to allow him to pursue flight training.

MAJ JAMES COLEMAN NAMED COMMANDER 31ST COMPANY IN 1966

In 1966 Maj James Coleman of Clinton, formerly with the 108th Aviation Company, and more recently with the National Guard Officer's Training School, replaced Maj Joel Varner as commander of the 31st Aviation Company and served in that capacity until the 1968 disbandment. Maj Coleman had been in the aviation program since 1956, first serving with the 198th Tank Battalion.



James Coleman

Maj Varner transferred to the staff of the Emergency Operations Headquarters for the purpose of being promoted, and served in an excess aviator slot.

ARMY AVIATION TOOK QUANTUM LEAP IN VIETNAM WAR

Though no Mississippi aviation units were called to active duty for the Vietnam War during the 60's and early 70's, Army Aviation took a quantum leap forward as result of its participation in the hostilities.

Some 20,000 military advisors had been in South Vietnam since 1959, but the Army did not commit aviation units until 1961. The early aviation units utilized UH 1 and CH 47 helicopters and L 19, L 20, U 21 and C 12 fixed wing aircraft. The OH 6 helicopters appeared in Vietnam in 1966. The AH 1 Cobra helicopters were first used in Vietnam in 1967 and the OH 58's first appeared in 1969.

As the "undeclared war" escalated, the U. S. committed 200,000 troops by 1965, 380,000 by 1966, and 525,000 by 1967. UH 1 helicopters and their crews played a leading role in the first major U.S. offensive in May 1965 when they moved paratroopers into battle, supported by a massive artillery barrage.

The use of helicopters in combat assault became more important over the next few years. Troops were moved quickly and effectively into advanced areas. With equal speed they were supplied, then airlifted out, or to another area. In addition to troop lifts, aviation personnel performed tactical combat assault, direct fire support, aerial recon, medical evacuation and were called upon to provide anti tank assault. One of the most important missions was medical evacuation. Over 320,000 wounded soldiers were evacuated from the combat areas.

Army Aviation also can be proud of the fact that seven army aviators were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor (2 posthumously) for their services during the "undeclared war."

EIGHT PRE-VIETNAM AVIATORS TO COMBAT

Eight pre-Vietnam aviators in the Mississippi program went on active duty and saw combat duty in that conflict. *Two of the eight were killed in Vietnam.*



Harry Phillips

Lt. Harry Phillips of Jackson, an aviator with the 123rd Aviation Company, went on active duty in 1961 before the 123rd was called to active duty during the Berlin crisis. He was in Korea during 1962-63, and was sent to Vietnam in 1966 with the 254th Medical Air Ambulance Detachment.

He was killed on August 13, 1966, while on a night mission to evacuate two wounded soldiers. His wife and three children lived in Memphis.

WO Henry Cauthen of Clarksdale was a member of the 31st Aviation Company during the mid-60's. He volunteered for active duty and in April 1967 and was sent to Vietnam where he was assigned to the 188th Air Mobile Aviation Company.

On July 31, 1967, three months after arriving in Vietnam, W/O Cauthen was killed, along with his co-pilot and three crew members, while on a night combat mission.

His wife, Gail, and two children lived in Clarksdale.

The other pre-Vietnam aviators in the Mississippi aviation program who saw action in Vietnam were *Cpt John Persons*, *1 Lt Edward Lowry*, *1 Lt Glaston Ford* and *2 Lt Huey P. Lang*, all former members of the 123rd Aviation Medical Company of Meridian, *1 Lt Billy Percival* of Grenada, who was with the 31st Aviation Company, and *1 Lt George Walker* of Coldwater, who was with the 108th ACR Aviation Company in Tupelo.



Henry Cauthen



Glaston Ford

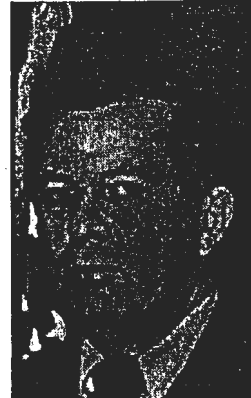
1 Lt Glaston "Sonny" Ford of Meridian was the first of the eight pre-Vietnam aviators to see action in Vietnam. He was assigned to the 119th Aviation Company in 1964-65. He completed a second tour in Vietnam in 1968-69 with the 213th Assault Support Helicopter Company, the 140th TC Det and the 222nd Combat Aviation Battalion. He was scheduled for a third tour in Vietnam when fighting ceased.

Lt Ford retired in 1980 with the rank of Lt Colonel. He now resides in St. Charles, Missouri.



John Persons

Cpt John Persons served in Vietnam in 1965-66, assigned to the 498th Air Ambulance Aviation Company. He served a second tour in 1968-69, first with the 45th Medical Company Aviation Section, then as commander of the 283rd Air Ambulance Company. He retired from active duty in 1976 as a Lt Colonel and resides in Scooba.



Huey Lang

Lt Huey Lang also served with the 498th Air Ambulance Avn Co in Vietnam in 1965-66. He served a second tour in 1968-69 when he commanded the 45th Medical Avn Co. He retired from active duty in 1980 as a Lt Colonel and resides in Meridian.



Billy Percival

Lt Billy Percival of Grenada joined the 31st Division Aviation Company in 1963 and completed flight training in 1964. In 1965 he transferred to the Marines and qualified as a naval aviator. He served with the Marines in Vietnam in 1969. He retired as a full Colonel and resides in Pensacola, Fla.



Edward Lowry

1 Lt Edward Lowry joined a Reserve unit in Laurel after leaving the 123rd. He volunteered for active duty and served in Vietnam in 1966-67 with the 1st Division Aviation Battalion. He served a second tour in Vietnam in 1968-69 with the 101st Airborne Division Aviation Company. He retired as a Lt Colonel and resides in Madison.



George Walker

1 Lt George Walker of Coldwater, while a member of the 108th Aviation Company, went on active duty in 1967-68, serving with the 185th Aviation Company in Vietnam.

He served a second tour of duty in 1970-71 as a member of the 173rd OV-1 (Mohawk) Aviation Company.

He later commanded the 131st Aviation Battalion and the 185th Aviation Group in the Miss. program, before being transferred to STARC headquarters.

THREE ARMY ADVISOR CHANGES IN 1959 - 1968 ERA



Maj Bill Hoge



Maj Donald Prim



Maj Bidwell Owens



Maj James Russell

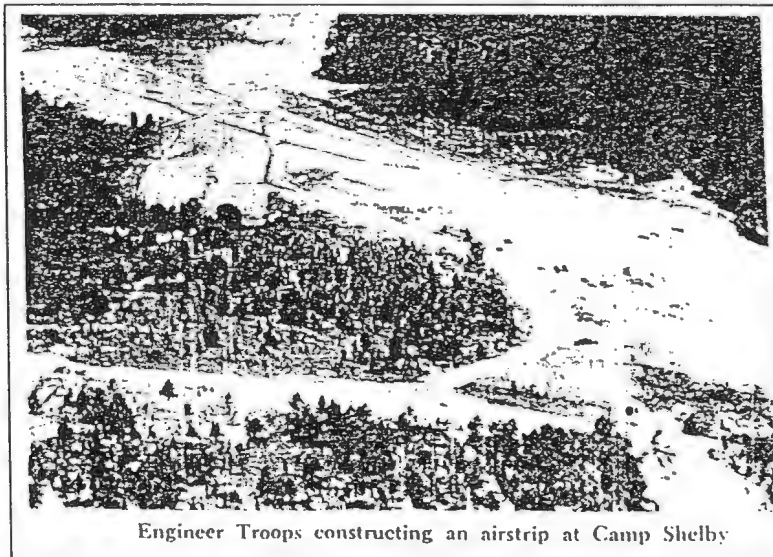
Maj Donald Prim replaced Maj Bill Hoge, who had been the Army Advisor since 1956, in 1961. Maj Bidwell Owens replaced Maj Prim in 1966, and Maj James Russell replaced Maj Owens in 1967.

SHELBY AIRFIELD READY FOR USE IN 1967

By the time for annual field training in 1967, the various Engineer Units had Shelby Airfield ready for use by aviation units. The engineer personnel had worked on the project during field training sessions since 1963, following the development of a plan by a special committee formed in late 1962.

The picture at right shows the development of the site in the early stages of the engineer's work.

When first put in use in 1967, the field consisted of a 5,000-foot sod runway, running generally north and south, with parking areas on the west side. An open-sided maintenance building was at the northwest corner of the runway. A small



Engineer Troops constructing an airstrip at Camp Shelby

operations "shack" was the hub of activity on the west side of the runway. There were two partially screened-in buildings, one for supply and another for a classroom, south of the operations "shack." During summer field training traffic around the field was controlled by a portable tower furnished by the Air Guard.

OTHER AVIATION ACTIVITIES DURING 1959 - 1968

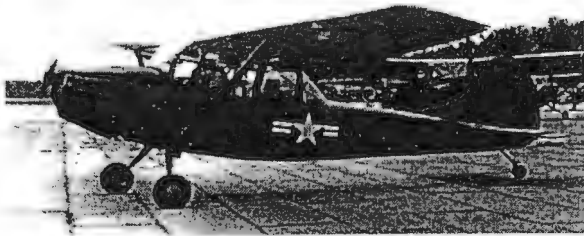
ANNUAL FIELD TRAINING: During 1959 - 1963, the Mississippi part of the two aviation companies participated in annual field training at Ft McClellan, Ala., along with the 31st Division. During the second week of each year's training, six L 19's, an L 20 and a helicopter would be dispatched to Camp Shelby where the Division's artillery units were training. During the remaining years of the period, ending in 1967, all Mississippi aviation units performed AFT at Camp Shelby.

AVIATORS HELP AFTER HURRICANE BETSY: In September 1965 when Hurricane Betsy hit the New Orleans area, the Louisiana National Guard did not have qualified aviators to fly their aircraft for emergency assistance. Hq & Hq Detachment of the Mississippi National Guard arranged to transfer Maj Leonard Tingle and Cpt John Parker of the 123rd Medical Aviation Company in Meridian to the Louisiana National Guard for temporary duty that allowed them to fly the emergency missions.

ROSTER OF AVIATORS AT END OF 1967

<p>Hq & Hq Detachment Ltc John O'Keefe, Jackson</p> <p>HHC 31st Infantry Div. Ltc Joel Varner, Jackson</p> <p>31st Aviation Company Maj James Coleman, Clinton Cpt James Burns, Jackson Cpt Arthur Farmer, C. Springs Cpt William Hodnett, Vicksburg Cpt William Palk, Natchez Cpt Ernest Mallory, Natchez Cpt Thomas Truitt, Florence Cpt Loring Tharpe, Jackson Cpt Albert Turnage, Monticello Cpt Billy McMasters, Grenada Cpt Robert Gardner, Jackson Cpt Henry Harvey, Tylertown 1 Lt George Clarke, Jackson 1 Lt James Davis, Starkville 1 Lt Bobby Krohn, Corinth 1 Lt James Norman, Jackson 1 Lt Robert Taylor, Greenville CW2 Henry Hawes, Tenn. CW2 Harold Godbold, McComb CW2 Walter Miley, Monticello CW2 Billy Sexton, Slidell, La. CW2 Marshall Duncan, Jackson CW2 Paul Kelly, Jackson WO Wade Berry, Texas WO Robert Caldwell, Ft Rucker WO Roy Matthews, Jackson WO Thomas Methvin, Jackson</p>	<p>Hq 31st Div. Artillery Ltc Hugh Ketchum, Jackson Maj Robert Raper, Memphis Cpt Richard Forbes, Grenada 1 Lt William Percival, Grenada 2 Lt Tommy Christopher, Grenada WO Ray Carroll, Grenada WO Sterling Mays, Grenada</p> <p>Hq 3rd Brigade, 31st Division WO George Perdue, Jackson</p> <p>Co E, 731st Maint. Bn., 31st Div. Cpt Bobby Welch, Jackson</p> <p>Hq 631st Field Artillery Group Cpt Hugh Garraway, Hattiesburg</p> <p>Hq 4th Bn, 114th Field Artillery Cpt Jack Davis, Jackson</p> <p>Hq 5th Bn, 114th Field Artillery Cpt Asa Bryant, Hattiesburg Cpt Teddie Dale, Wiggins</p> <p>Hq Co, 168th Engineer Group Cpt Charles Gore, Vicksburg</p> <p>Hq Co, 890th Engineer Battalion 2 Lt Kenneth Mitchell, Jackson CW2 Robert Housley, Jackson</p> <p>Hq 106th Engineer Battalion Maj Clarke Ammons, Monticello</p>	<p>102nd Public Information Detachment Cpt Robert Hutson, Jackson</p> <p>108th Armor Cavalry Aviation Company Maj Bruce McElroy, Baldwin Cpt Jesse Akers, Greenville Cpt Robert Ayers, Columbus Cpt Fred Franks, Saltillo Cpt Martin Hollis, Tupelo Cpt Dwight Spearman, Alabama Cpt Lee Hamberlin, Hernando Cpt Bill Hendrix, Memphis Cpt James Gentry, Meridian 1 Lt Lawrence Little, Macon 1 Lt George Walker, Coldwater CW2 Olen Kelley, Columbus CW2 George Schumpert, Amory</p> <p>123rd Medical Aviation Company Maj Leonard Tingle, Meridian Cpt William Bell, Meridian Cpt Joseph Hans, Meridian Cpt William Lewman, McComb Cpt John Parker, Meridian Cpt John Permenter, West Point Cpt Robert Richardson, Meridian 1 Lt George Messer, Meridian 1 Lt Kenneth Townsend, Meridian 1 Lt P. S. Garner, Jr., Meridian 1 Lt Larry Knight, Jackson 2 Lt Julian Bomar, Meridian 2 Lt Ira Morgan, Meridian 2 Lt Charles Chisolm, Meridian 2 Lt George Godwin, Meridian</p>
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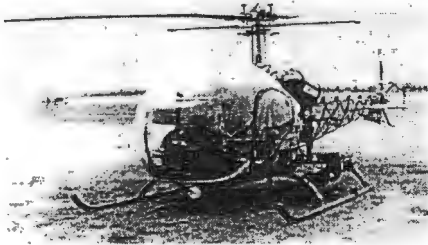
1959 - 1968



The L 19 (O 1A) Birddog continued to be the workhorse of the



The L 20 (U6) Beaver was used for VIP missions and for instrument flight training during the 1959-68 time period



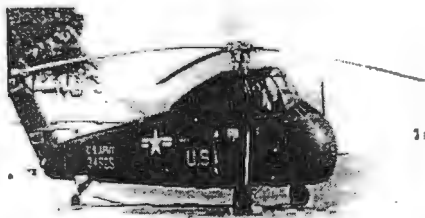
The OH 13 Bell helicopter was used by aviators during this era until 1962



The OH 23 Hiller replaced the OH 13 in 1962 and remained in use until the early 70's



The UH 19 Sikorsky helicopter replaced the OH 23 Hillers in the late 60's and remained until the early 70's



The CH 34 was used from the late 60's until the mid-70's, primarily by the Air

Change in Adjutant Generals In 1964



Cpt Ernest Mallory, right, an aviator with the 31st Division Aviation Company in the 1959-67 era is shown with Sgt Jimmy



Gen Walter Johnson, above, a former pilot during World War II, replaced Gen Pat Wilson as Adjutant General in 1964. and was



Gen Pat Wilson, who had been Adjutant General since 1947, and since the Army Aviation Program was founded, was replaced by Gen

1959 - 1968

Some Of The Members Of 108th Aviation Company - 1959-60



Robert Ayers



Fred Franks



Lee Hamberlin



Bruce McElroy



Charles McNair



Travis Parker



Howard Richardson



George Schumpert



Elmon Thomas

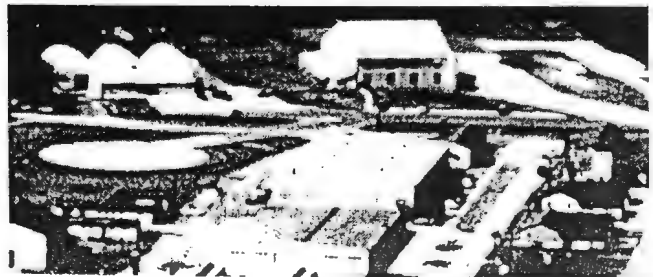


Where It Started In Tupelo

At left is a picture of the Tupelo hangar where the Tupelo Maintenance Support Facility, which supported the 108th Aviation Company, was established in 1962.

Where It Started In Jackson

At right is a picture of the northwest sector of Hawkins Field in Jackson where the Jackson Support Facility was located in 1953, using the metal hangar (1). In 1959 when the state got a part of two 31st Div Avn Co's, they used the old warehouse (2) and an orderly room in a small building just north of the warehouse. In 1963 the two units moved into the quonset-type buildings (3),



1959 - 1968

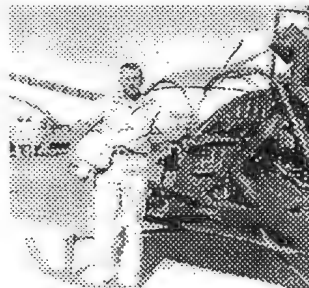
Jackson Support Facility Personnel in 1963



Shown at left are employees of the Jackson Support Facility in 1963, left to right: Ellis Self, Harold Ryals, Milton Loper, Emmett Brown, Wiley Isbell, Duane Townley, Alfred McLendon, Harold Lane, Sam Askew, Cpt James Burns, Cpt Bobby Welch and Bob Dreding.



At left is Cpt William Palk (left) of Natchez getting the straight "poop" from Sgt Ellis Self, the L 19 mechanic. Palk and Self joined the aviation program soon after the post-Korea reorganization



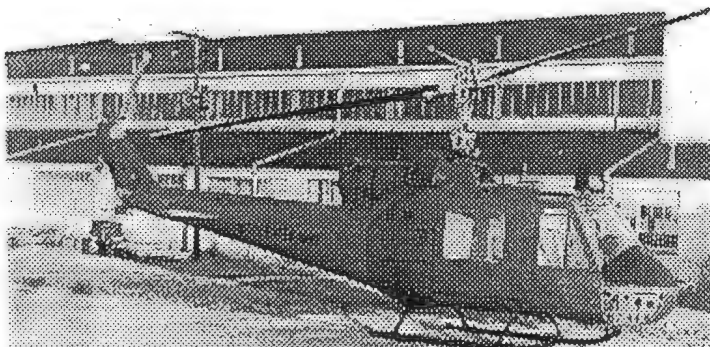
At right is Cpt John Parker of Meridian, shown with an OH 13 Bell helicopter, which was used in the aviation program from 1954 to 1962.



At left is Maj John O'Keefe leaving the operations tent in the early days of Operation Chlorine at Natchez in 1962



At right is Sgt Ellis "Scotty" Self doing KP at Operation Chlorine. It's his next best MOS to the one of airplane mechanic



Where It All Started In Meridian

At left is a picture of a UH 1 helicopter parked in front of the old Meridian hangar where the first Meridian Support Facility was established in 1962. Though this is a picture taken in the 70's, it does show the original hangar.

1959 - 1968

Thursday, May 27, 1965 — A The Clanton-Ledger

O'Keefe Wins His Wings As Master Aviator In NG

Lt. Col. John O'Keefe recently received orders awarding his master aviator wings. He is the first aviator in the Mississippi Army National Guard to qualify for his master rating. He was awarded the wings for meeting the requirements of the number of years flying and number of flying hours set by the Department of the Army. He also has the special instrument card which is required.

O'Keefe began flying in 1942 with the Army Air Corps. At the age of 19 he was a rated liaison pilot and served during World War II with the Second Air Commando Group in Burma and with General Chenault's 14th Air Force in China.

While serving in Burma and China, O'Keefe flew wounded men from the front lines, rescued downed pilots and flew

ammunition and blood plasma to troops in combat.

For his actions in Burma and China, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

He was released from active duty in 1945 and received his rating as an aviator in the Mississippi Army National Guard in 1952. In 1954, he attended helicopter school and received his rotary wing rating. He has flown a total of 1500 hours in helicopters and 3500 in conventional aircraft.

O'Keefe is presently assigned as staff aviation officer in Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment Mississippi Army National Guard in Jackson.

In civilian life, he is the executive vice president of the Mississippi Manufacturers Association of Jackson.



FINAL INSPECTION — Maj. Leonard Tingle (left) commanding officer of Meridian's 123rd Medical Company, goes over unit records with Col. Albert Gore of Jackson, commander of the 213th Medical Battalion, of which the local unit is a part. The unit left Sunday for two-weeks of field training at Camp Shelby.



DOWNTOWN JACKSON LANDING

A Mississippi National Guard helicopter hovers near the roof of the Edwards Hotel garage as it prepares to land on the building here Thursday morning. The craft, piloted by Capt. John O'Keefe, delivered Col. William G. Holea downtown. Col. Holmes of Guisport, arrived here Thursday to prepare for the Mississippi National Guard Association's annual meeting here this weekend.—Daily News Staff Photo by W. C. Shumaker.

JACKSON DAILY NEWS C—Tuesday, Nov. 17, 1964



CHANGE OF COMMAND

Capt. Frank R. Welch, left, new commander of Company E, Transportation Aircraft Maintenance, 731st Maintenance Battalion, Jackson, is congratulated by past commander Capt. James H. Tarpe during change of command ceremony at Hawkins Airfield Saturday night. Capt. Tarpe will remain as Service Platoon Officer of Company A, Air Mobile, 31st Aviation Battalion of Jackson.—Official NG Photo.

July 27, 1959 Grenada, Mississippi



WITH 31st DIV. — Pictured from left to right are Capt. Robert E. Raper, Flight Commander, Duck Hill; M-Sgt Jesse A. Strider, Maintenance Sgt, Grenada, and Maj. Hugh W. Ketchum, Asst. Division Air Officer, Grenada. Keeping the 31st Aviation Company running smoothly is one of their responsibilities while at National Guard summer training. They are now training at Ft. McClellan with the 31st Dixie Division.

Copter Lifts Jacksonians From Swamp

DEC. 1962

Three Jacksonians and a dog went on a brief duck-hunting trip Saturday but wound up on a chilly all-night camping expedition with a free helicopter tour of the Pearl River swamp.

Hinds County sheriff's officers said relatives reported William Burke Sr., his son, William Jr., 16, both of 320 Keener Ave., and Raymond Johnson, 16, of 228 Wesley Ave., missing at 8 p.m., Saturday.

The trio and a Golden Setter went to the river swamp south of Jackson at 2 p.m., for a brief duck hunting trip, and did not return, Sheriff J. R. Gilfoy was informed.

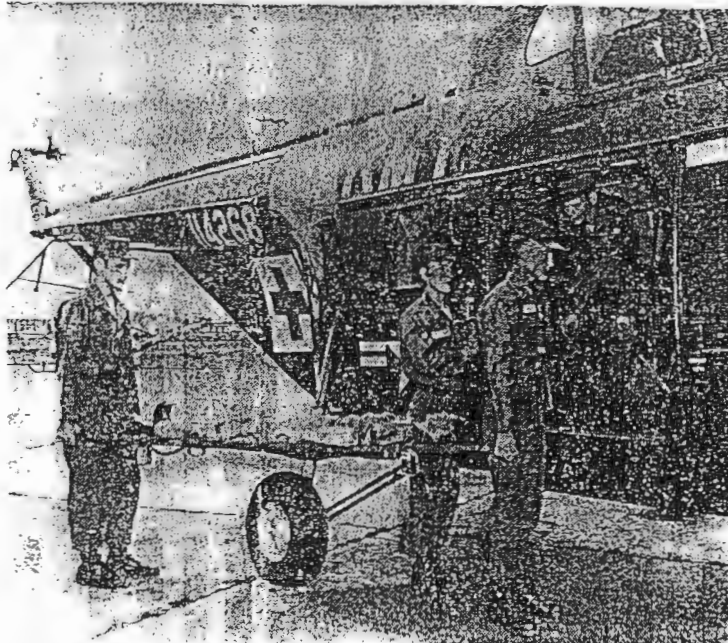
Deputies searched for the three throughout the night, and at daybreak National Guard Maj. John O'Keefe joined the hunt in a helicopter.

Five minutes later he found the group near a fire in the swamps.

They said they had wandered in the darkness until 10 p.m., then built a fire for the night.

O'Keefe airlifted man, boys, and dog to safety. None reported ill effects from the night.

MERIDIAN STAR Sunday, November 24, 1963



RESCUE OPERATION — Crew members of the 123rd Medical Co. simulate rescue operations for training purposes. Lt. Bob Richardson, pilot, awaits final preparations before takeoff with Sp-5

Clairborne Blackwell as the "casualty." Pfc. Aubrey Burt, Sp-5 Terry Pogue, Sp-5 Jerry Headley and Sp-4 Tommy Glover aid in the operation.

—Star Staff Photo



Sp/5 Edgar Goodman



Sp/5 Jerry Headley