



"SO MANY, SO MUCH, SO FAR, SO FAST"

United States Air Force Reserve

Senior Master Sergeant Darby Perrin, 2020

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By SMSgt Darby Perrin, 2020

At the start of Operation DESERT SHIELD in August of 1990, the C141-B Starlifter was well established as the workhorse and preeminent airlifter of Military Airlift Command. Nearing the end of its programmatic life, an unprecedented need for airlift during Operation DESERT SHIELD and Operation DESERT STORM radically altered its operations squeezing every drop from the venerable airlifter. Aircrew duty days were extended, crew maximum flying time was waived, and unit training was suspended. Home station and depot maintenance were expedited, with a focus on returning as many aircraft to service as soon as possible. To hasten the effort, Robins Air Logistics Center was directed to delay paint jobs and cease in-depth overhaul on the C141Bs, leaving the aircraft bare aluminum skin exposed to the elements. Affectionately referred to by C-141B aircrews and maintainers as “silver bullets,” those aircraft were part of the Starlifter Aircrew’s immense effort that provided for the movement of 159,462 tons of cargo and 20,000 passengers--more than thirty percent of all airlift during DESERT STORM/ DESERT SHIELD.

Perfected during Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM, the “air bridge” played a crucial role in the success of the airlift campaign. During the conflict, a combined total of 270 million pounds of fuel was transferred in flight to satisfy contingency operations. Featured in this composition is a KC-135R Stratotanker air refueling a C-141B Starlifter to expedite cargo and in route from Dover AFB, Delaware, to Dhahran AB, Saudi Arabia.

Comprising 20 percent of the total force, today’s Air Force Reserve continues to fill a critical role in aerial refueling and airlift operations. Reserve aircrews continue to answer the call of our nation’s air mobility requirements and worldwide contingency operations.

AIR FORCE RESERVE

The Air Force Reserve is a combat-ready force, composed of more than 70,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen, stationed locally at over 60 locations throughout the United States and serving globally for every Combatant Command in air, space and cyberspace.

We are a cost efficient and mission-effective force, providing the nation with operational capability, strategic depth and surge capacity, both overseas and here at home. The Air Force Reserve’s wide-ranging operational capability serves the diverse needs of every Combatant Commander, whose requirements are as varied as the geographic and functional areas they support.

Air Force Reserve Command directly supports the homeland with capabilities, including aerial firefighting, aerial spray, and weather reconnaissance, better known as the “Hurricane Hunters.”

Our relationship with other federal agencies, including the National Weather Service and US Forest Service, demonstrates how federal, military and civilian organizations can work together to support the entire nation.

The majority of our Reservists serve alongside our active-duty counterparts in association constructs. Approximately two-thirds of the Air Force’s associations are with the Air Force Reserve. Integrating through associations delivers significant taxpayer value, both in cost savings and improved mission effectiveness, by sharing aircraft, equipment and facilities with the active duty.

Value is also gained from “Airmen for Life” as the Air Force Reserve retains the experience and training cost of a member’s active duty service. As over 75 percent of our Reserve Citizen Airmen serve part-time, this combat-tested experience stays in a highly cost-efficient force, available whenever the nation calls. Further, the nation benefits from the intrinsic value gained by a member’s civilian experience in a variety of career fields, from pilots and nurses to space and cyberspace professionals.

AIR FORCE RESERVE MISSION

Provide Combat-Ready Forces to Fly, Fight and Win.

MISSION SETS

The Air Force Reserve currently performs about 20 percent of the work of the Air Force, including traditional flying missions and other more specialized missions, such as Weather Reconnaissance, Aerial Fire Fighting, Aerial Spray and Personnel Recovery.



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