AFLCMC *Heritage Hangar*

AFLCMC History Office

Kevin Rusnak, Chief Historian

Jason Engle, Historian

15-21 November 2021

15 Nov 1966 (Digital Dir.-Hanscom AFB)

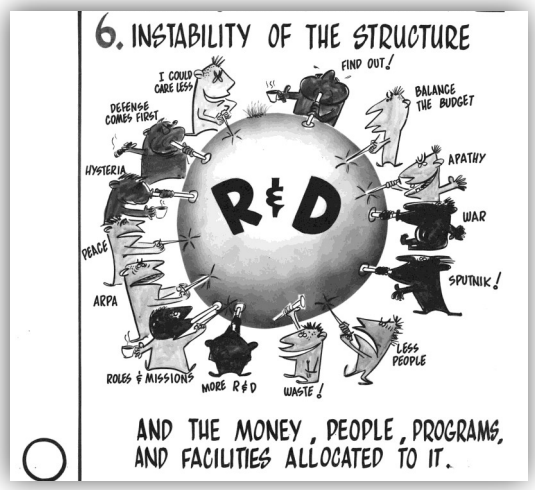
NASA's Gemini XII mission, the final flight of that program, ended when astronauts Jim Lovell (of Apollo 13 fame) and Buzz Aldrin (of Apollo 11) splashed down after their 4-day mission. The capsule was the first to be tracked by the EC-135N Apollo/Range Instrumented Aircraft (ARIA) (on 11/12 & 11/14), The ARIAs, contracted & managed by Hanscom's Electronic Systems Division, included the largest airborne steerable radar antenna in order to receive and relay voice and tracking data from moon-bound Apollo spacecraft to the Mission Control Center in Houston. The test with Gemini was an unplanned but successful demonstration of the technology during the aircraft's test phase. (Photo: NMUSAF)

16 Nov 1977 (Fighters & Adv Aircraft/Hill AFB)

Hill AFB held the groundbreaking ceremonies for its first General Dynamics F-16 *Fighting Falcon* (the name was revealed at Hill in 1980) support facilities. These consisted of two buildings, one (bldg. 125) was a training facility costing $1.5 million and the other (bldg. 119) a flight operations facility, both completed in Oct 1978. The initial F-16 support complex also included the Avionics Integration Support Facility (bldg. 1211) and building 118 (photo), the Flight Simulator Training Facility, completed in 1978 and 1980, respectively. Hill remains home to AFLCMC's F-16 Division, as well as other fighters. (Photo: 75 ABW/HO)

17 Nov 1957 (AFLCMC)

In the wake of Sputnik the previous month, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Thomas D. White requested that the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board study the reorganization of Air Force research and development to overcome the perceived technological gap between the US and USSR. The ad hoc committee was led by H. Guyford Stever. Over the course of the next two years, the recommendation that R&D be divided geographically was implemented, with Aeronautical Systems based at Wright-Patt, Electronic Systems at Hanscom, and Space/Missiles in California. (Photo: AFRL/HO)



18 Nov 1930 (Fighters & Adv Aircraft/WPAFB)

The first flight of the Boeing XP-9 occurred at Wright Field. Seeing the end of wood/cloth biplane fighters, the Air Corps requested that Boeing design a metal monoplane in 1928. Two years later, the company delivered the XP-9 to Wright Field via train, where it was flight tested. Terrible visibility led to its cancellation, but the semi-monocoque aluminum fuselage (where the stressed metal skin is part of the structure) design was key to enabling all-metal aircraft and persisted in most future aircraft. (Photo: *NMUSAF*)

19 Nov 1973 (Mobility & Training Aircraft Dir./Robins

President Richard Nixon relayed his thanks to the Warner Robins AFB team "for the outstanding job your people did on the airlift to the Middle East." He was referring to the Operational Nickel Grass that provided US military materiel to Israel during the Yom Kippur War using Air Force global mobility aircraft, including the new C-5A (photo). While successful, the mission revealed a need to improve strategic airlift and aerial refueling systems and procedures. It also prompted the Arab oil embargo of 1973 and the resulting oil crisis. (Photo: USAF)

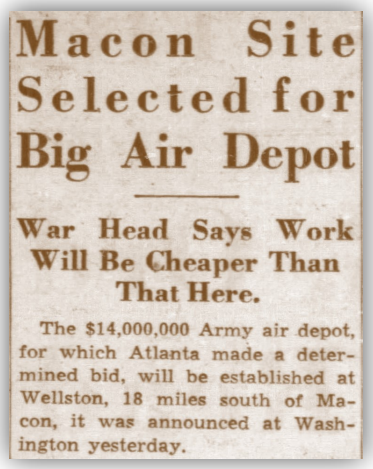
20 Nov 1992 (Mobility & Training Aircraft Dir.)

The Air Force completed testing of the Beech (now Raytheon) T-1A *Jayhawk* advanced training aircraft. The Jayhawk is the military version of the Beech 400A and is used for training student pilots selected for airlifters and tankers, as well as supporting navigator training. It holds a crew of two student pilots, along with an instructor. The first of 178 operational T-1As was delivered the same month and has served trainees since 1993. The twin-engine (Pratt & Whitney JT15D-5B) jet cost $4.1 million. (Photo: USAF)

21 Nov 1961 (WPAFB/88 ABW)

Fire completely destroyed Building 262A in WPAFB Area A, home to HQ Air Force Logistics Command offices and thousands of personnel records. The exact cause was unknown, but likely faulty electrical wiring. Base firemen Dale V. Kelchner and William J. Collins lost their lives battling the blaze. Fire Station No. 1 was memorialized for the two men in 1989. (Photos: AFLCMC/HO)

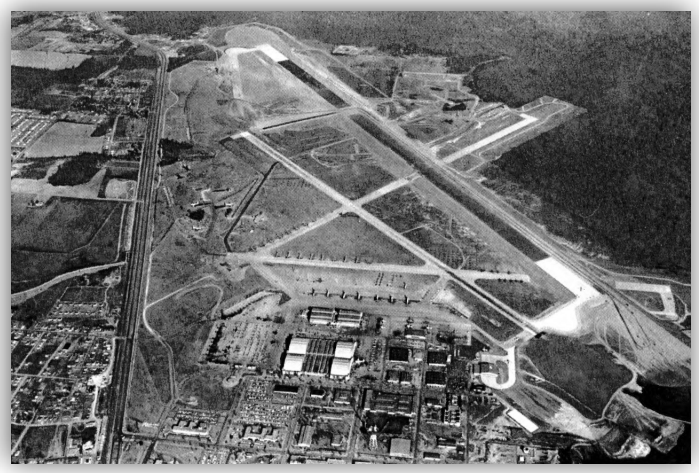
AFLCMC Installation Spotlight: Robins AFB



Macon Site Selected for Big Air Depot

War Head Says Work Will Be Cheaper Than That Here.

The $14,000,000 Army air depot, for which Atlanta made a determined bid, will be established at Wellston, 18 miles south of Macon, it was announced at Washington yesterday.



In the late 1930s, the US Army Air Corps (USAAC) began expanding in reaction to the re-arming of Europe that made the defense of the United States seem increasingly likely. The Air Corps established a series of geographically dispersed air depots around the country to supplement its existing infrastructure. These depots provided for both storage and maintenance of aircraft and equipment, and thus significant employment beyond that of a standard air field. Still deep in the Great Depression, local governments vigorously vied for the new facilities that could boost their local economies, at the low cost of donating the necessary land to the government as an inducement. The tiny town of Wellston, Georgia, beat out other locations around Macon and Atlanta for a new Southeast (aka Georgia) Air Depot in June 1941 (*left*), just months before Pearl Harbor.

Keeping with policy, the USAAC named the depot for the nearest town. In a twist, Wellston subsequently renamed itself "Warner Robins" at the urging of the local commander, in honor of recently deceased Air Corps logistics expert Brig Gen Augustine Warner Robins (*right*). Robins had graduated from West Point in the same 1907 class as Hap Arnold and McCook Field commander Thurman Bane. Robins spent the better part of the 1920s and 1930s at what's now Wright-Patterson AFB, as commander of the Fairfield Air Depot and rising to head of the Materiel Division (AFMC's equivalent). Before a heart attack cut short his life in 1940, he had modernized the logistics system that enabled the explosive growth during WWII. The depot was officially renamed for him in 1943.

Warner Robins Army Air Depot expanded in waves during World War II to accommodate its mission to modify, repair, and distribute aircraft, engines, armament, Norden bombsights, and other components, as well as train thousands of personnel for Air Depot Groups that deploying overseas to manage logistics in the war zones. At the end of the war, Warner Robins drew down significantly, but expanded again during the Korean War and Berlin Airlift (*center*, 1955). The Depot refurbished WWII-era aircraft and serviced new missiles like the Matador and Mace, as well as the new C-130 (built outside Atlanta in the factory that produced B-29s during the war), which started its focus on cargo aircraft.

Today, AFLCMC's components at Robins AFB (renamed that in the 1970s) include support for the F-15, C-17, C-5, and C-130, as well as elements of the Agile Combat Support, Armament, and Digital Directorates.

(Photos: *Atlanta Constitution*, June 15, 1941, p. 2A; AFLCMC/HO)

For more LCMC History & Heritage, follow us on Twitter: @AFLCMCHO and @McCookField for "100 Years Ago Today" Air Force acquisition activities