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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Interviews at Otis Air National Guard Base (Otis ANGB)

Type of event: Interview with Brigadier General Donald J. Quenneville

Date: January 7, 2004

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Geoffrey Brown

Team Number: 8

Location: 102nd Fighter Wing, Otis Air National Guard Base, Massachusetts Air National Guard

Participants - Non-Commission: Andrew Huddleston (Dep Ch, Plans, Integration & Transformation Div, AF/XOHP, 703 696-0024, Fax: 703 588-0636)

Participants - Commission: John Farmer, John Azzarello, Geoffrey Brown

Background:

Quenneville has been in the military for 33 years. Eight years of which was active duty. He came to the 102nd Fighter Wing in 1978, and last year became the commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard.

Please see the attached biography for further details.

Alert Site Mission:

Quenneville recalled that in 1972 NORAD's Air Defense mission included fifteen or sixteen alert sites. Between 1972 and 2001 the number of sites declined due to the perception of the Cold War threat. Most of those bases were at the maritime borders in 2001, as opposed to the northern alert sites that were active in the Cold War, and meant to respond to an attack from over the North Pole and Canadian airspace.

Quenneville explained that the alert site mission was relatively constant through its changes. He noted that the mission at Otis ANGB was mostly focused on responding to Russian Bear (a type of aircraft with the capacity to carry air-to-surface missiles) activity. When the Russians developed the Bear H model – that has the capability of launching a cruise missile – Otis had a high priority on shadowing those aircraft; but as the Russian defense capability declined with the worsening of the Russian economy, the number of alert sites declined.

Quenneville remarked that prior to 9/11 the focus of the alert bases was still an outwards-looking monitoring mission. Quenneville noted that Dr. Finklestein, a policy maker at NORAD, analyzed possible threats to national airspace. Quenneville opined that

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his answer to the need of the air alert mission despite the end of the Cold War was that rogue states looking for high level weaponry had a free market in the former Soviet Union. He believed that until those weapons were accounted for, it was still necessary for Otis ANGB to have an air alert mission. He noted that those focused on assessing the need for the air defense mission decided that seven air defense bases was the minimum needed.

Hijack Mission:

Quenneville noted that the hijack procedure and responsibility did not change over his career. He believed that NORAD developed the procedures that were used by the Air Force to intercept a hijacked aircraft. He noted that in addition to the radio signals to indicate a hijack that a pilot uses – signals Commission staff is familiar with – there were both [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for instance, Quenneville noted that the [REDACTED]

Hijack chain of command:

According to Quenneville, ideally the FAA would notify NORAD of an ongoing hijacking; but if NORAD became aware of a hijacking through a discreet IFF system code change then, since both entities used joint-use radar, the coordination would be “sorted out” between a NORAD sector like NEADS and the FAA before fighters are launched.

Drug Interdiction Component:

Quenneville noted that the F-106 did not participate in many drug interdictions, circa 1986. He noted that fighters were deployed for forty-five days to Panama in the early nineties. They would mostly intercept what was believed as a drug running aircraft, then shadow the target aircraft until it landed.

F-106 and F-15

Quenneville noted that the firing exercise he was involved in was to test different aircraft’s ability to fire a tactical nuclear weapon. This is one of the designs for the F-106 – to launch a missile referred to as the “Geanie Rocket”.

Though the F-15 was developed as an air interceptor, it quickly showed its ability as a tactical fighter. It was never designed to carry a nuclear weapon. He noted also that the radar and ability to carry better missiles were improved from the F-106 to the F-15.

NORAD/FAA Cooperation:

Quenneville noted that the Otis ANGB take-off route, which points off the coast and was designed to respond to an externally orientated threat, did not at all times call for

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FAA air traffic guidance. The route is designed to point out of the main air traffic, and that coordination could exist directly between NEADS controllers, who have the ability to find a target on their radar systems, and the fighter pilots. He noted that exercises were conducted at night on occasion specifically because there is less air traffic at that time.

Quenneville noted that he does not recall a live exercise involving the FAA and an airliner to practice a hijack. He explained that the standard procedure was to never approach to closer than five models and to trail the hijacked aircraft to monitor its actions.

Threats:

Quenneville noted that though he was aware of Osama Bin Laden before 9/11, he never received a link between Bin Laden and the post-Cold War threats that were typified by the 9/11 attacks. He continued, and noted that even though the quantity of threats had changed over his career, the outlook and operational approach to those threats had not. The adequacy of the air defense mission of NORAD was based on the ability to perceive a threat with enough time to respond.

Quenneville noted that as of 9/01 the fighters "sat alert" with an external tank and live guns; it was possible they would sit with heat seeking missiles as well. He said that because of the Russian Bear exercises that were scheduled on 9/11 the fighters were configured as 3-2-2-1. He noted this is a higher state of readiness than the fighters would normally have been at.

Quenneville noted that the last intercept he recalls for Russian Bears was in 1988.

9/11:

Quenneville was advised during a weekly meeting that the pilots were put at Battle Stations due to a possible hijack. The Operations Group Commander briefed him, and he continued the meeting. It ended, and he went to get paper work for the next meeting. Quenneville went into the break room, and was told that a commuter airplane had just hit the World Trade Center (WTC). He told Commission staff that he thought at the time that it was a large whole for a commuter airplane. He was watching the broadcast when United Airlines Flight 175 (UAL 175) hit the second tower. He immediately called to convene the Battle Staff, and headed to the Command Post.

Quenneville noted that the fighters at alert status were NORAD assets, and controlled by NORAD. He said that as the Wing Commander on 9/11, he was considered a "force provider". He noted that NORAD always specified how to posture their air alert assets.

At the Command Post the Battle Staff convened. He noted that the initial intelligence that they relied on was that the suspected hijacked aircraft was the first aircraft to hit the WTC. He did not recall if they initially knew the second aircraft was

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hijacked as well. He also noted that their aircraft were communicating with NEADS entities since the aircraft were too far away to communicate with directly.

Quenneville noted that two of the training sortie fighters backed up the PANTA flight while the other aircraft were being refitted. Quenneville believes that the training sortie fighters launched around 8:52 AM, very close to the time the PANTA flight was airborne. He noted that the training missions were recalled at 9:25. The Maine 85 tanker that was used by PANTA was deployed in support of those fighters' training. He noted there was another tanker in the air that they used as well.

Rules of Engagement (ROE):

He noted that the operations group commander would have communicated changes in the ROE to the pilots who were launched subsequently of the initial scrambled fighters. Quenneville explained that Duffy and Nash received the information from NEADS, and that the other pilots were briefed per the direction of NEADS by Otis ANGB staff. Quenneville noted that the procedure created for this was in place and practiced since it was the same procedure that was used when DEFCONS were changed due to the Cold War threat.

Quenneville noted that the ROE was developed based on "bigger picture" inputs. On 9/11 there was a specific set of ROEs, and these were adjusted accordingly. The adjusted ROEs redefined where authority would be issued from to have an order to engage an airliner.

Assets at Otis:

He noted that following direction from NEADS, Otis ANGB began manning combat air patrol (CAP) missions. They recalled and refitted the training assets, and launched fighters in support of the PANTA flight. He noted that over the course of the day Otis ANGB changed the fighters from their training configuration to full armament. As airplanes "recovered" they began loading heavier armament. Within [redacted] they had a full configuration on five airplanes. Within [redacted] during continual flying operations, they had [redacted] airplanes fully configured. All this was done in coordination with NEADS.

CAPs:

Quenneville noted that the role of Otis ANGB was as a force provider for the NEADS mission. Otis ANGB would tell them their capability, and NEADS would make deployment decisions based on that. He noted that Otis flew airplanes 24/7 for six or seven weeks following 9/11.

Post 9/11:

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Quenneville noted that, as an example of the changes in personnel, Otis ANGB was a training organization. He noted that the dining facility was only open one weekend a month. But after 9/11 it served four meals a day for months. He noted this displays the amount of recall of personnel that occurred to fulfill their orders after the attacks.

Current Status:

Quenneville noted that Otis ANGB performed combat air patrols through the end of January 2001, and those operations continued in part at Otis ANGB beyond February 2002. Most of the personnel that were placed on active duty on 9/11 were stood down by a year later.

Quenneville noted that from a public interest level it is important for the public to know that there are airplanes at alert. He also noted that they are not restricted to "looking outward", but that this threat still exists.

Recommendations:

Quenneville noted that to recognize an internally generated threat is important, and that by watching the country's protective system react to different threat levels he believes there is better sharing of information.

He noted that from an air defense perspective the stand-up of NorthCom has assisted in bridging the gaps between agencies to help the defense of the country.

He noted in terms of the Otis ANGB mission, the increased view to 360 degrees has not changed the need of Otis ANGB to defend the sovereignty of the United States, and that the ability to "scale up" quickly cannot be underestimated.



Biography

National Guard Bureau

Departments of the Army and the Air Force
General Officer Management Office, Arlington, VA

BRIGADIER GENERAL DONALD J. QUENNEVILLE



Brigadier General Donald J. Quenneville is the commander and chief of staff, Headquarters, Massachusetts Air National Guard (ANG). He is accountable for the activities of approximately 2,500 military personnel assigned to the state's six ANG units: 102nd Fighter Wing, 104th Fighter Wing, 253rd Combat Communications Group, 267th Combat Communications Squadron, 212th Engineering Installation Squadron and the Air National Guard Band of the Northeast. On the federal level he is responsible for ensuring the personnel under his command are well equipped, well trained, and fully capable of supporting national security objectives and prepared to employ whenever needed. In support of the governor, General Quenneville ensures Massachusetts Air National Guard personnel are prepared to protect life and property and to preserve peace, order, and public safety.

General Quenneville began his military career in 1971 when he received his commission through the Officers Training School at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

After spending eight years on active duty as an F-106 pilot, he joined the Massachusetts Air National Guard's 102nd Fighter Wing. He has served in numerous command and staff positions, from squadron pilot to F-15 wing commander. He was commander of the 102nd Fighter Wing on 11 September 2001; pilots and aircraft from the unit were the first to respond to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center towers. Under his direction, the men and women of the wing were awarded the 2002 Winston P. Wilson Trophy for recognition as the best fighter unit in the Air National Guard. He assumed his current command in November 2002.

EDUCATION:

1970 Bachelor of Arts-Engineering Science, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
1975 Squadron Officers School

1979 Master of Science-Systems Management, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Calif.
1984 Air Command and Staff College
1988 National Security Management Course

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. May 1971 – September 1972, undergraduate pilot training, 3640th Pilot Training Wing, Laredo Air Force Base, Tex.
2. September 1972 – December 1972, student interceptor pilot training F-106, 4756th Combat Crew Training Squadron, Tyndall Air Force Base, Fl.
3. December 1972 – October 1976, pilot fighter interceptor F-106, 49th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Griffiss Air Force Base, N.Y.
4. October 1976 – November 1977, chief of safety, 49th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Griffiss Air Force Base, N.Y.
5. November 1977 – November 1978, F-106 firing program manager, 4756th Test Squadron, Tyndall Air Force Base, Fl.
6. November 1978 – March 1982, pilot fighter interceptor F-106, C flight, 101st Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.
7. March 1982 – October 1986, chief of safety, 102nd Fighter Interceptor Wing, Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.
8. October 1986 – July 1988, squadron operations officer, 101st Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.
9. July 1988 – November 1991, director of operations, 102nd Fighter Interceptor Wing, Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.
10. November 1991 – November 1993, operations group commander, 102nd Fighter Wing (ACC), Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.
11. November 1993 – April 2000, vice wing commander, 102nd Fighter Wing, Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.
12. April 2000 – November 2002, commander, 102nd Fighter Wing, Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.
13. November 2002 – Present, chief of staff, Headquarters, Massachusetts Air National Guard, Milford, Mass.

FLIGHT INFORMATION:

Rating: Command Pilot
Flight Hours: More than 4,560
Aircraft Flown: T-33, T-37, T-38, C-131, F-106, F-15

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

Legion of Merit
Meritorious Service Medal with 1 device
Air Force Commendation Medal
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 2 devices
Combat Readiness Medal with 8 devices
National Defense Service Medal with 1 device
Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon with 6 devices
Armed Forces Reserve Medal with 2 devices
Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon
Air Force Training Ribbon
Massachusetts National Guard Service Medal with 1 device
Massachusetts National Guard Desert Storm Service Medal

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION:

Second Lieutenant Apr 29, 1971
First Lieutenant Apr 29, 1973
Captain Apr 29, 1975
Major Jun 5, 1982
Lieutenant Colonel Jul 3, 1986
Colonel Dec 7, 1991
Brigadier General Jul 13, 2003

(Current as of October 2003)

The date of publication indicated on this biography reflects the most recent update. It does not necessarily reflect the date of printing.

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