

U.S. AIR FORCE THUNDERBIRDS





LT. COL JOE MOORE

commander/leader

From Spartanburg, S. C., LT. COL. MOORE flew 100 missions over North Vietnam and holds the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star, the Air Medal with nine OLCs, the Combat Readiness Medal, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.



MAJ DOYLE RUFF

right wing

From Orlando, Fla., MAJ RUFF flew 203 combat missions in Southeast Asia, 19 over North Vietnam. He received the Silver Star with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with seven OLCs, and the Presidential Unit Citation.



MAJ BOB JACKSON

left wing

From Tacoma, Washington, MAJ JACKSON flew 343 missions in Southeast Asia and holds the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with eleven OLCs, Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Stars.



CAPT TOM GIBBS

slot

From Loveland, Colo., CAPT GIBBS flew 100 missions over North Vietnam and holds the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 15 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.



MAJ MIKE KERBY

solo

From New York City, MAJ KERBY flew 154 missions in Southeast Asia as an advisor to VNAF. He holds the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, the Combat Readiness Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal.



CAPT ART IVINS

narrator

From Leo, Indiana, CAPT IVINS flew 106 combat missions in Southeast Asia, 62 over North Vietnam. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Air Medal with 6 OLCs and Combat Readiness Medal.



MAJ BILL ELANDER

materiel officer

From Atlanta, Georgia, MAJ ELANDER flew 42 missions over North Vietnam and holds the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, the Combat Readiness Medal, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.



CAPT DENNIS WEDDLE

information

CAPT CLYDE LABELL

administration

From Coon Rapids, Iowa, CAPT WEDDLE is responsible for all preshow publicity and coordination; while CAPT LABELL of San Francisco, Calif., handles all administrative actions.



GROUND SUPPORT CREW

When the United States Air Force Thunderbirds present their spectacular aerial demonstrations, they show the teamwork, coordination, discipline, and precision flying ability necessary to effective combat power. But these top pilots are the first to recognize the demanding job performed by the men on the ground.

Like the pilots, each of these technicians feels honored to be a part of this select organization. As volunteers who compete with many others for a single vacancy, these experts spend long days, and sometimes nights, keeping the Air Force's showcase flyers airborne. As a result, in the history of the team, there has never been a show cancelled due to maintenance difficulties.

Thunderbird airmen will tell you that the tours of duty with the team are the most rewarding two years of their careers. In the words of a maintenance supervisor, "Running a maintenance operation with this group of experts is a real pleasure. Seldom does a supervisor find himself with a highly specialized team where every man wants to do the job and knows how."

Enlisted technicians required are radio, electronic navigation, crew chiefs, aircraft electrician, ground radio communications, pneumatic, instrument, aerospace ground equipment, and mechanical accessories repairmen; and automatic flight control, protective coating, jet engine, supply inventory management, material facilities, and personal equipment specialists. In Administration, administrative and aircraft operations specialists, as well as an information technician, an illustrator, and a photographer are needed.

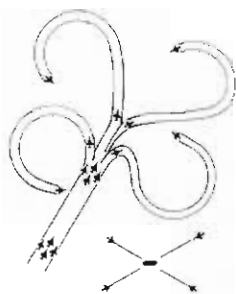
THUNDERBIRD MANEUVERS



WEDGE CLOSER



ARROWHEAD LOOP



LOW SHOW BOMB-BURST



FLAT PASS



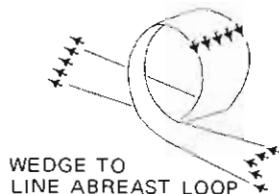
CHANGEOVER ROLL



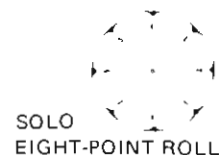
SOLO
INVERTED



ARROWHEAD ROLL



WEDGE TO
LINE ABREAST LOOP



SOLO
EIGHT-POINT ROLL



DIAMOND
TACTICAL PITCHUP



DIAMOND
GEAR-DOWN VERSUS
SOLO AT HIGH SPEED



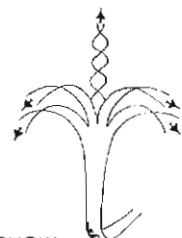
SOLO PUSH-UP
FOR LANDING



ROLL BACK TO
ARROWHEAD



SOLO
INVERTED-TO-INVERTED



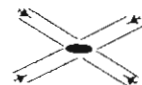
HIGH SHOW
BOMB-BURST WITH SOLO
VERTICAL ROLLS



DIAMOND
CHANGEOVER CLOVERLEAF



SOLO MAXIMUM
PERFORMANCE TAKEOFF
AND ROLL WITH IMMELMANN



CROSSOVER



MISSION AND HISTORY

The United States Air Force Thunderbirds were activated in May 1953, to "promote better understanding and appreciation of air power and to assist with the effective advancement of our national objectives." A unit of the Tactical Air Command, the team's mission is one of peace and good will.

Modern military aircraft are highly complex. In the hands of unskilled operators, they are ineffective instruments. Today, our air strength must be capable of world-wide application in a matter of hours especially in Southeast Asia. The Thunderbirds typify pilot skill and group mobility continually, to our people at home and around the world as well. When they deploy, they move as a highly mobile, nearly self-sustaining task group which includes a full complement of ground personnel. Every man is a selected professional airman dedicated to the successful accomplishment of the team's responsibilities and mission.

The team started at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, in Republic F-84G Thunderjets and later F-84F Thundersbreaks. In 1956, they moved to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, and the North American F-100C Super Sabre. After a brief period in the Republic F-105B Thunderchief in 1964, the team returned to the North American F-100D until 1968. In 1969, the team changed to the McDonnell Douglas F-4E Phantom II.

In their 17-year history, the Thunderbirds have performed in more than 40 countries of the Free World, before more than 80 million spectators. They have been received by the heads of foreign and U.S. governments, and have personally greeted millions of people . . . truly America's "Ambassadors in Blue."

