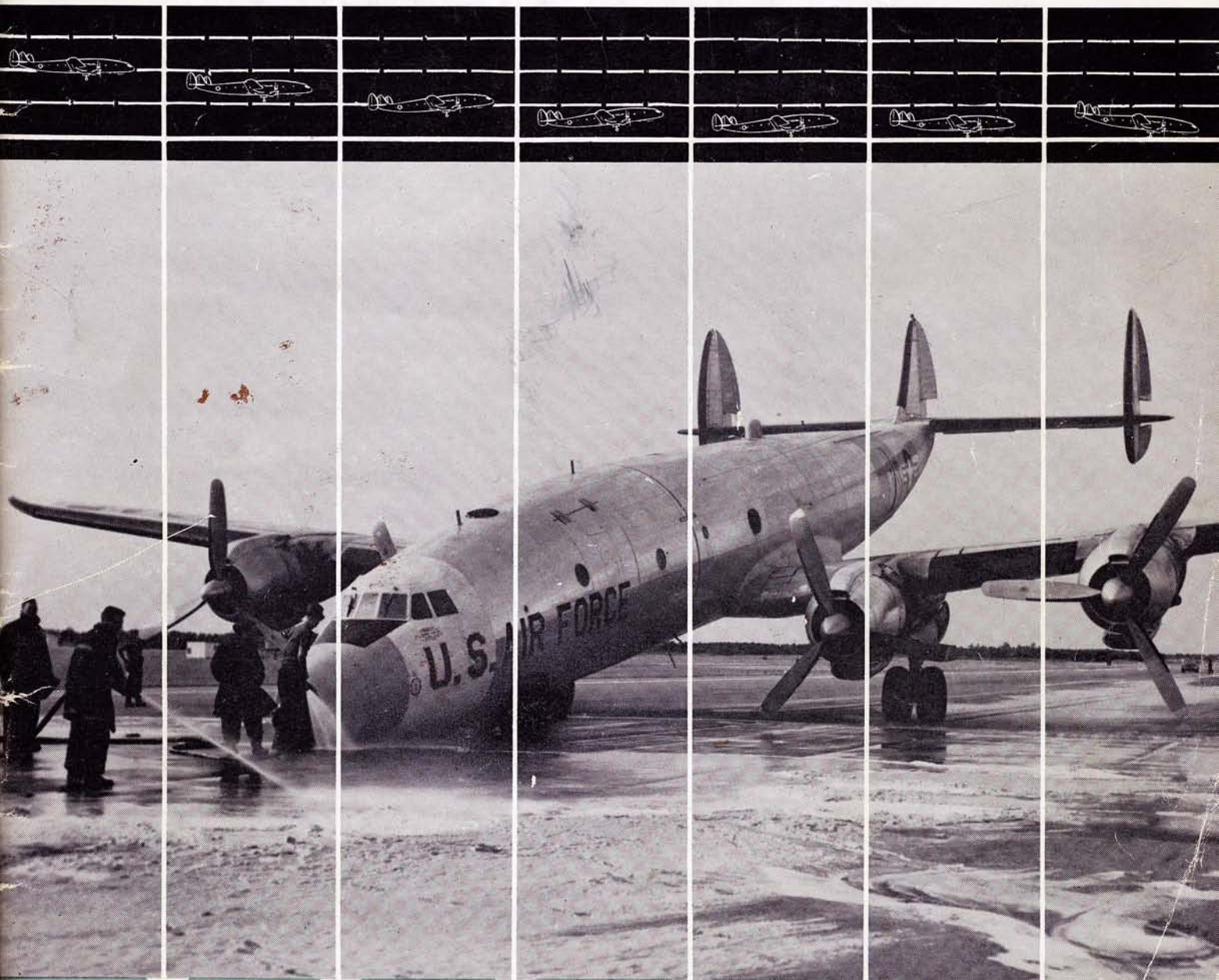


A E R O S P A C E

SAFETY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

October • 1962



Landing With One Or More Gear Retracted

★ 1st Lieutenant DAVID R. VANCE

86 Bombardment Squadron, RAF Sculthorpe, England

OUTSTANDING SKILL, displayed in landing his crippled aircraft has earned 1st Lt David R. Vance, 86 Bomb Sq., RAF Sculthorpe, England, a WELL DONE award.

On 8 August 1961 Lt Vance and his crew took off in a B-66 on a training mission. Weather was 600 feet broken, 1.2 miles visibility, winds 130/13 with gusts to 19 kts. Immediately prior to liftoff the right wing dropped sharply, but the pilot was able to raise it with no difficulty and continued takeoff. Actually, the right main wheel had separated from the aircraft. Maintenance personnel observed the wheel leave the aircraft and the news was passed to Lt Vance through Air Traffic Control.

Lt Vance immediately flew to the Sculthorpe TVOR and established a holding pattern at maximum endurance airspeed. During the next three and a half hours the crew assessed the situation and decided on a gear down landing. On GCA final, however, visibility dropped to less than one mile in heavy rain. With the deteriorating weather, Lt Vance climbed out to rendezvous with a KB-50 tanker for emergency refueling in order to wait out the weather.

When the weather improved another attempt was made at landing. With fire and emergency equipment in place on the ground, Lt Vance landed the B-66 on the intact gear 500 feet down the runway. Immediately after touchdown the drag chute was deployed, left engine stopcocked and nose gear lowered to the runway. As flying speed was lost the right main gear brake assembly contacted the pavement and the aircraft veered sharply to the right. Skillfully using the remaining brake and nosewheel steering, Lt Vance maintained directional control almost in the center of the wet runway for 1500 feet. The aircraft then entered a gradual skidding turn and stopped 3000 feet from initial touchdown 90 degrees from the runway head-

WELL DONE



ing. There was no fire, no injuries and only minor damage to the aircraft. Within 48 hours it was again on the normal flying schedule.

The skillful manner in which Lt Vance averted a major aircraft accident, under hazardous conditions, is a tribute to his flying skill and reflects great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force. WELL DONE. ★

