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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT DIVISION

MARCH 27, 1981

B-202406

The Honorable Caspar W. Weinberger
The Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Subject: Use of Air National Guard Aircraft to Transport
Personnel to and from a Bowling Tournament
(AFMD-81-44)

This report discusses the results of a limited survey which raised questions about the propriety of the Air National Guard's use of many of its aircraft to transport Guard personnel to and from a bowling tournament held in Nashville, Tennessee, during May 1980. These flights were made despite messages sent by the National Guard Bureau to State units forbidding such use.

After we discussed the results of our work with Defense and National Guard Bureau officials, they initiated certain corrective actions. (See pps. 4 and 5 and encl. II.)

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE,
AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of our survey was to inquire into the effectiveness of controls over the use of National Guard aircraft in transporting personnel to sporting events.

We interviewed responsible Defense and Guard officials to discuss passenger airlift policies and procedures. We also reviewed Federal Aviation Administration documents to identify those military aircraft landing at or departing from Nashville, Tennessee, during early May 1980. Further, we reviewed National Guard records which contained a mission statement for the flights we identified.

We made our survey at the following organizations:

- Department of Defense, Washington, D.C.
- National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C.
- Delaware Air National Guard, New Castle, Delaware.
- Montana Air National Guard, Great Falls, Montana.
- Tennessee Air National Guard, Nashville, Tennessee.

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Because we did not visit each unit participating in the bowling tournament, it is possible that we did not identify all aircraft used to transport bowlers and spectators.

BACKGROUND ON AIR NATIONAL GUARD
BOWLING TOURNAMENT

Since 1962, an annual bowling tournament has been held for Air National Guard personnel. (See encl. I for a list of tournament locations.) Although the tournament has become a widely publicized traditional event and is attended by individuals from units all over the country including Headquarters, National Guard Bureau, it has not been officially recognized by Defense or the National Guard Bureau.

The 18th annual Air National Guard bowling tournament was held in Nashville, Tennessee, from May 8 through May 11, 1980. Of the approximately 2,000 people who attended the event, 1,300 bowled. Only active or retired Air National Guard personnel were permitted to bowl in the tournament. Most attendees arrived on May 8, 1980, using various means of transportation including military aircraft, commercial aircraft, and privately owned vehicles.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS
AND NATIONAL GUARD GUIDANCE
ON USE OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT

According to the Air Force Office of Transportation, which determines policy for airlifting personnel on Department of Defense aircraft, only previously scheduled valid training flights may airlift space-available passengers to participate in sporting events. It is inappropriate to schedule flights to airlift space-available passengers to a sporting event and then justify the flights as training missions.

The National Guard Bureau policy regarding the airlifting of personnel for purposes of competition or nonoperational functions is that special flights will not be generated to accommodate schedules of competitive teams. Transportation to sporting events not specifically sanctioned and supported by Defense cannot be supported as a byproduct of training flights. Headquarters, National Guard Bureau, had specifically notified State units of this policy. Apparently, the National Guard Bureau was aware of real or potential misuse of aircraft to transport personnel to sporting events because it has sent messages to State units reaffirming this policy each year since 1975, except in 1978.

QUESTIONABLE USE OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT
TO AIRLIFT PERSONNEL TO THE TOURNAMENT

From available Federal Aviation Administration and National Guard Bureau records, we identified 12 military aircraft, including 11 Air National Guard and 1 Air Force reserve aircraft, which

were used to airlift about 431 space-available passengers to the 1980 bowling tournament. The round trip cost to the Government of these flights was about \$110,000. This estimated cost is based solely on standard cost per hour to operate the aircraft, and estimated flight distances, and does not include flightcrew salaries. For those units we visited, we were told that no one received a per diem allowance.

Listed below are those flights, including the number of passengers and estimated costs, that we know carried individuals to and from the bowling tournament.

<u>Place of origination</u>	<u>Type of aircraft</u>	<u>Space- available passengers</u>	<u>Estimated round trip cost</u>
Minneapolis, Minn.	C-130	59	\$ 4,918.66
Hayward, Calif.	C-130	25	13,804.00
Chicago, Ill. <u>a/</u>	KC-135	43	10,840.24
Charlotte, N.C. <u>a/</u>	C-130	15	4,522.00
Cheyenne, Wyo.	C-130	68	7,378.00
Great Falls, Mont.	C-131	24	5,082.70
Wilmington, Del. <u>a/</u>	C-130	19	12,495.00
St. Joseph, Mo.	C-130	60	3,689.00
Milwaukee, Wis. <u>a/</u>	KC-135	11	12,476.52
Suffolk, N.Y. <u>a/</u>	C-130	13	11,582.64
Van Nuys, Calif.	C-130	80	12,693.33
Willow Grove, Pa. <u>a/ b/</u>	C-130	<u>14</u>	<u>9,758.00</u>
Total		<u>431</u>	<u>\$109,240.09</u>

a/Two round trips were made from each of these six cities; one to drop passengers off and another to pick them up.

b/This flight was made by an Air Force Reserve aircraft.

For 11 of the 18 round trips listed above, training was cited as the justification for the missions. Based on additional information we obtained on some of these flights, we questioned the need for and relative value of the training provided. Examples follow.

1. On May 8, 1980, an Air National Guard C-131 aircraft was flown from Great Falls, Montana, to Nashville, Tennessee (about 6-1/2 hours one way). According to official flight documents, the purpose of the flight was to provide training to one pilot. However, according to Montana Air National Guard officials, although the pilot did receive training during the flight, the primary purpose for going to Nashville was to transport 27 Air National Guardsmen--3 flightcrew members and 24 space-available passengers--to participate in the bowling tournament. They added that the pilot could have been given the required training during a 1-hour local flight.

The C-131 stayed on the ground at Nashville until its return to Great Falls, Montana, on May 11, 1980, with the flightcrew and 24 Air National Guard space-available passengers. As shown on the table on page 3, the cost to operate the aircraft amounted to \$5,082.70.

2. On May 8, 1980, a KC-135 aircraft transported 11 Air National Guard bowlers from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Nashville, Tennessee. The plane was originally scheduled to transport the bowlers in conjunction with a Strategic Air Command refueling mission. The refueling mission, however, was cancelled. The Milwaukee Air National Guard unit then rescheduled the aircraft for a routine navigational training flight, landing in Nashville where the bowlers deplaned before the aircraft returned to Milwaukee. Bowlers were brought back from Nashville on another KC-135 aircraft which, according to Milwaukee Air National Guard officials, completed another prearranged refueling mission directly over Nashville. As shown in the table, the cost to operate the two flights amounted to \$12,477.

3. An Air National Guard flight from St. Joseph, Missouri, landed in Nashville on May 8, 1980, dropped off 60 Air National Guardsmen, stayed on the ground the entire weekend, and returned to St. Joseph on May 11, 1980. The official mission of this flight included aircrew proficiency and navigational training, and recruiting and retention. The cost of this flight was about \$3,689.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
AND NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

After discussing our findings with Defense officials, the Assistant Secretary (Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Logistics) notified the National Guard Bureau that

"All information thus far indicates a flagrant violation of Department of Defense policy concerning the space available status of National Guardsmen and the use of special flights to transport personnel to sports events. In that the National Guard Bureau had issued specific guidance on this subject to National Guard units * * *, the failure of the units to comply with policy in this instance appears even more blatant."

"Misuse of Government assets, in direct violation of specific department guidance, cannot be condoned."

The Assistant Secretary asked the National Guard Bureau to provide a "list of actions taken to preclude a future occurrence of this type" and "effect billing of the bowling tournament attendees, transported on May 8-11 missions to and from Nashville * * *." A copy of the Assistant Secretary's letter to the National Guard Bureau is included as enclosure II.

In response, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau on October 6, 1980, sent a letter to Defense (see encl. III) stating that the Bureau shared Defense's concern over proper use of airlift assets and is constantly vigilant to ensure maximum utility of aircraft while accomplishing "primary taskings" of training and readiness and that the diversion of mission/training aircraft to airlift space-available passengers is one way to optimize these assets. The National Guard Bureau also indicated that competitive sporting events can benefit unit morale and aid recruitment and that it is currently studying Guard policies on sporting events, including transportation procedures.

In addition to the letter to Defense, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau sent a letter to all adjutants general regarding the use of Army and Air National Guard aircraft. This letter specifically states that "training of aircrews is not a justification for otherwise unauthorized flights. The misuse or even the inappropriate use of National Guard aircraft adversely impacts on the National Guard image."

National Guard officials told us they have not billed individuals for transportation received. They believe that many of the passengers may not have been aware of the restrictions imposed by the Guard on using aircraft for transportation to sporting events. They indicated that prior to seeking reimbursement, an investigation of each flight would have to be made to determine who was responsible for authorizing the flight and whether each passenger had prior knowledge of the restrictions. In the opinion of these officials, 4 of the 12 flights we identified were, at least in part, legitimate missions.

CONCLUSIONS

National Guard units have used Government aircraft to transport personnel to a sporting event despite messages sent by Headquarters, National Guard Bureau, prohibiting such use.

The action taken by the Assistant Secretary instructing the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to seek reimbursement for the flights in question should help to deter future unauthorized flights. We believe, however, that the National Guard Bureau should first make an investigation of the circumstances surrounding each flight and determine who was responsible for its authorization.

Also, if the Bureau's study concludes that certain sporting events should receive its official sanction in order to promote unit morale and recruiting, any use of Government aircraft to transport participants to such events should be thoroughly justified as being in the best interest of the Government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To help deter further misuse of Guard aircraft, we recommend that you require the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to:

- Investigate the circumstances surrounding the flights in question.
- Issue formal reprimands to those who authorized the flights contrary to Defense and National Guard Bureau policy.
- Seek reimbursement, where appropriate, from those passengers who were on unauthorized flights to and from the Nashville bowling tournament.
- Arrange for periodic internal audits of the use of aircraft to transport passengers to and from sporting events. Auditors should arrange to visit the sites of widely attended sporting events.

As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations. You must send the statement to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs within 60 days of the date of the report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made over 60 days after the date of the report.

We discussed our findings with Defense and National Guard officials. Their comments were considered in the preparation of this report.

Sincerely yours,



D. L. Scantlebury
Division Director and
Chief Accountant of GAO

Director

Enclosures

BOWLING TOURNAMENT SITES

1962	Martinsburg, West Virginia
1963	Martinsburg, West Virginia
1964	Martinsburg, West Virginia
1965	Salt Lake City, Utah
1966	Reno, Nevada
1967	Hartford, Connecticut
1968	New Orleans, Louisiana
1969	Minneapolis, Minnesota
1970	Phoenix, Arizona
1971	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
1972	Salt Lake City, Utah
1973	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
1974	No tournament
1975	Denver, Colorado
1976	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
1977	St. Louis, Missouri
1978	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
1979	Terre Haute, Indiana
1980	Nashville, Tennessee

PLANNED SITES

1981	Chicago, Illinois
1982	Van Nuys, California



MANPOWER
RESERVE AFFAIRS
AND LOGISTICS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

SEP 20 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

SUBJECT: Use of National Guard Aircraft in Support of Sporting Events

The General Accounting Office has informed this office of an apparent misuse of National Guard aircraft utilized for the transportation of some 500 National Guardsmen to a bowling tournament held in Nashville, Tennessee, between May 8-11, 1980. All information thus far indicates a flagrant violation of Department of Defense policy concerning the space available status of National Guardsmen and the use of special flights to transport personnel to sports events. In that the National Guard Bureau had issued specific guidance on this subject to National Guard units in an August 1979 message, date time group 071755Z, the failure of the units to comply with policy in this instance appears even more blatant.

Misuse of Government assets, in direct violation of specific departmental guidance, cannot be condoned. In addition to providing this office with a list of actions taken to preclude a future occurrence of this type, request you effect billing of the bowling tournament attendees, transported on May 8-11 missions to and from Nashville, in accordance with DoD Directive 4515.13-R, paragraph 2-3b. This action of billing personnel for unauthorized military transportation will recoup a portion of the appropriated funds utilized in performing the airlift to Nashville.

Your earliest response will be appreciated.

Robert B. Pirie Jr.
Assistant Secretary of Defense (MRA&L)



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20310

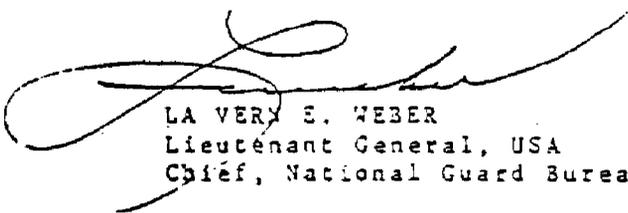
IN REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF NGB-ZAA

6 OCT 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (MRA&L)

SUBJECT: Use of National Guard Aircraft in Support of Sporting Events

1. Reference your memorandum, subject as above, dated 22 September 1980.
2. The National Guard Bureau is aware of an investigation concerning alleged misuse of Air National Guard aircraft to transport bowling tournament participants in May 1980. We share your concern over proper use of airlift assets; consequently, we are constantly vigilant to insure maximum utility of our aircraft while accomplishing primary taskings of training and readiness. The diversion of mission/training aircraft to provide opportune airlift capacity is one method to normalize these assets. Procedures for such scheduling are currently in effect.
3. The National Guard Bureau believes competitive sporting events can be of benefit in unit morale and force recruiting areas. We are reviewing our policies concerning these activities. This evaluation includes transportation procedures. We have not seen a GAO investigative report, either in final or in draft, concerning any alleged aircraft misuse. We believe it would be premature to effect billing for transportation before a GAO study is published.
4. The National Guard Bureau will delay final response to your memorandum pending review of the GAO report. We will continue to insure maximum utilization of all Air National Guard aircraft.


LA VERRY E. WEBER
Lieutenant General, USA
Chief, National Guard Bureau