

The Big Picture – Fifty Years of Aviation

Master Sergeant Stuart Queen: In the Fall of 1907, the United States Army purchased, from two bicycle mechanics named Wright, the first military plane, guaranteed to remain aloft for one hour, it carried two persons at an airspeed of 40 miles an hour. It was light enough to be transported in an Army wagon.

Fifty years have passed since 1907. In America, flight has become a commonplace reality. There seems no limit to aviation progress. This is the Army's tribute to the pilots, the mechanics, the engineers and the countless others who have given wings to man's dreams.

Narrator: This is the age of flight, the airy. Today air power is a dominant factor in the American defense program. Far out from all four corners of the United States, Navy and Air Force radar planes are spreading an aerial umbrella across the sky – careful men guarding against any sudden attack. They are a vital link in a radar team that includes the DEW Line Early Warning stations in Northern Canada, Texas Tower Installations at sea, and Navy Picket ships.

America has a shield of radar which will search out unknown aircraft long before they reach U.S. borders, but it is upon our airmen and modern aircraft that we must rely in case of enemy attack. Here is our offense and our defense. A magnificent bulwark of aircraft whose speed, strength and dedication provides us...