

GENERAL DUANE H. CASSIDY

1 JULY 1987 TO 21 SEPTEMBER 1989

On 18 April 1987, acting on the recommendation of the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, President Ronald Reagan ordered the establishment of USTRANSCOM. After decades of studies, hearings, reports, and commissions, the nation finally had a unified command to serve as the single advocate for the Defense Transportation System.

President Reagan nominated Air Force General Duane H. Cassidy to be the first Commander in Chief, USTRANSCOM, and the Senate confirmed him on 1 July 1987. General Cassidy was already the Commander in Chief, Military Airlift Command (MAC), which meant he now wore two command hats. This arrangement set a precedent that endured until 2005.

Prior to USTRANSCOM's establishment, General Cassidy had concerns about creating a unified transportation command: "The concept had been fraught with so many problems before. . . . I was afraid it would come out as some kind of hybrid that wouldn't work." Once convinced that this time the proposal was sound and enjoyed strong political support, General Cassidy and the senior Air Force leadership embraced the opportunity to help shape the new command.

To take advantage of MAC's expertise in global command and control, USTRANSCOM was placed at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, the home of MAC. Like their commander, some of the MAC staff were also dual-hatted on the USTRANSCOM staff. General Cassidy handpicked the senior leadership from the most accomplished transportation officers he could find in the Services. They assembled what he called "the best junior staff I have ever seen."

General Cassidy's first priority as USTRANSCOM commander was to gain credibility for the command from the other combatant commands. He did this by sending a high-ranking team around the world to ask what USTRANSCOM could do for them. "We showed them we could help, that we were a positive force." He also established relations with the chief executive officers and union leaders of the commercial transportation industry to find out what they could do for USTRANSCOM.

The maritime industry especially needed shoring up. The command drafted a National Sealift Policy, the first ever, which President George H. W. Bush signed in 1989.

In addition, USTRANSCOM made major contributions to containerization policy and helped formulate transportation policy statements for the Department of Defense and Department of Transportation.



General Cassidy also championed acquisition of the C-17 *Globemaster III*. Creating the prototype of the Global Transportation Network, an automated command and control and in-transit visibility system that integrated data from selected transportation information systems, was another priority.

By the time General Cassidy retired in 1989, USTRANSCOM had grown from 98 military and civilian employees to 360 and was becoming a force in shaping airlift and sealift policy. As he departed, General Cassidy declared "It is a privilege beyond belief to have been part of the United States Transportation Command at its inception."

