

## **108<sup>th</sup> WING**



### **MISSION**

The members of the 108th Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, fill a multitude of missions at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. The 108th's service to the State and Nation is diverse. The 204th Intelligence Squadron supports both the Air Mobility Command and the USAF Expeditionary Center and the 150th Special Operations Squadron, operating the C-32, provides a dedicated rapid response airlift to the Department of Defense in support of United States Government crisis response to events abroad and domestically. The 140th Cyber Operations Squadron, activated in 2015, operates the cyber vulnerability assessment and the hunter weapon system. Add in the medical personnel, civil engineers, security forces, supply, operations, communications, personnel, finance and the other Airmen that make up the 108th; the Wing continues to fulfill its missions and goals with excellence.

### **LINEAGE**

108<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing  
Redesignated 108<sup>th</sup> Wing

### **STATIONS**

McGuire AFB, NJ

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

Mission Aircraft  
KC-135E

Support Aircraft

### **COMMANDERS**

BG Richard C. Cosgrave#, #1993

**HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

**EMBLEM**



Azure, a gauntlet Silver Gray grasping a torch Argent flamant Proper within a wreath of laurel Vert, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "PER CAELUM VICTORIAE" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The mailed fist depicts strength and power, essential qualities needed for successful completion of the unit's missions. The torch, in flames, represents freedom and independence, the laurel wreath is a symbol of victory.

**MOTTO**

PER CAELUM VICTORIAE—Through the Skies to Victory

**NICKNAME**

**OPERATIONS**

The 108th Fighter Wing was activated on March 1, 1951, for the Korean War and assigned to the Strategic Air Command. It was subsequently transferred to the Tactical Air Command and released from active duty on November 30, 1952. It was reactivated on October 1, 1961 for the

Berlin Crisis and immediately transferred overseas. The 108th spearheaded OPERATION STAIR STEP, the largest ran-Atlantic deployment of jet fighters in history. It developed a simple but unique procedure to maximize "topping off" each jet fighter's fuel tanks prior to the long, over-water flight to Europe. The technique was adopted by all units that followed. Its proudest Berlin Crisis achievement came shortly after it arrived at Chaumont Air Base, France. Of all the Guard and Reserve fighter units activated, the 108th was the first of only two units declared combat ready upon arrival by the U S Air Forces, Europe, inspectors. The wing was released from active duty on August 17, 1962.

On October 1, 1993, the 170th Air Refueling Group NJANG consolidated with the 108th Air Refueling Wing. The 170th Air Refueling Group, including the 150th Air Refueling Squadron was established at Newark Airport, NJ, on February 1, 1956 and transferred to McGuire AFB in July 1965.

**2005 13 Sep** Thirty-five Security Forces personnel from the 108<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing returned to home station at McGuire AFB, New Jersey. They had deployed to St. John's Parish, Louisiana.

On Dec. 1, 2009, the 108th was redesignated as the 108th Wing in acknowledgement of its new missions. The 108th Contingency Response Group was added to the wing as was the 204th Intelligence Squadron. Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, commander of the 108th Wing, said, "The excellent people that make up the 108th continue to stand out and show the Guard and the Air Force what a great job we do." The 108th CRG is only one of two such groups in the Air Guard – the other is in Kentucky – and one of eight in the continental U.S., with three more spread throughout the world. The CRG is the Air Force's rapid entry force designed to assess and open an air base, perform initial airfield operations and ensure a smooth transition to combat sustainment. According to Col. Robert Brazel, commander of the 108th CRG, the group will do noncombat evacuations, humanitarian relief operations, and disaster response as well as full spectrum war airbase opening.

The Airmen of the 108th Air Refueling Wing gathered on the McGuire Air Force Base tarmac on Aug. 7 and said goodbye to an old friend that flew combat missions from Vietnam to Iraq during a 52- year military career. With pieces of chalk, the Airmen signed their names on the gray fuselage of their "friend," a KC-135E. After a brief ceremony, the big bird took off for one last mission, refueling a C-5 en route to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, where the four-engine jet will become a display in the Air Mobility Command Museum. The plane retiring from New Jersey is one of three "E" Model KC-135s in the entire Air Force inventory still able to fly – and the only one still capable of flights in support of combat. The plane that was retired, number 57-1507, flew its last mission in support of operations in Iraq, a refueling operation over the Atlantic Ocean, on July 14. Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, the 108th commander, was one of the two pilots for the plane's final flight. Cunniff, who logged more than 3,000 hours at the controls of KC-135Es over his career, called the retirement "bittersweet." "This is the end of the era and retirement of an aircraft that served with distinction over many years," Cunniff said. "But it's also a happy day, a new beginning." That's because the 108th Air Refueling Wing's fleet has

been upgraded to KC-135R, which have more powerful, quieter and more fuel efficient engines as well as upgraded electronics. Under original Department of Defense plans announced in 2005, the 108th would have lost its mission with the retirement of its last KC-135E, Cunniff said. Instead, New Jersey's congressional delegation worked with Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Maria Falca-Dodson and the Airmen of the 108th to convince the Pentagon to allow the unit's mission to continue with upgraded aircraft. But the plane that retired Friday was clearly a part of history. Commissioned in 1959, the plane was first assigned Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, then transferred to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana and then it moved on to Thailand and the Philippines in support of combat operations over Vietnam. With its ability to carry more than 30,000 gallons of fuel, the KC-135 was credited with changing the face of aerial combat in Vietnam by lengthening the time warplanes could spend over the battlefield. Built and designed by Boeing, the KC-135 was a relative of the 707, one of the most successful early wide-bodied commercial airliners. The E Model heading for retirement transferred to the Air Guard in 1975 and made its way to the 108th in 1984. The plane flew missions during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, patrolled the no-fly zone over Iraq in the late 1990s and most recently flew thousands of hours in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. As the time for the plane to push back and begin its takeoff neared, one of the Airmen who kept it flying all these years looked a bit sad. "I cut my teeth on these airplanes.

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#### Air Force Lineage and Honors

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#### Sources

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