

136 ATTACK SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

482 Bombardment Squadron (Dive) constituted, 3 Aug 1943
Activated 10 Aug 1943
Redesignated 503 Fighter Squadron, 30 May 1944
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945
Reconstituted and redesignated 136 Fighter Squadron and allotted to NY NG, 24 May 1946
Extended Federal Recognition as 136 Fighter Squadron (SE), 8 Dec 1948
Redesignated 136 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 1951
Redesignated 136 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 10 Nov 1958
Redesignated 136 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 15 Jun 1971
Redesignated 136 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992
Redesignated 136 Air Refueling Squadron
Redesignated 136 Airlift Squadron, 1 Jul 2008
Redesignated 136 Attack Squadron

STATIONS

Hunter Field, GA, 10 Aug 1942
Drew Field, FL, 6 Feb 1943
Walterboro AAFld, SC, 3 Jul 1943
Rice AAFld, CA, 17 Sep 1943-9 Mar 1944
Fowlmere, England, 5 Apr 1944-7 Sep 1945
Drew Field, FL, 20 Sep-7 Nov 1945
Naval Air Station, Municipal Airport, Niagara Falls, NY

Niagara Falls, NY

ASSIGNMENTS

339 Bombardment (later Fighter-Bomber; Fighter) Group, 10 Aug 1942-18 Oct 1945
107 Fighter Group, 8 Dec 1948
101 Fighter-Interceptor Group, 2 Mar 1951
4708 Defense Wing, 6 Feb 1952
107 Fighter-Interceptor Group, 1 Dec 1952
107 Air Defense Wing, 1 May 1956
107 Tactical Fighter Group, 10 Nov 1958
140 Tactical Fighter Wing, 26 Jan 1968
31 Tactical Fighter Wing, 14 Jun 1968
107 Tactical Fighter Group (later Fighter Interceptor Group, Fighter Group, Air Refueling Group),
11 June 1969
107 Operations Group, 1 Oct 1995

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

A-24, 1942
P-39, 1943
P-51D, 1944
F-47, 1948
F-51, 1952
F-94, 1954
F-86, 1957
F-100, 1960
F-101, 1971
F-4 1982
F-16, 1990
KC-135R, 1994
C-130

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

Maj Richard H. Hintermeier
LTC Thomas E. Emborsky
Maj Douglas B. Routt

HONORS

Service Streamers

American Theater

Campaign Streamers

Offensive, Europe, Air Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe, Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Germany, 10-11 Sep 1944

EMBLEM





On an irregular shaped cloud, outlined blue over a lightning flash yellow. Outlined red, a Thunderbird outlined black, flying. (Approved, 7 Aug 1951)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

New York's Finest

OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 30 Apr 1944-21 Apr 1945

503rd Fighter Squadron

Code: D7

Callsign: Beefsteak (A Group)

Unique (B Group)

One day after the seventh anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the 107th Fighter Group came into existence. On December 8th 1948, during formal ceremonies under the roof of the Naval Air Station the following units were activated: 136th Fighter Squadron, LTC Robert J Kirsch, Commander; 107th Fighter Group, LTC Lawrence J. Dissette, Commander; 207th Air Service Group under the command of Col Myron Hyman.

The new Air National Guard Unit was then composed of 15 officers and 100 airmen servicing and flying the P-47. Their mission was the air defense of Western New York. The 107th Fighter Group was extended Federal Recognition on 8 December 1948.

In April 1949 the 136th Fighter Squadron held its first mass flight when 5 P-47 joined by 16 other downstate aircraft participated in a mass fly-by over most of western New York. In May of 1949 units of the ANG staged a mock battle during an air show sponsored by Sattlers at the Buffalo Airport. This for the first time brought to the public attention the importance of the Air National Guard as a defending force.

In June of 1949 officials of Gasport, New York appealed to the Air National Guard to help alleviate a water shortage by flying to Providence, Rhode Island to pick up a badly needed water filter. LTC Kirsch immediately dispatched a C-47 to the scene. Shortly thereafter "mission accomplished" was flashed back to the base.

In 1949 field training was held at Dover Air Force Base, Dover, Del., all units were inspected by Lt Gov. J.R. Hanley and the Niagara units were rated as excellent.

In 1950 field training was held at Grenier Air Force Base, Manchester, N.H. During this time the 136th logged its highest flying time in its history and that record still stands, almost 1000 hours in two weeks.

In June 1950, when the Korean War broke out, the unit went on 24 hour alert. Designated a Wing, a 21 month activation period began March 1951. Personnel of the unit deployed to several overseas bases. Several members earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for air combat. Upon release from active duty in November 1952, the unit returned to the ANG as a Fighter Interceptor Group flying the P-51H Mustang.

The 136th received orders on March 1st 1951 ordering the entire squadron into active duty for 21 months. Forty percent of the 136th personnel were sent overseas and served in Korea, Germany, Alaska, Guam and the Philippines. Lt Arnold Wackerman won the Distinguished Flying Cross while serving in Korea. The 136th while on active duty broke the gunnery record for reciprocating engine aircraft in the nation.

Following officers filled key positions; Col Robert J. Kirsch — Commander; Ltc Lawrence J. Dissette — executive officer; Capt. David A White Jr. — personnel director, Maj Charles M. Poston Jr. — operations director; Maj Robert T Reed — maintenance director.

Strength report; strength of wing as of 30 June 1951 was 206 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 2008 airmen. Total hours flown during that period: 88818 hours.

Maj Richard H. Hintermeier, commanding officer of the squadron, one of several units of The 107th Fighter Wing with headquarters here, said the squadron would report for active duty March 1. The Major could not disclose the squadron's destination nor any other details of the activation. Recall to service of local Air Guard units was anticipated since the Air Force announced yesterday that 12 of the remaining 17 ANG wings would be put into federal service. Col. Robert J. Kirsch, commanding officer of the 107th Wing, said the activation order did not include any other units here. He said he did not know if activation orders would follow for the other components.

Squadron Charged with Providing Cover for Niagara Frontier; May Get Jets Charged with providing an air cover for the Niagara Frontier on a fulltime basis, presumably with jet fighter planes in the not too distant future, members of two Air National Guard squadrons were activated into the Air Force today at their base at the Niagara Falls airport. While their officers would not comment on the mission of the 136th Fighter and 136th Weather Squadrons, other than to say that they would be stationed here "for the present," the units unofficially are reported as another link in the country's defense network.

In a statement to be read at a formal ceremonies at the base this afternoon, Governor Thomas E. Dewey praised the squadrons for "being ready to defend yourselves and our country not only now, but long before Korea, when many others failed to see the handwriting on the wall." "it is men like you who have always been the backbone of the Republic in times such as these," the governor said in the statement, which was to be read by Col. E. Alan Nordstrom, Buffalo, inspector-general of the New York State National Guard. Some public officials of this city, additional military dignitaries and representatives of the Bell Aircraft Corporation also were to take part in the activation ceremonies at 3 p.m.

In 1952 the unit designation of the wing and subordinate units was changed to Fighter Interceptor to go along with the wing's mission of air defense. Colonel Kirsch commanded the fighter squadrons at Syracuse (138th), Schenectady (139), and White Plains (139) as well as the fighter group at Syracuse and all Niagara units. That year seven support squadrons came into existence: the communications squadron, installations squadron, food service squadron, and the air police squadron under the air base group. Under the maintenance and supply group were the supply squadron, motor vehicle squadron and the maintenance squadron. In December of 52 the 136th was equipped with the P-51H, the old reliable P-47s were turned over to the Air Force at Niagara Falls.

The T-33 arrived in November of that year. 2nd Lt Thomas B. Healy Jr. of Buffalo, the first aviation cadet to come back to the Niagara ANG under the air guard quota, made the first operational flight in it. Then in February the first F-94B arrived, soon the squadron was completely equipped with these 600 mph all-weather interceptors. In addition two TB-25K Radar Trainers were also assigned to the 136th.

It was in March of 1954 when federal funds of \$1,500,000 were released for hangar construction and 23,000 square yards of concrete ramp. \$12,000 was paid for 40 acres of land. Construction began on the new air guard base when Col Kirsch turned over the first spadeful of dirt. His dream finally a reality. The new facilities included a 40,000 sq ft hanger, a 27,000 sq yd parking ramp, a 21,000 sq ft supply warehouse, a 34,000 sq ft motor vehicle maintenance building and a small paint storage building.

Field training in 1954 was conducted at the recently completed permanent field training site, Hancock Field, Syracuse. It was the first time that the 107th Wing went to camp with jet fighters. The entire two weeks was devoted to transitioning from Mustangs to the Starfires.

In March 1954 the Group moved to the newly constructed \$3,500,000 Air National Guard Base in the Northwest section of the municipal airport.

In April 1955 two Starfires from the 136th Fighter Interceptor Squadron were airborne within 15 minutes after an alert call went out during "Operation Minuteman", a nationwide test of all Army and Air National Guard Units in the country to see how fast the units could mobilize in case of a real emergency. Over 85% of the Niagara unit was present for duty within the first hour.

The 136th along with downstate fighter squadrons started aerial gunnery exercises in May to familiarize all pilots with radar gunnery. They fired at a 30 foot by 6 foot plastic target being towed by another jet over the gunnery range on Lake Ontario. The gunnery missions continued every week-end until bad weather called a halt to it late in the year.

In October 1957 the unit received their first F-86 which replaced the F-94s which served the unit for almost three years. A year later in October of 1958 the unit was reassigned from the Air Defense Command to the Tactical Air Command.

The conversion to the F-86 changed the mission of the unit from Air Defense Command to Tactical Air Command and brought about the training of all aircrew for Air to Ground gunnery, which included dive bombing, rockets, and strafing. The new mission was interesting in that we did not have an air to ground range in New York so we were introduced to many TOY trips, most of them to Terra Haute, Indiana where we used the Camp Attebury Range. These trips were unique in that they were self-supporting using the C-47 to fly support people and equipment.

Other trips with the F-86 included a wing supported fire power demonstration at Seymour Johnson AFB. The wing sent about 60 aircraft, 20 each from its 3 squadrons. The Niagara unit flew napalm and guns, Syracuse dropped 500 lb. bombs and fired guns, and Westchester fired rockets and guns. Schenectady was the only unit in the state not to support the fire power demonstration because they were in the process of converting to C-97 aircraft. Volk Field,

Wisconsin was another place which was visited and like Hancock Field was a Field Training Site but it had an air to ground range. We with this aircraft truly became "TACUMSIZED" and was to remain so as we converted to the F-100C in 1960. The F-86H was called the last of the sports cars.

10 Nov. 58 — Unit converted to Tactical Fighter Squadron (TAC) from Air Defense

In August of 1960 the 136th converted to the F100C. This was the unit's 5th primary aircraft conversion with 4 different support aircraft in a 12 year period. The F-100 was to be with the 136th for 11 years. Stability was within the unit but not in the world. The unit was assigned to the 113th TFW, as an augmented squadron and people had to be assigned from all the units of the 113th TFW to bring us up to strength.

In Oct 1961, members started a year of activation, in response to the Berlin Crisis. The turbulent 60's started with a call to active duty in October 1961 for 12 months during the Berlin Crisis. The unit was programmed to deploy to Bitburg Germany. After world tensions eased the deployment was not required. The 107th was released from active duty in August of the following year.

Three hundred members of the unit went to McGhee Tyson in Knoxville, Tenn. in August 1963 for Operation Swift Strike III. In June of 1964 four hundred personnel deployed to Savannah Ga. to practice delivery techniques for strafing, skip-bombing, rocketry, and dive bombing.

In January 1964 the 107th Tactical Fighter Wing was inactivated. The 107th Tactical Fighter Group and its subordinate squadrons became part of the 113th Tactical Fighter Wing. These changes brought about a change in command and Colonel John E. Blewett assumed command of the 107th Tactical Fighter Group.

On 14 Aug 1965, six F-100Cs flew to Honolulu, Hawaii to participate in exercise "Tropic Lightning." In August 1965 the 107th Tactical Fighter Group participated in exercise "Tropic Lightning" in Hawaii. This was the first Pacific crossing for an Air National Guard Tactical Fighter Unit and gave the group over-the-water and in-flight refueling experience. For seven weeks the 107th practiced close air support for the Army's 25th Infantry Division in exercises on the Island of Hawaii.

In October 1967 the 136th flew eight 8 F-100s 3,000 miles nonstop with mid air refueling to Elmendorf Air Force Base Alaska for Operation Gold Rush.

The 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron, of Niagara Falls, now based at Washington, D.C., with the 113th Tactical Fighter Wing, will be released from active service on Aug. 24.

They will be released as part of the cutback involving 24,000 men and officers of the Army Reserve and the National Guard, who were called to active duty on Oct. 1.

National Guard and Army Reserve units based in Europe will start returning to their home bases on July 15. The 138th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Hancock Field, Syracuse, will be among the early returning units.

Upon returning to the Niagara Falls Municipal Airport, the 136th will resume weekend drills once a month as part of their regular training program.

The 600 men and officers of the 136th are commanded by LTC, John E. Blewett

The 107th Tactical Fighter Wing, New York Air National Guard. Niagara Air National Guard Base, has been deactivated as of today, the National Guard Bureau has announced. This will mean no loss of personnel here, as they will remain here as members of the 107th Tactical Fighter Group, a spokesman for the unit said. LTC John Btewett, wing commander, will continue as group commander, the announcement said. There will be no change in the status of the group's attached unit, the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron, the spokesman said. With deactivation of the wing here, the 107th Group becomes a part of the 113th Tactical Fighter Wing, Andrews Air Force Base, Md. Col. Robert Kirsch, Air National Guard base commander, will remain in that command. All personnel formerly attached to wing headquarters will be transferred into group headquarters. The 136th Squadron is up to strength in all categories but pilots, the spokesman said. "We still have a pressing need for pilots from any branch of the service," he said. The squadron flies F-100s.

The operational readiness, unequivocal proficiency, and obvious esprit of the NY Air NG fighter units were never more clearly demonstrated than recently when the 107th Tactical Fighter Group of Niagara Falls supported an active army maneuver in Hawaii.

Indicative of the Air Force's high regard for the Air National Guard was the request from the Tactical Air Command for the Guard to meet this requirement. The mission assigned to the air crews and support personnel of the NY outfit involved operation of their F-100 in close air support of the regular army's 25th Infantry Division during exercise "Tropic Lightning."

Overall, direct support operations were continuous for a 6-week period, from mid-August to early October. Personnel of the 107th group were rotated at intervals in order to avoid undue interference with civilian occupations. This was accomplished in C-97 Transport planes flown by the 106th Air Transport Wing, another NY Air NG unit from Brooklyn.

NY Air NG Guardsmen planned the operation completely, with little more than 2 weeks lead time. Pilots of the 107th flew their jets across the Pacific to Hawaii, with 4 in-flight refuelings, and arrived within 3 minutes of scheduled time. Col John E. Blewett, Cmdr, 107th Tac Ftr Gp, led the flight with Lt. Col LaVerne J. Donner, Cmdr, 136th Tactical Ftr. Sq., serving as his deputy.

The unit was fully operational and flying support missions on the day after arrival. Its jet fighters flew over 200 sorties with bombs, rockets and napalm, throughout the exercise —and had a most commendable 93.7 percent overall effectiveness. Of 13 aborts, throughout the operation,

only 4 were due to mechanical failure and these of radio equipment. The other 9 aborted flights were due to unfavorable weather in the target area.

The entire deployment, including MATS airlift, was flown exactly as scheduled. No air or ground accidents, incidents or serious problems occurred and tanker cooperation was excellent.

Participation in Tropic Lightning afforded the 107th an excellent opportunity to test its readiness under realistic conditions, involving a lengthy over-water deployment and use of live ordnance in close air support, all facets of unit operations were under close scrutiny and many potential problems closely examined.

ELMENDORF AFB, Alaska — Members of the New York Air National Guard's 107th Tactical Fighter Group flew to Alaska earlier this month for a joint air mobility exercise Gold Rush VI/Big Bear II. The air guardsmen flew F-100 non-stop from their Niagara Falls home base to Elmendorf Air Force Base near Anchorage for the exercise. They were refueled along the way by KC-97 tankers of the Air National Guard's 126th Aerial Refueling Wing. While in Alaska, the century series jets supplied close air support and interdiction missions for Army troops in the Nome area and took part in a joint live fire exercise in the Fort Richardson area near Anchorage. The fighter unit's 100 support personnel were flown to Alaska for the exercise Friday by Military Airlift Command transports. In addition to their equipment, the men of the 107th brought over 3,000 pounds of books for the library at Nenana, one of the small Alaskan communities devastated by flood waters in August.

On 26 January 1968, the 107th Tactical Fighter Group, New York Air National Guard, was ordered to active federal service by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Included in the call-up of the 107th was the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron along with other supporting squadrons which makeup the group. In view of world conditions, encompassed by the North Korean's seizure of the U.S.S. Naval vessel, The Pueblo, the group was prepared for a possible immediate deployment to that troubled part of the world. For reasons unknown to its personnel, the unit was not immediately deployed but were subject to months of intensive training. The recall affected about 800 men, including the support squadrons in the Group. "Top Off" training for the pilots began immediately and included three weeks at Myrtle Beach for gunnery practice, sea survival training at Homestead AFB, FL, and three weeks of "Night Owl" gunnery practice on the Avon Park range in Florida. Night Owl flights were nighttime attack sorties flown under the illumination of flares.

Unfortunately, tragedy met the 136th TFS before they ever deployed. Lt Robert Wolf and Lt Raymond Reader were killed in a mid-air collision over Lake Ontario during ACM training. Additionally, Maj Richard Dye was killed coming off the "Night Owl" range when he experienced engine failure at low altitude.

In late May, secret movement orders were received notifying the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron of a pending deployment. Augmented with additional personnel from the group, the

136th FIS were ordered to deploy its 20 aircraft and approximately 350 officers and airmen to the Republic of South Vietnam.

Leaving Niagara Falls International Airport in the early morning darkness of 6 June, the support personnel of the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron boarded two Trans International Airways DC8S for an as yet undisclosed destination. The 136th aircraft and their aircrew would depart the local base on the 12th of June under the command of Lt. Colonel Laverne J. Donner.

While most of the 136th's equipment departed for Tuy Hoa from 8 -11 June, 20 F-100s departed Niagara Falls on 12 June in four cells, led by their squadron commander, LTC Laverne J. Donner. The first 16 F-100s arrived at Tuy Hoa on 15 June, with three more on the 17th, and the last arriving on the 19th. The arrival of the bulk of the 136th's pilots on the 15th was immediately followed, on the 17th, with theater indoctrination briefings, survival technique briefings, and intelligence and local procedures.

The 12,000-mile deployment took less than three days for the aircraft and included a non-stop flight from Niagara Falls IAP to their first stop-over, Hickam AFB, Hawaii. This flight required seven air-to-air refuelings and kept the aircrews confined to their cramped fighter cockpits for over 11 continuous flying hours. Cited by the U.S. Air Force as "the longest distance ever flown by an Air National Guard Fighter Unit and the longest yet flown by an ANG Squadron deploying to southeast Asia from Conus," this feat would be repeated as other ANG units likewise deployed to South Vietnam in order to booster U.S. air power in that locale. Altogether, the 136th aircraft were refueled 13 times prior to their arrival at Tuy Hoa Air Base, Republic of South Vietnam.

With the deployment safely behind them, the 136th aircraft landed at Tuy Hoa Air Base, RVN and thus became an integral part of the mighty Seventh Air Force with an assignment to the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing — The Flying Dragons.

Tuy Hoa Air Base, strategically located on the east coast of South Vietnam, about 150 miles northeast of Saigon, gave 136th pilots access to virtually all of South Vietnam and some military targets in the Peoples Republic of North Vietnam.

Reorganized into a fighter squadron under PACAF criteria, the 136th retained 160 personnel while the remainder of the deployed guardsmen were integrated into other wing units. Many of the guard personnel assumed key positions especially in maintenance areas.

After undergoing intensive orientation briefings on intelligence, weapons, tactics, weather and jungle survival, the aircrews were ready for action. With a primary mission of air-to-ground support, pilots of the 136th operated on 324-hour, seven day a week schedule attacking enemy supply areas, staging and infiltration routes and targets of opportunity.

By 30 June, 1968, only 13 days after the last pilots and jets arrived, the 136th had flown 137 combat sorties and had 15 pilots in an operational ready status. By 16 July, the entire squadron

was checked out for local procedures and combat operations. Additionally, many of the personnel deployed with the 136th were sent to help out in the 31st TFW, in the areas of maintenance, supply, personnel and finance, intelligence, operations and administration.

The 136th suffered its first combat loss on 25 July, 1968 when Captain Joseph A. L'Huillier was fatally injured after he ejected from his disabled aircraft west of Chu Lai. Immediately after a high angle dive bomb delivery, Captain L'Huillier's aircraft was believed to have been hit by ground fire. Captain L'Huillier relayed that his aircraft controls were failing and then pulled up into a cloud deck and ejected. No one observed his ejection but his parachute was spotted on the ground a short while later. A rescue helicopter picked him up within 30 minutes but he died before he could be hospitalized. His fatal injuries were probably incurred upon ejection or landing, with improper chute opening or seat involvement suspected.

Despite their recent history of tragedy, the men of the 136th continued to fight gallantly when one their pilots, 1Lt Julius Thurn, got an unexpected crash course in the unpredictability of war. During late August, the Special Forces (SF) camp at Duc Lap came under intense and sustained attack by the enemy. The 31st TFW responded by surging aircraft and repeatedly launching alert aircraft for immediate support. One such scrambled sortie included 1Lt Thurn. After arriving on the scene to provide air support, the FAC briefed the target to Lt Thurn. Lt Thurn began his attack and ground fire immediately and completely disabled his aircraft and he was forced to eject in the target area.⁵⁰ While descending in his parachute, he was shot at by enemy soldiers, yet was not hit, and landed just outside the SF camp between the enemy and friendly positions. A Special Forces team from the camp immediately rescued Lt Thurn, escorted him into the perimeter, and promptly handed him an M-16 rifle to help defend the camp. Lt Thurn helped defend the camp for three hours until he could be evacuated by helicopter. Lt Thurn returned to Tuy Hoa with no injuries but commented that "I am the luckiest guy in Vietnam today."

The dangers of war continually tested the nerve of the 136th TFS. For example, on 2 August, 1968, 1Lt Michael J. Laskowski was attacking a target in the A Shau Valley and received heavy ground fire, causing heavy damage to his F-100C. He was forced to eject in mountainous terrain and was picked up by a "Jolly Green" 30 minutes later. Thankfully, Lt Laskowski received no injuries.

The same could be said for Lt Harry Roberts on December 18th. Lt Roberts was forced to eject from his aircraft after his jet lost oil and had subsequent engine failure. He parachuted into the ocean and was picked up after spending a "very refreshing" 15 minutes in the Gulf of Tonkin. The cause of the crash was suspected enemy gun fire shortly after takeoff. During their second full quarter in SVN, the squadron had 247 structures destroyed, 700 bunkers destroyed,

22 sampans destroyed, over 100 KBA, and numerous other targets destroyed and damaged.

The pilots' heroism and skill did not go unnoticed. By the end of March, 1969, the 136th had been awarded 5 DFCs, 27 Air Medals, 4 Vietnamese Gallantry Crosses, multiple Purple Hearts and 1 AFM.

Like the other ANG fighter squadrons had already ascertained, the pilots weren't the only members of the 136th to face the dangers of combat. On 29 July, 1968, the enemy attacked the base using satchel charges and B-40 rockets, inflicting heavy damage to aircraft on the flight line. One F-100C assigned to the 136th TFS was significantly damaged and one crew chief, Sgt Gary MacDannell, in the 136th was seriously wounded during the attack.

The maintenance personnel and crews of the 136th compared favorably with those of other 31st TFW squadrons. During the July–September timeframe, they were second only to their fellow ANG friends, the 188th TFS, in having the highest percentage of combined time as "C-1" and "C-2." Additionally, in October the 136th won all three of the 31st TFW's "outstanding maintenance awards." These included the outstanding armament load crew, the outstanding flight line maintenance award and the outstanding crew chief of the month. Lastly, during this quarter the 136th also picked up the "Hi Flyer" award for having the highest monthly flying time on one of its jets and the "White Broom Award" for the squadron with the best Foreign Object Debris program.

The 136th's maintenance personnel were still not done. The 136th flew the 31st TFW's 50,000th mission on 18 October, 1968. And then, in November, the 136th won the PACAF-wide award for the Outstanding Load Crew. Additionally, the other deployed members of the NY ANG who had been sent to other organizations in the 31st TFW held such key positions as Hospital Commander, the Wing Chief of Administrative Services and the First Sergeant of the Base Supply Complex, to name a few.

The last sorties flown by an Air National Guard fighter Squadron in Vietnam were flown by the 136th TFS on 20 May, 1969. Subsequently, on the morning of 25 May, the 136th, the last Air National Guard fighter squadron in Vietnam, departed from Tuy Hoa AB. The final leg of the redeployment to Niagara Falls, on 28 May, was culminated by an 18 ship formation fly-by over the main street in Buffalo, New York, and the surrounding Niagara Falls area.

The end of May 1969 found the guardsmen eagerly awaiting their scheduled return to the United States and the families they left behind. On 27 May 1969, departing Tuy Hoa Air Base aboard DC8S, the guardsmen arrived under cloudless skies at Niagara Falls International Airport to be greeted by many state and local dignitaries and waiting family members. The unit was formerly deactivated on 12 June 1969 returning to its traditional Air National Guard status.

Almost the full force of the 107th Tactical Fighter Group of the Air National Guard at Niagara Falls Air Base reported for duty this morning, no longer private citizens and Weekend Warriors, but now a part of the regular U.S. Air Force,

About 92 per cent of the unit's approximately 800 officers and men formed in front of a hangar

to hear a welcome from their commander, Col. John Blewett of Kenmore.

The guardsmen began work today with their regular jobs, the ones they do when they train and function one weekend a month during' normal times. These routines will now be done very day, five days a week.

The officers and men will work again all day Sunday, the Air Force said, and then begin the dally five-day week routine on Monday, working from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.. Thus, the first day off for most of the men will not come until next Saturday. The Monday through Friday schedule is expected to affect almost all the men and officers, with only routine maintenance forces working on the weekends. Would Relay Word

The biggest concern of the men right now is whether they are to remain at Niagara Falls or be sent elsewhere. Alt indications so far point to the men remaining at the air base for at least the near future.

"I know as much as you do at this point," Col Blewett told his men. He said he would inform them as soon as he received further instructions from higher Air Force headquarters.

The colonel impressed upon the men that they were now members of the regular Air Force, and their active status could last for two weeks, two months or a maximum of two years.

The unit's information officer, Maj John Basil, said all but one per cent of the unit's force had been accounted for by 8 a.m. today, the hour the men went on active duty.

That one per cent, he said, is probably comprised of men that were out of town since the call-up and have not been contacted formally. He said some men could have been on vacations or business trips and away from the mainline of news to near of the unit's activation.

According to approximate listings of the unit's strength, that one per cent would mean between only six or eight men unaccounted for. Some Are Training

Another seven per cent of the force, he said, were not at the base today because they are elsewhere on Air Force training missions or undergoing basic training as part of the first phase of their Air National Guard six-month active duty stint.

Reporting back from a commanders' meeting later this morning, Maj Basil said the first problems for Col. Blewett and his officers is logistics in handling and accommodating personnel.

The Maj said there are about 50 men in the unit who live too far away to commute daily to the base, and they will have to be billeted. Ha said there are enough accommodations on the base for these men.

Officers and men in the immediate area who will commute daily will receive additional pay for

quarters allowance, which varies in amount according to rank and number of dependents.

Another problem will be parking at the base, and the colonel has recommended that the airmen form car pools for travel to and from the base daily.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of reports by SSgt Edward A. Craig, a member of the 107th Tactical Fighter Group, which was stationed at Niagara Falls until being sent to Vietnam in early May as the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron. SSgt Craig, a linotype operator at the Niagara Falls Gazette, filled this story June 19, 1968. TUY HOA AB, Republic of South Vietnam — Leaving Niagara Falls International Airport in the early morning darkness, the men of the 107th Tactical Fighter Group boarded their Trans International Airways DCS for a then undisclosed destination. Within a few hours, we were in Oakland, California, then on our way to Honolulu, Hawaii and Wake Island. The later proved to be of great interest to the Western New York airmen because of its size — 2.6 square miles — and lack of vegetation. AFTER A STOP in Guam, it was finally revealed that our destination was the Republic of Vietnam. During our stop at Clark Air Force Base, The Philippines, our last before entering the war zone, MSgt Norman Pearson of Gasport, New York was greeted by his brother who is stationed at that base.

In just 21/2 more hours flying time the 107th, now known as the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron, arrived at Tuy Hoa Air Base. GREETING the 136th personnel at Tuy Hoa was the Commander of the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing, Colonel Abner M. Aust. The first impression of the base was its size, and the second, the unbearable heat. The New Yorkers, who are accustomed to mild weather, soon wilted under the 110-degree sun of Southeast Asia. Billeting of personnel and assigning work occupied the men's time until the arrival of their aircraft the following Sunday, June 16. Leading the flight of F-100s was its Commander, Lt Colonel Laverne J. (Dusty) Donner of Ransomville, New York. ONCE MORE Colonel Aust greeted the arriving personnel and wished them success in their new venture. At present, the unit is organizing itself into the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing and plans to be in combat within a short time. The base we occupy is reported to be the safest in all South Vietnam having never suffered damage to enemy action. Protecting the base on the outer perimeter are the men of the 101st Airborne and a unit of the famous Republic of Korea White Horse Division.

Of the over 6000 sorties flown by the pilots of the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron, none were more memorable than those missions flown in support of the Due Lap Special Forces Camp in the II Corps Area of South Vietnam. Located southwest of Tuy Hoa Air Base, close to the South Vietnam-Cambodian border, this strategically located special forces camp was extremely vulnerable to Viet Cong attacks and was under continual siege by an estimated 3000 North Vietnamese regular troops and Viet Cong irregulars in that area. The 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron had flown hundreds of sorties in support of this Special Forces Camp. During a particularly demanding mission requiring the utmost in accurate munitions delivery, 1st Lt Julis Thurn's F-100 was hit by the intense anti-aircraft artillery that was encountered on each pass. With his aircraft's engine failed and fire rapidly engulfing his mortally wounded 'Super Sabre', Lt Thurn was able to glide only short distance before he was forced to eject over contested territory. During the brief parachute descent, extreme automatic weapons fire were directed at

Lt Thurn causing an initial rescue attempt to be halted because personnel at the nearby special forces camp were certain he must have been killed. Lt Thurn landed in rugged terrain. He immediately freed himself of his parachute and radioed his position to the circling tactical air controller who notified the helicopter air rescue unit. Two attempts were made by the Air Rescue choppers to pluck Thurn from enemy terrain only to be driven off by intense ground fire. An air-to-ground rescue was impossible, the Special Forces troops at the Due Lap camp formed a ground rescue party and fought their way to the downed pilot. This group suffered several casualties and just managed to make its way to Tnum and back to the safety of the Due Lap camp bunkers. Lieutenant Thurn, air force fighter pilot, became Lieutenant Thurn, infantryman, as he took his place alongside the other defenders of the embattled fortification. Sometime later a helicopter gun ship managed to land about a mile from the Due Lap camp picking up Lt Thurn and returning him to the nearby Tuy Hoa Air Base. Lt Thurn was not injured during this experience, but the seriousness of the incident will always be remembered by the two bullet holes in the outer shell of the flying helmet he has as a memento.

The Viet Cong seemed more interested in destroying air-craft rather than attacking personnel," Niagara Falls airmen have written home about a July, 1968 attack on a United States Air Base where a unit of the 107th Tactical Fighter Group is stationed. The airmen are stationed with the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron, a unit of the 107th, at Tuy Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, on the central coast of South Vietnam, about 295 miles northeast of Saigon. The base was attacked July 29 and nine Viet Cong were reportedly killed. Two Americans, Airman Gary McDaniel and Ron Senowech, were reported wounded and planes worth \$6 million were destroyed. Portions of letters written home described the battle as follows: "The alert siren sounded off and soon everybody was inside their bunkers. A few minutes passed and the Commander called all fire teams to assemble ... and get out onto the main line of resistance. "Meanwhile the Viet Cong suicide squad inside the base had blown up two C-130 and damaged several of our F-100 with satchel TSGT Gary McDaniel charges plus injuring several airmen including Airman Gary McDaniels and Ron Senowech, members of the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron. They're all right now but will receive the Purple Heart for injuries suffered during the attack." "Within minutes the zapper squad was cut off from its unit outside the barbed wire and then began the fireworks. The Air Police ... killed five or six of the Communist attackers on the outer edges of the runway. The MACV helicopter gun-ships let loose their rockets on the remaining VC within the compound and killed the remaining commandos just outside the perimeter." "I can't say that I really got into any action because by the time we got into our positions Charlie was all finished ... The next morning the Air Police collected nine VC bodies. The sad part of it all was there was one young VC who looked only 12 years old wrote one of the airmen." "You have to hand it to them. They sure had guts coming inside the wire to get at the aircraft. While we were in some danger, the Viet Cong seemed more interested in destroying aircraft rather than attacking personnel. Let's hope they stay that way!" "When the unit arrived in Tuy Hoa it was told that this was the safest base in all South Vietnam, but it has to be said now that we're the second safest base. The safest base hasn't been built yet! All that can hoped is that the unit doesn't have any more nights like that one." The 136th arrived in The Re-public of South Vietnam in early-June. About 350 men make up the unit. The remaining 400 plus men of the 107th are serving in the Republic of South Korea where they were deployed in

early July.

TUY HOA — They call themselves "The Enchilada Air Force" and "Rockey's Raiders." Not very ominous maybe, but both really pack quite a punch. "The Enchilada Air Force" is the 188th Tactical Fighter Squadron, a former New Mexico Air National Guard unit. "Rockey's Raiders" is the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron, a former New York Air National Guard unit. Since becoming integral parts of the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing in June, both squadrons immediately began to prove their worth in battle. Recently F-100 pilots from the 188th and 136th teamed-up and provided close air support for troopers of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division who were in contact with enemy forces 13 miles west-northwest of Dak To in Kontum Province. A forward air controller (FAC) who directed both air strikes credited the pilots with killing 40 enemy soldiers. They also destroyed 10 bunkers, 250-calibre machine gun sites, 2 suspected recoilless rifle positions and caused 4 secondary explosions and a sustained fire. They diverted from a preplanned mission in response to a request for immediate close air support issued by the friendly ground forces. "The friendlies marked their own positions and the FAC marked the enemy positions with a white smoke rocket," said Maj. Vernon R. King. "I rolled in and dropped my first bombs. The FAC said they were right on target. He also said I had caused a secondary explosion. I made another bomb pass and the FAC said they were right on the money too, and that I had started a fire this time and caused still another secondary explosion." Another pilot said that when he dropped his bombs the FAC shouted, 'Bullseye!' He could see the secondary explosions and the fire clearly from the air and started to strafe the enemy positions. The friendlies were receiving fire from a new enemy position. When the F-100s arrived in the area they waited while the FAC and the friendly forces determined just where the enemy fire was coming from. After about 20 minutes, an Army ground commander requested help. His troops were pinned down by the enemy's fire. The aircraft rolled in and dropped bombs on the enemy. After the strike the ground commander said the enemy fire had stopped

Following the deployment of the augmented 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron to Vietnam, approximately 370 personnel remained at the Niagara Falls ANG Base awaiting assignments. Their future lay in the hands of a U.S. Air Force mobility team who's task was to select needed Air Force specialties for assignments at various state-side and overseas bases. While a very small number of guardsmen were scheduled to remain at the Niagara Base to serve as caretakers, the balance of the personnel were systematically selected for assignments to several Major Air Force base in the United States and overseas. The greater Majority of guardsmen at Niagara were identified for shipment overseas to established bases in the Republic of South Korea. Departing the Niagara Guard Base on 9 July 1968, slightly less than 300 personnel were airlifted to the Korean peninsula for their assignment to the Major bases of Kwang-Ju, Kunsan and Osan. A small number of personnel were assigned to other Korean bases. A comparison of living conditions between those guardsmen deployed to Vietnam and their counter-parts in Korea found that the Korean contingent were forced to live under a more "warlike" status. Housed in field tents and with very limited facilities, they spent the next ten months of the tour continually adjusting to weather conditions from the extreme heat of summer to the bitter cold of winter.

On the 30th of May 1969, the Korean contingent was returned back to the United States in order to join back with the 107th Tactical Fighter Group just prior to deactivation on 12 June 1969.

LTC Harold T. Schoultz has been named commander of the 136th Tactical Fighter Squadron of the 107th Tactical Fighter Group, New York Air National Guard.

The appointment was announced by LTC Laverne J. Donner, who earlier this month was promoted to commander of the 107th from commander of the 136th.

Four F-101s gently touched down the morning of April 13th 1971. The arrival of the jets to the 107th Fighter Group marked the beginning of a new role for our highly experienced and decorated Air National guard outfit. According to Col. Lavern J. Donner, who was the commander of the 107th at that time, our unit assumed air defense responsibilities for the protection of certain sectors of the eastern United States including western New York. The F-101B was considered a strong deterrent factor in the Air Force's inventory of air defense aircraft which are primarily used in the defense of the United States in the event of a sneak attack by hostile bombers. It carried heat-seeking air to air Falcon missiles and nuclear-tipped Genie ballistic rockets to find and destroy any enemy aircraft before they reached their targets. Its crew consisted of a pilot and a weapons systems officer.

The 107th was one of three Air National Guard groups to be converted to the new Air Defense Command mission of defending the United States against enemy bomber attack. The 107th at the time was attached to the 21st Air Division, Syracuse with responsibility for North Eastern United States, part of NORAD link which utilized early warning radar systems throughout the US and Canada. The 107th was put on alert status 24 hours a day under strict guidelines set forth by the Air Defense Command and the Department of Defense. The arrival of the new aircraft supported the President Nixon's desire to help bring Air National Guard units to the modern state of readiness they required in their role as primary back-up forces in the nation's defense: The Total Force Concept.

It was in August of 71 that the 136th Fighter Squadron bid a sad farewell to its last F-100 since 1960. They had logged over 50,000 hours which included 10,200 combat hours and over 5,000 missions in Vietnam. It seemed fitting that the last man to fly the Hun from Niagara was Maj Frank McKee. The Hun, tail number 878, was flown to Sioux City Iowa. The flying time to Sioux City is 1-hour and 40-minutes. Maj McKee's flying time prior to this flight was 998:20 hrs. So upon landing he completed his unit's last F-100 flight and logged his one thousandth hour of F-100 time.

In Jun 1971, the unit officially received Federal recognition as a part of the Aerospace Defense Command flying the F-101B In mid 1975, the unit earned the Air Defense Command's coveted "A" Award for maintaining a high degree of sustained operational effectiveness. In Feb 1976, the 107th received notification that it was the recipient of the USAF Outstanding Unit Award.

In October of 1971 Governor Nelson D. Rockefeller honored nine pilots from the 136th Fighter Squadron with the New York State Conspicuous Service Medal. Col Laverne J. Donner, who at the time was the commander of the 107th Fighter Group, presented the medals in behalf of the Governor to the nine pilots for their extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty while on active duty at Tuy Hoa Air Force Base, Republic of Vietnam. The pilots receiving the award were LTC James C. Cook, LTC Norman C Culbertson, LTC Joseph M. Fell, LTC Sydney K. Johnson Jr, LTC Harold T. Schoultz, LTC Michael Svisco, Maj Fillmore V. Hall Maj Franklyn C. Mckee and Capt Michael J. Laskowski.

During the period 4 Oct-18 Oct 1975 the pilots, WSO's and crews of the 107th were deployed to Tyndall AFB to participate in Operation Combat Pike. Over 100 unit personnel were involved in this exercise.

In April, it was announced that the 107th was scheduled to receive 18 F-4C to replace the F-101 being utilized. In addition, 24 military and 13 technical positions were to be added to the unit strength.

On 27 November, F-101s from the 107th's 136th FIG Sq deployed to Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida for the Annual Aerospace Defense Command Weapons System Evaluation. The deployment, designed to determine the overall capabilities and effectiveness of the complete interceptor system, involved approximately 100 Officers and Airmen of the 107th.

The skies over Western New York were alive with activity from 11:30 P.M. on 22 March until 6:00 AM on 23 March as pilots and weapons systems operators from the 136th Fighter Interceptor Sq participated in a 21st North American Air Defense region exercise designed to test the intercept activity and turnaround capabilities of flying units within the region. The exercise, entitled "Fertile Keynote 77-3", ran from March 21-24 and allowed commanders to prove their battle management procedures. A simulated air battle was staged in which F-101B Voodoo jets from the 136th FIS, under the command of LTC James C Cook, scrambled to intercept various "enemy" aircraft including B-57 fighter bombers, F-106 Delta Darts, F-105 Thunderbirds and Canadian CT-33's and CF-100's. In an attempt to penetrate the air defense network, the "enemy" aircraft dropped chaff (strips of aluminum foil cut to various lengths) to jam our radar systems. Through the use of long range radar inputs from the Lockport radar station and other radar sites to the 21st NORAD Region Headquarters at Hancock Field, Syracuse, it was possible to have one air controller for each interceptor in the air. Col Blewett, in commenting on the exercise stated that "Fertile Keynote 77-3 was extremely successful and provided us with a realistic assessment of our air defense capabilities."

In April of 78 the F-100 got a new look, and an old emblem. The clean-up project entitled, "Pacer VooDoo" consisted of cleaning, painting and overhauling of aircraft if necessary. The 107th CAMS was in charge of the project. During that time a new emblem was to be painted on the tail section of the aircraft. The emblem was the same one used by the 503rd Fighter Sq (Dive) in the Second World War. The 136th came out of that unit. The emblem featured a red

Thunderbird enclosed in an irregular shaped cloud outlined in blue with yellow lightning bolt outlined red jutting from the cloud.

In June of 1978 two 107th Fighter Interceptor Group aircrew members were presented with the North American Aerospace Defense Command "We Point With Pride" Award by LTC CP Balko of 21st Air Division Headquarters on behalf of the Division Commander, Brig Gen Carl S Miller during the May UTA. Maj Douglas B Routt, pilot, and Capt. Lanny A. Karns, weapons system officer, were credited with saving an F-101 VooDoo while on a routine training mission last year. The F-101 developed a malfunction shortly after takeoff. A fuel line separated causing an explosion in the right engine which resulted in a fire. Jettisoning of remaining fuel was discussed, but, because of the heavily populated area off the take off runway they decided to retain the fuel and make a single engine heavy-weight landing. The landing was completed with over 15,000 pounds of fuel on board. Post investigation reports stated that "Maj Routt and Captain Karns demonstrated the highest degree of professionalism." Their timely recognition and corrective action saved a valuable aircraft and prevented the loss of lives. Both men received letters of recognition from the North American Air Defense Commander, Gen James E Hill.

On 29 July through 12 August 1978 the USAF Clinic personnel deployed to Griffiss AFB to perform annual field training. During this period, the Niagara Falls International Airport main runway was closed for a Maj construction project which reinforced a culvert, permitting the airport to handle larger commercial aircraft. A portion of the 107th FIG deployed to Griffiss AFB, NY, in order to maintain uninterrupted normal, non-alert air operations. The deployment party consisted of approximately 50 maintenance and operations personnel, and the necessary air crews. The Alert Aircraft remained at the Niagara Falls Air Base, where provisions were made permitting the alert aircraft to take off if needed.

Wednesday, 4 November 1981 F-4 Number 40860 bearing the name "NIAGARA FALLS" and sporting a rainbow colored tail rudder, roared into air history here at the 107th Air National Guard Base, becoming the first of about 20 new jet aircraft. Number 40860 was piloted here from Selfridge Air Force Base by Maj Michael Laskowski, with Lieutenant Colonel James C Cook, Group Commander, in the back seat.

Lt. Col James Burdick and LTC Wayne Craig, were trained and qualified as the Unit's first F-4 Instructor Pilots. The first "back sealers" on the training flights were Maj Scott Wales, and Captain Richard Griffin. On their first training mission, the new jets circled the local area for about 45 minutes at a cruising speed of about 350 Knots. The first few training flights were designed to allow transitioning pilots to get the feel of the Aircraft's flight envelope. After all flying personnel were fully qualified, normal training flights and routine intercept training missions were resumed.

The end of May 82 brought with it another milestone in the history of the 107th Fighter Interceptor group. The F-101 would end its 11 year history with the unit. All but aircraft 413 would have arrived at their final resting places throughout the country. It was then planned

that aircraft 413 would adorn the area across from the O&T building next to the F-100.

Annual water survival training was conducted on 18 July 82 with the aid of the United States Coast Guard, Youngstown, NY. The training consisted of aircrew familiarization, use of water survival equipment, simulated parachute drags and helicopter pickups.

The conversion from the F-101 to the F-4C's was going quite smoothly in 82. We were receiving excellent assistance, instruction, and training. Some of our training was being conducted on Base by Field Training Teams. These teams stayed on base for several months. We also had 5 deployments to other bases for training. Unit training plans; F-101 flying sorties available decreased effective January 1982 due to programmed conversion to the F-4. The first F-4 ground school was completed in March of 82. The first scheduled flight of our new F-4C would be in April of 82.

Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, became our deployed home away from home starting with the F-101 and continuing with the F-4. Numerous deployments to Tyndall included Copper Flag, Combat Archer, Combat Pike, William Tell, and ACMI deployments.

In January and March of 1984 the 107th placed F-4s on alert at George AFB California, supporting the 144th Fighter Interceptor Wing, 49th Fighter Wing, Fresno, conversion from the F-106 to the F-4. In February of 1984 the 107th deployed to Gulfport, Mississippi for annual unit field training. Aircrews trained extensively in Air Combat Maneuvering.

From 31 Mar to 15 Apr of 84, 75 members of the 107th found themselves in Keflavik, Iceland. Six F-4s made the five hour flight over the Atlantic. After orientation flights off Iceland, our fliers would settle in for two weeks of flight surveillance over the ocean routes used by Soviet jets en route to Cuba and Africa. Their mission was to monitor the Soviet flights. Beside the regular flights from the Soviet Union to Cuba and Africa, the Russians frequently conduct military exercises in the airspace near Iceland. Although the planes would not be in the air at all times, they were on alert status and could be airborne within five minutes if the need would arise. Support personnel consisted of 65 crew chiefs and mechanics. On April 13, 1984, 136th aircrew flying off alert from Iceland intercepted their first Russian Bear bomber. Maj Rogers Smith, pilot, Captain Craig Mading WSO. Captain Paul Kelly, pilot and Maj Steven Kaplan. WSO, intercepted the Bear over the Atlantic in the Iceland-U. K. gap. Following the intercept the F-4s recovered at Leuchars in Scotland. Close observers of the air traffic operating from the NATO Base this week will notice unfamiliar markings on the tails of the F-4s. The design is that of the 136th Fighter Interceptor Squadron that is here to replace the 57th FIS while it is deployed to the United States. The "Black Knights" of the 57th FIS will be gone for two weeks to Tyndall Air Force Base, FL to participate in "Copper Flag," a Tactical Air Command-sponsored exercise that will be held from April 15-28. This exercise, held three times each year, is designed to provide the Air Force with realistic training against airborne threats to the security of the North American continent. Aircrews participating in "Copper Flag" will fly intercepts against aircraft simulating a bomber attack on the United States. F-4s from Iceland will be part of the defending, or friendly forces. Approximately 50 aircraft and 700 people will be deployed to

Tyndall for the exercise. In the meantime, the 136th FIS from Niagara Falls, NY will fill in for the "Black Knights." Six F-4s from the unit arrived this week to take over the air intercept duties. After two weather delays — one caused by bad weather in New York, the other by stormy conditions here — six F-4s, accompanied by three KC-135, flew six hours non-stop from Niagara Falls to Keflavik. Each fighter had to be refueled twice while enroute. Although the flight was uneventful, according to Squadron Commander LTC Doug Routt, it was not exactly a pleasure. Six hours crammed into the cockpit of an F-4 wearing all the Paraphernalia required to fly over water is a long time to remain essentially immobile. The 18 officers and 57 enlisted men who comprise the 136th FIS are part of the Air National Guard of New York State, the maintenance people also being attached to the 107th Fighter Group. Some of these men are "part-time" Guardsmen who have regular jobs as bankers, lawyers, teachers, salesmen, etc. during most of the year. Others are "fulltime" Guardsmen who, although not on active duty, work for the Air Force full time. The details are not easily explained but it is clear that the policy, called the Total Force Concept, works well for the Air Force. According to LtCol. Routt, "Seventy percent of all air defense units in the Air Force are Air National Guard units." The colonel said that the Guard is the oldest reserve unit in the United States and that, "We're as good (as the active duty squadrons) and cheaper." This statement is justified by two facts: (1) most Guardsmen are older and have more experience than their active duty counterparts, and (2) Guardsmen don't require the expensive support — i.e. housing, permanent changes of station, commissary and exchange privileges, etc. that are part of the active duty serviceman's compensation. Most of the men of the 136th FIS were anxious to come to Iceland. For the pilots it is a chance to get a real intercept, that is, a rendezvous with a Soviet aircraft that has entered Iceland's air space. Asked if they weren't deterred by Iceland's meteorological reputation, CMSgt, Leo Ward, who is in charge of maintenance, said, "The weather's better here than in upstate New York."

In February 1985 the 107th again deployed to Gulfport Mississippi for annual training. The deployment exercised the 107th's ability to move to and operate from bare base facilities. Aircrew engaged in intensive air to air combat training over the Gulf of Mexico. The Mardi Gras festival in New Orleans was in full swing.

In April of 1986 the 107th began performing a ZULU alert at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The alert mission, performed at the request of headquarters, United States Air Forces Europe, continued for 12 months. That was the first Air National Guard Air Defense Alert Detachment in Europe. The mission, named Creek Klaxon, consisted of eight F-4D, aircrews, maintenance and support personnel from a number of ANG units.

Also in April of 1986 the 107th FIG received its first F-4D from 184th TAG FTR GP McConnell AFB Kansas, the first aircraft to arrive was piloted by LTC Jules Thurn, 136 FIS Commander, with 1st Lt Dan Pike acting as his WSO. The flight from McConnell to Niagara Falls took 2.1 hours.

On March 9th the last flight of T-33 Tail number 535854 was flown from Niagara Falls to Phillips AAF Maryland by LTC Julius Thurn. The final T-33 marked the end of the longest aircraft tenure in our unit history, 27 years, from 1960-1987.

In September 1987 LTC Thomas Emborsky succeeded Lt. Col Julius Thurn as 136th FIS Commander. Also in September five 107th F-4s and one hundred personnel deployed to Tyndall AFB Florida for a Copper Flag exercise.

In 1990 The 136th Fighter Interceptor Squadron is the combat ready arm of the 107th FIG. Equipped with F-4D's, the 136 FIS performs air sovereignty defense alert for North American Air Defense (NORAD) from Niagara Falls IAP, NY and Detachment 1 at Charleston AFB, South Carolina. Additionally the 136 FIS is prepared to deploy and operate to support NORAD in the air defense of the United States. The 136 FIS trains primarily at Niagara Falls. Flying operations are also conducted at Charleston to support the aircrews that rotate through the detachment. Tasked to support NORAD and 1st AF exercises, the 136 FIS has deployed to numerous locations. Routine deployments to Tyndall AFB, Florida allow aircrews to live fire air to air missiles and conduct Dissimilar Air Combat Tactics Training. Unit deployments to the Air National Guard Training site at Gulfport, Mississippi have resulted in concentrated training for squadron aircrews. Personnel of the 136 FIS come from a variety of backgrounds. Technicians, full-time Alert Aircrews, and the Traditional Guardsmen make up the Unit. Civilian occupations include Airline Pilots, College Professors, Professional Engineers, Program Managers, Test Pilots, Firemen, School Teachers, Carpenters, Computer Systems Analysts, Marketing Executives, Businessmen and Lawyers. The cross section of the personnel in the 136 FIS gives the Unit a unique ability to creatively meet all tasking.

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