

147 AIR REFUELING SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

346 Fighter Squadron activated, 1 Oct 1942

Constituted, 2 Oct 1942

Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945

Redesignated 147 Fighter Squadron and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946

147th Fighter Squadron (SE) extended federal recognition, 22 April 1949

Redesignated 147 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 1 Oct 1952

Redesignated 147 Aeromedical Transport Squadron, 1 May 1961

Redesignated 147 Air Transport Squadron 18 Feb 1964

Redesignated 147 Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1966

Redesignated 147 Aeromedical Airlift Squadron, 19 Feb 1968

Redesignated 147 Air Refueling Squadron 4 Oct 1972

STATIONS

Bushey Hall, England, 1 Oct 1942

Coltishall, England, Oct 1942 (ground echelon, which was formed in US, was at Harding Field, La, until 2 Nov 1942)

Casablanca, French Morocco, 19 Nov 1942

 Ouja, French Morocco, 6 Jan 1943

La Senia:Algeria, 14 Feb 1943

Orleansville, Algeria, c. 21 Apr 1943

Maison Blanche, Algeria, 22 May 1943 (operated from Monastir, Tunisia, 4-13 Jun 1943)

Rehaia, Algeria, 22 Jul 1943

Sardinia, 28 Oct 1943 (detachment operated from Sidi Amor, Tunisia, 7 Feb-15 Jun 1944) Pomigliano, Italy, 25 Jun 1944 (detachment operated from Piombino, Italy, 7 Jul-24 Aug 1944) Tarquinia, Italy, 24 Aug 1944
Pisa, Italy, 16 Nov 1944-14 Jul 1945
Seymour Johnson Field, NC, 25 Aug-7 Nov 1945
Pittsburgh, PA

ASSIGNMENTS

350 Fighter Group
120 Operations Group

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-39, 1942
P-400, 1942-1943
P-38, 1943
P-47, 1944
F-47
F-51, 1952
F-84, 1955
F-86, 1958
C-119, 1961
KC-97
KC-135, 1977

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

LTC Firman Shoff
LTC John Dranko
LTC Charles Balik
LTC Edward Reybein
LTC Donald W. Johnston
LTC Edward J. Bollen
Maj George H aliiwell
Maj Richard Grant

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Tunisia
Sicily

Naples-Foggia
Rome-Arno
Southern France
North Apennines
Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Italy, 6 Apr 1944

EMBLEM



346 Fighter Squadron



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Activated, 1 Oct 1942 by special authority prior to constitution as 346th Fighter Squadron on 2 Oct 1942. Combat in MTO, Jan 1943-2 May 1945.

In June 1951 the 147th Fighter Squadron converted Unit Equipped aircraft from the F-47N to the F-51H. The unit mission, defense of eastern US, remained the same.

With the third annual field training encampment scheduled for 11-25 August, much work was necessary to prepare both pilots and maintenance personnel to satisfactorily perform with the newly-assigned aircraft. The Pittsburgh based units arrived at a new permanent training site, Spaatz Field, Reading, Pa., with their new F-51's, T-6's, and C-47's. All training during this period was scheduled to conform to Continental Air Command (CONAC) Training Directives. Flying training was concentrated on aerial gunnery being fired at the Ocean City Range, and Ground Controlled Interceptor missions. A total of 44 aircraft were stationed at Spaatz Field thirty-three F-51H's; four C-47's and seven T-6G's. With the newly assigned F-51's, the 146th flew 370 hours and the 147th flew 395 hours.

On 1 October, the 112th Fighter Group and attached squadrons, the 146th and 147th, was redesignated Fighter Interceptor Group and Squadrons, with no change in mission. This action was premature and was brought about by a mix-up in signals. On 1 December, all units were again redesignated Fighter-Bomber. The 104th Fighter Squadron was also redesignated Fighter-Bomber and was relieved from assignment to the 112th Fighter Bomber Group effective 1 January 1953.

The beginning of 1953 saw the Pittsburgh-based fighter units depart for a warmer climate and better flying weather. The redesignation of the 146th and 147th from Interceptor to Bomber

required all aircrew members to now become proficient in use of bombs. The training conducted at Eglin AFB, Florida, in February 1953, included the use of bombs, rockets and .50 calibre ammunition for both air-to-air and air-to-ground firing. Upon completion of training, both units returned to Pittsburgh. A fourth Annual Federal Inspection was conducted and again yielded an overall "Sat."

Conversion to the jet age began in November, 1953, with the arrival of one T-33A for each unit. Since none of the assigned pilots or mechanics had any previous jet fighter experience, everyone started from ground zero, but with great enthusiasm.

In July 1955, the unit mission was officially changed to Fighter Interceptor and placed under the 26th Air Division, Air Defense Command, for operational control of training. Operating with the ADC Ground Control Stations and air-to-air gunnery training was primary.

Meanwhile, the 147th was busy ferrying the original F-84's to the Arizona storage area, and enjoying a more simple checkout program in their newer F-84F's. The appearance of the later model was similar to the "split tail"; there the similarities ended.

Normally, two vital radio calls remain: one at twenty seconds, and one at ten seconds before the rockets are released. On the attacker's twenty second call, the target pilot automatically responds with a "Stand By," carefully determining if the F-86L is locked onto the proper target. On the ten second call, the target pilot confirms a good pass by giving the "Clear to Fire," or, if a questionable pass, the target pilot calls "Heads Up," meaning fly through on a dry pass.

In this instance, the target pilot felt the F-86L was going to fire on the Delmar, and gave the "Clear to Fire" call. The target pilot had misjudged. Two of the six rockets fired hit the T-33. one passing through a tip tank setting it on fire. and the other passing through the engine compartment. Fast reaction on the part of the target pilot by releasing the tip tank, removed the immediate threat of fire. The rocket passing through the engine compartment had severed an oil line. Ingested oil in the engine introduced heavy dark smoke into the cockpit. Again, the target pilot reacted properly by blowing his canopy away from the aircraft and descending to a lower altitude. All aircraft safely returned to Hancock Field. The Group Commander now had one day to sort out all the facts and report same to the Commander of Air Defense Command. There is no bigger loser.

In November 1957, the Annual CONAC Inspection visit was satisfactorily completed. The unit was also alerted to another aircraft change. The 146th was being converted to the F-86L allweather fighter while the 147th was to convert to a later model F-84F. As it turned out, the change in the 84F models was short-lived. In March 1958, the last "Hogs" departed for other ANG fighter units and the 147th was also equipped with the F-86L.

Unfortunately, the 147th was destined for other things not yet revealed. The 147th continued the alert commitment until 1 May 1961.

The 147th FIS continued operating the F-86L with some apprehension as to its future while the 146th was converting to the F-102. Shocking news filtered on to the base in the Spring of 1961. The 147th was scheduled to move to an aeromedical transport mission and to be equipped with the C-119J.

On 1 May 1961, the 147th reorganized as an Aeromedical Transport Squadron with the Military Air Transport Service designated as its gaining command. Specifically, the First Aeromedical Transport Group, Brooks AFB, Texas, the only active Air Force Aeromed unit, was assigned the advisory responsibility for the 147th. The First Aeromed played a key role during the initial training phase of the aeromed mission, especially so in the newly formed Aeromedical Flight, consisting of Flight Nurses and Medical Technicians. By July, three Air Force Advisor personnel were in place: a C-119 Instructor Pilot, a Flight Nurse and Medical Technician.

Conversion training for the C-119 started in earnest when the initial cadre upgraded to Instructor status by early June. The basic aircrew consisted of a Pilot, Co-Pilot and Flight Mechanic. Ten aircrews were authorized. The Flight Mechanic, the first enlisted position on flight status, was a welcome addition to assist the pilots in managing this vibrating monstrosity. He assisted with aircraft pre-flight inspections, monitoring engine and system instruments from engine start to engine shut down, and operating heaters for wing and tail surfaces and cabin heat. He was responsible to assure proper weight and balance calculations and safety of the cargo compartment. He was the master mechanic and resident expert on all crosscountry flights: the last to leave the aircraft upon arrival and the first arriving at the aircraft prior to departure. The success of on-time departures from other than home base was directly proportional to the skill of the Flight Mechanic.

At last, the 147th Aeromedical Transport Squadron was to have an aircraft capable of intercontinental missions. The silver, and later, grey and white Constellations from Pittsburgh were destined to be seen in almost every part of the world. There were few sad faces as the last of the ungainly C-119 tucked up their spindly landing gear and disappeared into the western quadrant of the Pittsburgh control area. The C-119's were bound for the aircraft graveyard at Davis Monthan AFB in Arizona, but many were still to see service in Europe before the final melting pot.

13 May 1968: Called to active duty as part of the Pueblo Crisis call-up to conduct worldwide aeromedical support operations from its Pittsburgh base.

13 Dec 1969: Returned to state control.

Aug 1990: Volunteers began flying Desert Shield support missions.

20 Dec 1990: Called to active duty for Desert Shield.

15 May 1991: Released from active duty after taking part in Desert Shield/ Desert Storm.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.