

166 AIR REFUELING SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

364 Fighter Squadron constituted and activated, 1 Dec 1942

Inactivated 20 Aug 1946

Reconstituted and redesignated the 166 Fighter Squadron allotted to the Ohio NG on 24 May 1946

166 Fighter Squadron (SE) activated 21 Aug 1946

Redesignated 166 Tactical Fighter Squadron

Redesignated 166 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1952

Redesignated 166 Fighter Interceptor Squadron

Redesignated 166 Tactical Fighter Squadron

Redesignated 166 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

Redesignated 166 Air Refueling squadron

STATIONS

Hamilton Field, CA, 1 Dec 1942

Tonopah AAFld, NV, 7 Mar 1943

Santa Rosa AAFld, CA, 4 Jun 1943

Marysville AAFld, CA, 15 Aug 1943

Ainsworth AAFld, NE, 6 Oct-10 Nov 1943

Raydon, England, 1 Dec 1943

Leiston, England, 2 Feb 1944

Linsey Air Station, Germany 20 May 1945

Neubiberg, Germany, 20 Jul 1945-20 Aug 1946

Port Columbus Airport, OH

Rickenbacker ANGB, Columbus, OH

Lockbourne AFB, OH, 1 Feb 1947
Youngstown Municipal Airport, OH, Jul 1952
Lockbourne AFB, OH, 31 Oct 1952

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Etain Air Base, France, 3 Nov 1961
Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, 26 Jun 1968

ASSIGNMENTS

357 Fighter Group, 1 Dec 1942-20 Aug 1946
Air Defense Command 31 Oct 1952
121 Operations Group

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-39, 1943
P-51, 1943
P-51, 1948
F-84, 1950
F-51
F-80, 1952
F-80, 1954
F-84, 1955
F-84, 1957 1958
F-100
A-7, 1974
KC-135

Support Aircraft

T-6
C-45

COMMANDERS

Cpt Varian K. White, 1 Dec 1942
Cpt Thomas L. Hayes, Jul 1943
Maj John A. Storch, Mar 1944
Maj Donald C. McGee, May 1945
Maj Richard A. Peterson, Oct 1944
LTC Albert W. Roby, Aug 1946
Maj James E. Kidd, Nov 1947
Maj James A. Poston, Dec 1949
Maj Carl E. Breathwit, Apr 1951
LTC James A. Poston, Sep 1953
LTC Paul E. Hoover, Feb 1959

Maj Donald Q. Griffith, Dec 1961
Maj Victor A. Rawlins, Jan 1963
LTC Harry W. Martin, Sep 1966
LTC Donald Q. Griffith, Jun 1968
LTC William F. Casey, Jun 1969
LTC Robert E. Preston, Jul 1971
Maj Kenneth E. Potts, Jul 1973
LTC G. M. Campbell, Mar 1976
LTC R. P. Meyer, Jr. Aug 1980
LTC T. W. Powers, Sep 1986

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

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

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Germany, 6 Mar and 29 Jun 1944
Derben, Germany, 14 Jan 1945

French Croix de Guerre with Palm
11 Feb 1944-15 Jan 1945

EMBLEM



Gold and black circular frame on a gray background, a black crow with one eye open, firing a machine gun with six empty shell casings falling away, also the crow is sitting on a striking cobra tail in honor of the P-39 Bell Airacobra, first combat plane flown by the unit in World War II and the emblem was approved during this period.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 11 Feb 1944-25 Apr 1945

21 Aug 1946 the 364th Fighter Squadron was activated as an Ohio Air National Guard Unit and redesignated the 166 Fighter Squadron. The unit was located at Port Columbus Airport and was assigned two T-6 and one C-45. The senior flight instructor was LTC A.N. Roby and the

maintenance officer was LTC N.C. Erlenbusch. A recruiting office was established in the State House in downtown Columbus.

The Squadron moved to Lockbourne Air Force Base and received federal recognition on 26 January 1947. The first tactical aircraft received was the P-47 this decision was reversed quickly and the P-47 was replaced by the P-51D.

The pilots received a brief checkout in the P-51 and on 4 May 1947 the first of a long list of tactical operations was conducted.

The 166 shared Lockbourne AFB with the 332nd Ftr Wg After deactivation of that unit, the 166 Squadron was responsible for the entire base.

On 13 Nov 1947, LTC Roby was placed on extended active duty and remained with the unit as Air Force Advisor. Maj James E. Kidd replaced him as Squadron Commander.

In 1948, the first two weeks summer camp was conducted at Lockbourne with a small detachment of pilots, crew chiefs and armament personnel operating from Bakalar Air Force Base, Columbus, Indiana. The squadron converted to P-51H and the P-51D were returned to the Air Force.

In 1949, the 55th Wing, Lockbourne AFB, commanded by BG Errol H. Zistel and Operations Officer, LTC Edsel O. Clark, moved to Delaware for its two weeks of training. A total of 150 fighters were involved in the operation. The 166 and its sister squadrons from Mansfield and Springfield flew from Dover Air Force Base. personnel were transported to and from Delaware by troop train.

In Apr 1950, the 166 received F-84C Two place jet trainers were not available and the pilots experienced their first jet flight all alone. P-51H were transferred to Westfield, Mass. The five squadrons of the 55th Wing conducted summer camp at Lockbourne AFB.

10 Mar 1950 the 166 experienced its first pilot fatality, 1LT Niel H. Diehl and 1LT William Drazic collided at night near Stubenville, Ohio and both received fatal injuries.

On 1 Feb 1951, the 166 Fighter Squadron was recalled to active duty for a basis period of 21 months. Lockbourne AFB was activated concurrently with the fighter squadron. On 1 Apr 1951, the Strategic Air Command took command of the base. Soon after the unit reported for active duty, pilots began receiving orders for transfer to other units. Many saw combat duty in Korea, flying the F-51, F-84, F-80 and F-86, others were assigned to F-84 units in England. The squadron served as part of the 4708th Air Defense Wing and in Jul 1952 moved to the newly dedicated Municipal Airport at Youngstown, Ohio. The majority of the personnel were released from active duty by the end of 1952. 36 of 41 pilots were assigned out of country and four pilots were lost during the period; 1LT Willis Thatcher and 1LT William Prindle to combat action in Korea, 1LT Donald Goodwin in England and Capt Harold E. Powell in Ohio.

In 1953 the Squadron was once again flying the F-51 and performed its Summer Camp at Grayling, Michigan.

In 1954 the jets were back as F-80 aircraft were assigned. This was the first year for moving to Alpena, Michigan with the Squadrons from Mansfield, Springfield and Akron for Summer Camp. The other three Squadrons flew the F-51 and the primary mission was air-to-air gunnery. In August 1954, the 166 began a full time alert program with the Air Defense Command. Two F-80 were maintained on five minute status seven days a week from one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset. Five pilots were ordered to active duty each day to fly the aircraft. This program increased the capability to protect our country and also helped to finance a college education for many of the young pilots.

1955 was a busy year for the 166. In Jan and Feb, F-84E were assigned. Summer Camp was again held at Alpena, Michigan and the 166, 162nd and 164th Squadrons were all busy qualifying in the new aircraft. On 2 Jul, LTC James A. Poston, Commander of the 166 Squadron, won the cross country race from Ontario, California to Detroit, Michigan and received the "Ricks Memorial Trophy." His flight time was two hours, 57 minutes and 14 seconds for an average speed of 546.505 miles per hour. Much of the success was credited to the fast turnaround time at the refueling stops. Refueling teams from the 166 Maintenance Section were positioned at the enroute bases.

In 1956, Camp was once again conducted at Alpena, Michigan. The Air National Guard conducted a gunnery competition at Boise, Idaho with units all over the country represented. Cpt George Conrad and Capt Bob Preston were the 166 representatives on the wing team for "Operation Bulls Eye."

In 1957, the 166 won the "ZISTEL TROPHY" which was presented each year during the Summer Camp period at Alpena, Michigan for the best squadron shooting average. The former winners from Springfield were a close second. Average scores for the two week period were 166—17%, 162nd — 15.6 and 164th — 8.94. The 166 was particularly proud of one aerial target towed by 1LT Weidinger that came home with an average score of 33% for eight pilots. The sharpshooters in this flight were Lt Col Poston, Capt Yeager & Smoot, UT Nilles and Reaver, 2LT Potts, Roudebush and Fair.

On 10 Nov 1957, an electrical malfunction caused the landing gear of an F-84F to extend in flight at a speed of .95 mach. The air stream forced the right landing gear strut through the wing. This incident brought to a close an excellent flight safety record accumulated while flying the F-84E. The Squadron had flown 24 months, Oct 1955 to Nov 1957, and logged 12,600 flying hours without an aircraft accident.

The new F-84F aircraft provided the Squadron with a triple threat capability. It retained its conventional fighter bomber mission and its backup Air Defense mission, but in addition it now had a nuclear weapons delivery mission. The required training in new techniques of toss

bombing, over the shoulder bombing, and high altitude dive bombing. Additional training was also required of the munitions section for maintenance of the automatic bomb systems and loading of nuclear weapons.

In 1958, the 166, 162nd and 164th Squadrons combined to conduct a fire power demonstration at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The aircraft staged from Camp Campbell, KY and delivered 500 pound bombs, rockets and napalm.

In 1959 and 1960, the 166 moved to Volk Field, Wisconsin along with the other Squadrons of the Wing. Maintenance shops and field maintenance were combined to practice the Wing Maintenance Concept. Volk Field proved to be an improvement over Alpena, Michigan because it included an excellent bombing range near by and the major training effort was in air-to-ground weapons delivery. Air-to-air gunnery was also conducted, the T-33 tow aircraft were required to drag the "rag" targets 150 miles to and from the gunnery range over Lake Michigan.

The Squadron participated in simulated combat exercises involving air and ground forces. These operations were given the code words of "Bright Star Pine Cone II" (1959) and "Bright Star Pine Cone IV" (1960).

In 1960, members of the 162nd Squadron developed the capability to tow the new air-to-air dart target with the F-84F. This target greatly improved the aerial gunnery training. Firing was conducted while the target was towed at high speeds in climbing and diving turns.

In 1960, the Squadron competed again in the competition for the Earl T. Ricks Memorial Trophy. This year the event included the 12 Air National Guard units equipped with F-84F. It was a two day contest requiring conventional and nuclear bomb delivery events and a speed run from George AFB to San Francisco, California. Again the fighter squadron commander, this time 41 year old Lt Col Paul E. Hoover, represented his unit. The 166 F-84F, tail number 936, won the speed dash with a time of 40.24 minutes. Lt Col Hoover overall points won him the second place honors. Maj Milan F. Forkapa, Commander of Ohio 112th Tac Ftr Sq, won first place. This one-two punch assured the judges that the Rick Trophy should again return to the State of Ohio.

On 26 1960, Col James E. Kidd, Deputy Commander of the 121st Tac Ftr Wing, was killed when his F-84F crashed in Southern Ohio. Col Kidd was Commander of the 166 Fighter Squadron 1947-1949.

1961 was an unforgettable year in the history of the Ohio Air National Guard. The Wing Headquarters, 162nd and 164th Squadrons performed Field Training at Alpena, Michigan while the 166 moved to Myrtle Beach, S.C. to participate in "Operation Swift Strike III", a joint air-ground task force exercise. The Air Force was impressed with the excellent performance of the 166 during the war games and they had reason to be interested in the unit capability. On 25 Jul, President Kennedy announced his intention to ask Congress to call to active duty certain reserve units. Prior to the move to Myrtle Beach the 166 was alerted for a possible call.

Activation was naturally the major subject of conversation. On 25 Aug, the word was passed for a 1 Oct entry into active duty.

Much preparation was completed during the thirty day period prior to activation, but there was still much to be done and the multiplicity of tasks, all with priority, made October the most hectic that the men had ever experienced. The F-84F was capable of air refueling, the aircrews had not received training in this operation. The decision was made to island hop across the Atlantic. The pilots were required to fly training missions of 1300 miles to perfect long range cruise control. Water survival suits were fitted and worn on training missions. Instrument flying was practiced with emphasis on instrument let-down procedures at destination and enroute bases. Increased emphasis was placed on conventional weapons delivery techniques and the nuclear weapons training was discontinued. The aircraft maintenance personnel were the unsung heroes of this great preparation effort. All aircraft were to be readied for overseas deployment with a minimum of thirty hours until the next inspection. Eleven periodic inspections were completed in addition to supporting the increased flying schedule. Manhours were lost to physical examinations, personnel processing, tactical evaluations and the immense task of preparing and packing all equipment and furniture for overseas shipment. The fact that all aircraft were ready to go and made the trip successfully, once again confirmed the high quality of 166 Maintenance.

The climax to this dramatic month of Oct 1961 was "Operation Stairstep", the Atlantic Ocean crossing of 216 Air National Guard aircraft. This was the largest mass ocean crossing of fighter aircraft in history. On 30 Oct, two 166 T-33 aircraft piloted by Cpts Caughell, Fulmer, Reaver and Saltsman, departed Loring AFB, ME to travel the northern route through Goose Bay, Labrador; Sondstrom, Greenland; and the United Kingdom. The same day the F-84 led by Col Dale E. Shafer, Jr. Commander of the 121st Wing, departed McGuire AFB, NJ for their trip via Harmon, Newfoundland; Lajes, Azores; and Seville, Spain. One more aircraft deployment was also conducted. A C-47 support aircraft, with additional fuel tanks installed in the cargo department, made the long overwater flight. The crew of this aircraft was LTC G.F. Moser, Maj Erwin Priwer, Sgt Larry Stortz and Lt Kenneth Barker, a navigator borrowed from the Air Force. The final destination for all 166 was Etain, France

On 14 Dec the 166 Commander, LTC Paul E. Hoover, was appointed Deputy Wing Commander of the 7121st Wing. Maj Donald Q. Griffith assumed command of the 166 with Maj V.A. Rawlins moving up to operations officer. Flight Commanders during the tour in Etain, France were Capt Rex Anderson, Bill Stringfellow, George Conrad and Bob Preston.

As 1962 arrived, all equipment had arrived and the 166 was established in its new home. Combat targets were assigned and four aircraft were loaded and maintained on twenty four hour, five minute alert status.

51-9415 - Crashed, engine failure, 6nm SE of Etain AB, France, 30 JAN 62, no fatalities, ejected.

7121st Tactical Wing, 166 Tactical Fighter Sq, F-84Fs, 5 November 1961-15 July 1962 Twenty-

six aircraft assigned to the squadron. These Thunderstreaks were flown from Lockbourne AFB, OH to Etain AB, France by 166 TFSq pilots. These F-84Fs transferred to 366th TFWg and remained in France until July 1963, then were flown to Holloman AFB, NM.

On 30 Jan 1962, the 166 experienced its only aircraft loss during this period of activation. 1LT Wayne E. Sagar bailed out of his aircraft after encountering engine failure.

Two rotational gunnery exercises were conducted at Wheelas AFB, Libya, North Africa. The excellent weather and ranges at Wheelas provided the pilots with the training in air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons delivery necessary to maintain combat ready status. Weapons training was conducted from home base at the Suippes Range in France and the Siegenburg Range in Germany. Daily simulated close air support missions were flown throughout Germany in support of U.S. Army forces.

An interesting exchange program was conducted to better acquaint the 166 personnel with their allies of the German Air Force. Four F-84Fs with pilots and crew chiefs moved to Hopsten Air Base, Germany, while an equal number of German personnel and aircraft came to Etain and flew missions with the 166.

Two pilots from the 162nd Squadron, 1LT Oscar Clippard and 1Lt Harry Beasley were assigned to the 166 for the stay in France. Maj George E. Sites was assigned from 7th Army as the ground liaison officer.

The return from France was started in July 1962 and the last cargo plane arrived at Lockbourne on 9 August. The Air Force formed the 366th Wing to replace the returning guardsmen. All planes and equipment were turned over to the new wing. The Ohio men departed with only their personal equipment. Three squadron pilots remained in France and performed instructor duties for the 366th Wing. Capt Ken Potts and Capt Tom Caughell accepted career reserve status while 1LT Oberbeck signed a one year extension with the Air Force.

Prior to the squadrons arrival in Ohio, supply actions had been initiated to replace furniture and equipment left in France. F-100C were transferred from other Air Guard squadrons and the transition program was initiated.

Air National Guard units were reorganized under a Tactical Fighter Group concept. The fighter squadron was decreased to operations and intelligence functions.

A change in command took place in January 1963. LTC Hoover was named 121st Wing Commander, Maj Griffith 121st Group Commander and Major Rawlins 166 Squadron Commander. The squadron moved to Volk Field, Wisconsin for field training with its parent unit the 121st Group. This was the first occasion to conduct training away from the Wing Hq and other fighter units. The mission was to demonstrate the capability of the Group to conduct tactical operations plus all base support functions without outside assistance. The squadron completed qualification in their F-100 Super Sabres and were once again prepared to accept a

combat mission.

In 1964 the unit returned to Volk Field for field training and again was the only flying unit on base. The Wing Headquarters moved from Alpena, Michigan to spend the second week of training with the Lockbourne units.

In Mar 1965, the unit deployed to England AFB, LA for firing of AIM-9 missiles. Qualification in loading and firing the heat seeking air-to-air missile was a new requirement. The first missiles were fired by squadron pilots on 5 Mar 1965. Two weeks field training was conducted at home station with a weapons deployment to England AFB the second week.

August 1965, the 121st TFG/166 TFS was designated a "Beefbroth" priority unit. This resulted in authorization of 100% manning and equipping. Authorized weapons load crews increased from six to twelve crews. Aircrews were trained in air refueling with KC-135 in addition to their KC-97 operations. Over three hundred young men were recruited, a few were entered into Air Force Technical Schools while the majority were trained in their specialty at home station. The major training task was in the weapons area and SMSGT Frank Kunke was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for the excellent training accomplished by him and members of his section.

In March 1966, the 121st/166 was reporting a C-1 combat readiness status and the priority units were meeting Tactical Air Commands' commitments on contingency plans and exercises without activation.

On 3 Feb 1966, Cpt Joe W. Criswell successfully ejected from his F-100C south of Lockbourne AFB, after engine malfunction and failure. Field training was again conducted at Volk Field, WI.

In July 1966, twelve F-100 were deployed non-stop to Anchorage, Alaska for exercise "Gold Rush I." This was the first long range deployment with air refueling conducted by the unit. The six hour 30 minute flight was excellent training for overwater deployments in the future. On 5 December, five F-100 deployed to Camp Campbell, Ky for exercise "Eagle Prey." Live ordnance drops and simulated close air support missions were conducted in support of the Army's 101st Airborne Division in war games.

The unit continued to support Air Force exercises. In May 67 "Goblin Hunt" at Fort Campbell, Kentucky; March 67 "Game Cock," at Myrtle Beach, S.C. On 27 July 67, six F-100s deployed to Hickam AFB, Hawaii for "Coral Sands II," and amphibious exercise involving the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force. An overnight stop was made in Sacramento, California prior to the overwater flight. In-flight refueling was provided by KC-97s. This required rendezvous with two separate cells of tankers over the Pacific Ocean. The pilots gained valuable experience by delivering heavy live ordnance on the bombing range located on the island of Hawaii, and on the beach during the troop landing operation.

A new location was selected for field training in 1967. The unit moved to Otis AFB, MA Air

National Guard. The recreation facilities in the Cape Cod area proved excellent, the flying operations were limited due to extensive poor weather conditions.

On 22 Aug 1967, 2LT Edwin L. Rhodes, received fatal injuries in an accident while performing a close air support mission at Camp Campbell, Ky. This was the first fatal accident involving a 166 squadron pilot, while in Air National Guard status in seventeen and one half years.

The Lockbourne Guardsmen were prepared and had been expecting the call for two years. Mobilization processing was initiated the day before activation and completed on the first day of duty. The unit could have deployed twenty-four hours after reporting by activating the much practiced mobility plan. The decision was made to deploy regular Air Force F-4 squadrons to South Korea and the 121st/166 remained at home station for six months. During this six months period, the pilots were busy completing additional training. Capt Miller and McEntee ferried F-100 aircraft from Spain to Luke AFB. All pilots completed the TAC Sea Survival School at Homestead AFB, Fla and night bombing training at MacDill AFB, Fla. Some pilots attended the Fighter Weapons Orientation Course at Nellis AFB, Nevada and others the Forward Air Controllers School in Florida. For personnel other than aircrews it was difficult to justify the recall and remain at home station. The men wanted to go somewhere and do something.

Capt Jerry Fair was selected as TAC pilot of distinction for his performance in an aircraft emergency situation on a night refueling mission. 2LT Ruel H. Brown was fatally injured when his F-100 crashed south of Indianapolis on 8 Feb 1968.

On 25 June 1968, twenty five unit F-100 departed Lockbourne AFB, and arrived in Hawaii nine hours later. On the 26th they traveled to Guam and the 27th on to Kunsan Air Base, South Korea. The trip required a total of twenty two flying hours and thirteen air refuel-ings. All aircraft arrived on schedule and the entire operation was a picture of perfection. The very next morning after arrival, the 335th Squadron departed Kunsan and the 166 pilots assumed the alert commitments of the replaced unit. The 127th Fighter Squadron, Kansas ANG, arrived one week later to share the mission and base facilities.

The most serious problem for the Kansas and Ohio Squadrons was the lack of supplies. Aircraft parts and engines were going to high priority combat units in Vietnam. The mechanical condition of the aircraft deteriorated seriously. Early in 1969, the 354th Wing, composed of the two fighter squadrons, failed an ORI and four aircraft were lost as a result of engine failures. Successful bailouts were accomplished in all but one case. Capt Bob Yeager ejected from a 166 aircraft on 11 January. On 26 February, Capt Douglas Thorn was fatally injured in a takeoff accident. On 23 March, Capt Art Draut F-100 engine failed over the base and he made a successful flameout landing. On 27 February and 17 March pilots of the 127th squadron ejected successfully.

Three 166 Squadron pilots, Lt Col Griffith, Major Potts and Major McEntee accepted forty-five day TDY tours in Vietnam to fly combat missions with activated Air Guard Squadrons.

Eight pilots from other activated ANG squadrons were assigned to the 166 during the Korean tour; Capt Gardner and Cuthrell, Lt Thobe, and Riordan from New Mexico; Lt Callen from New Jersey; Lt Cook from the District of Columbia; Lt Sage from Colorado; and LtTylor from Iowa.

Air Force Unit Histories

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Sources

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