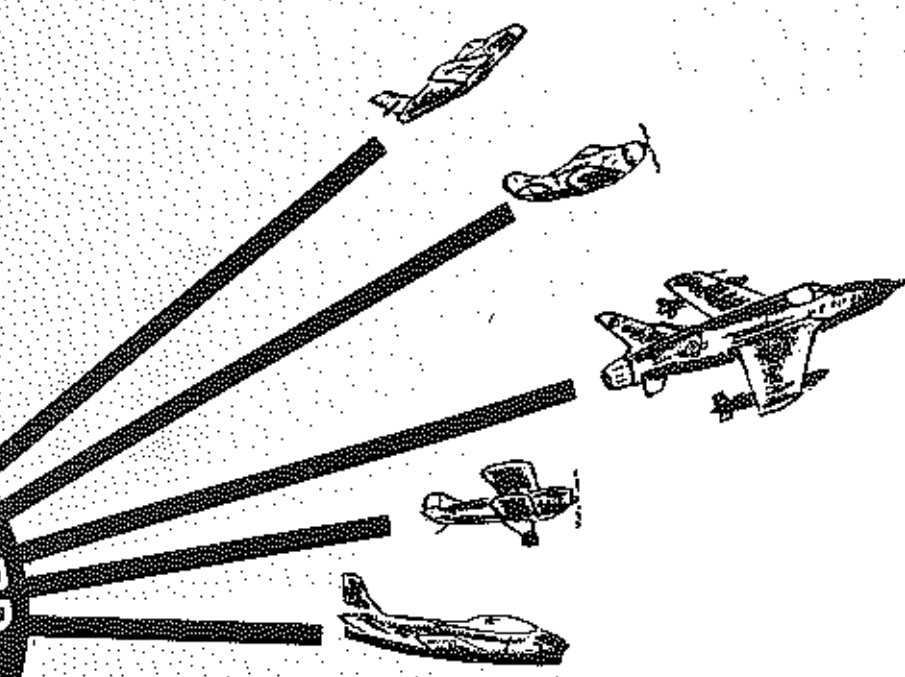




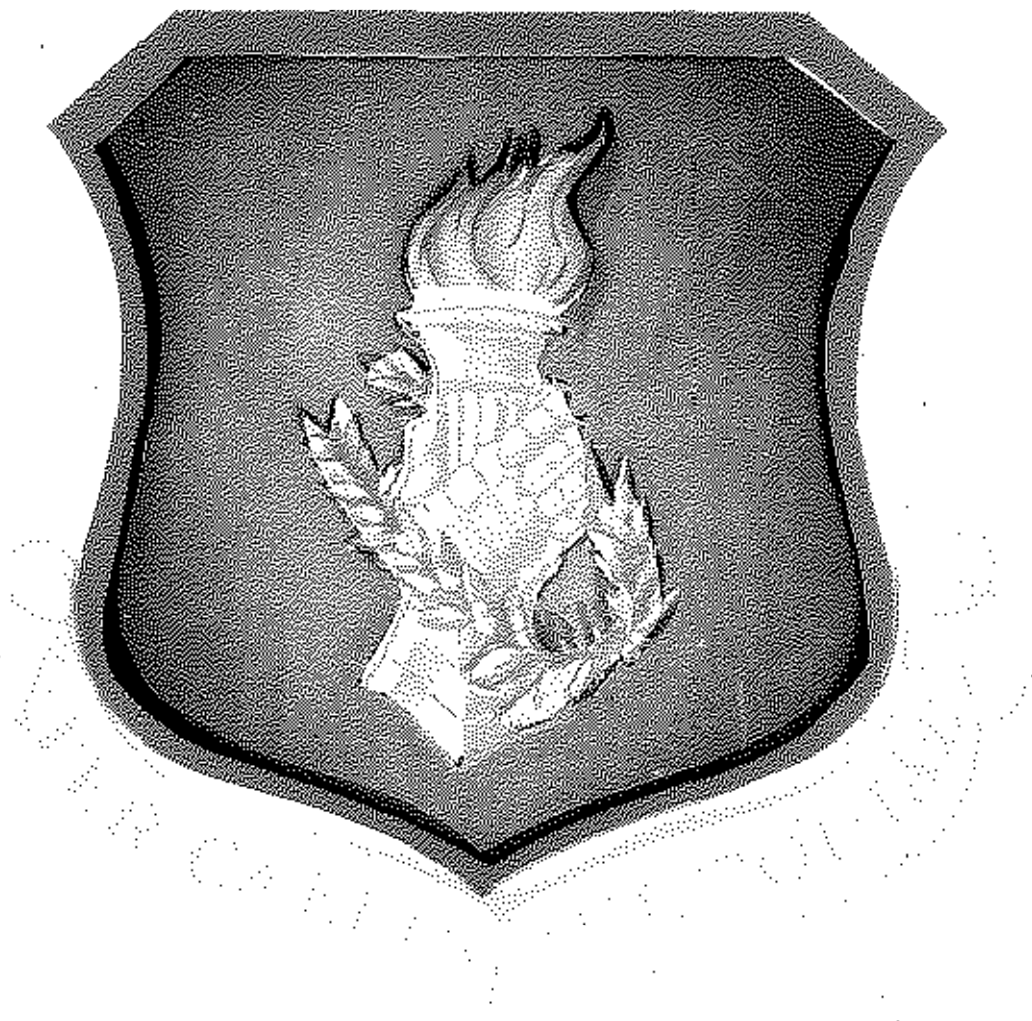
108th
TACTICAL FIGHTER WING

History



Jennies to Thunderchiefs

1964



108TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING

The blue is the color for the Air Force. The bordure of red symbolizes active participation in battle and combat. The Mail Fist is a symbol of strength and power, and like qualities are identified with the successful completion of the unit's mission. The torch, in flames, is a symbol of freedom and independence; the laurel wreath, a symbol of victory. Freedom, independence, and victory symbolically express the aims and accomplishment of the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing. The motto "Through the Skies to Victory" is appropriate for the unit.



119TH TAC FTR SQ



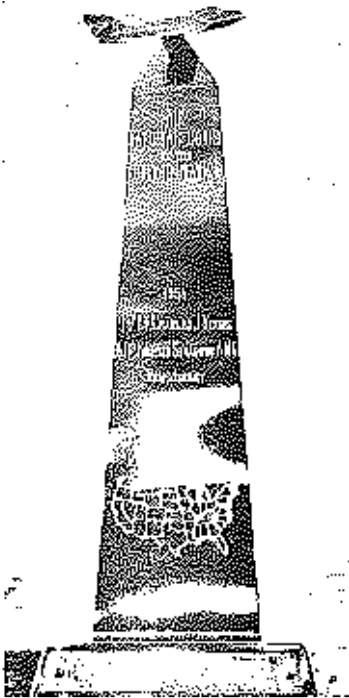
141ST TAC FTR SQ

149TH TAC FTR SQ



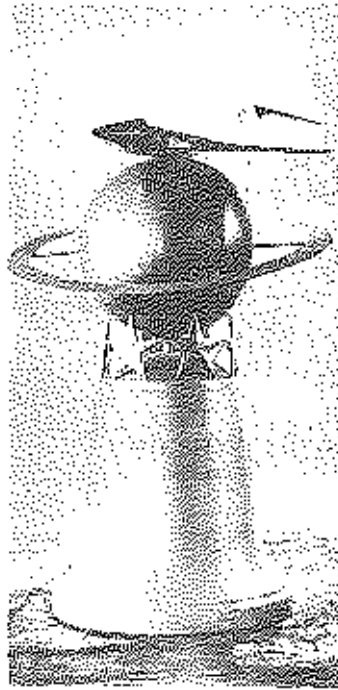
Honor Page

RICKS
MEMORIAL
RACE
TROPHY



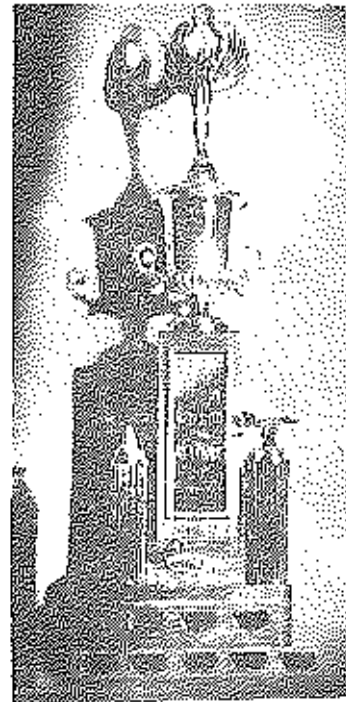
1954 1st Lt. Young
141st Ftr Bmr Sq

SPAATZ TROPHY



1949 119th Ftr Sq
1954 119th Ftr Intcp Sq
1959 141st Tac Ftr Sq

A N G
OPERATIONAL
READINESS
TROPHY



1959 141st Tac Ftr Sq

AIR FORCE
ASSOCIATION
TROPHY



1955 119th Ftr Bmr Sq
1960 141st Tac Ftr Sq

FIRST AF
FLYING SAFETY
AWARD

U S A F
FLYING SAFETY
AWARD



Jun 54 119th Ftr Bmr Sq
Jun 56 141st Ftr Intep Sq
Jun 61 141st Tac Ftr Sq

FIRST AIR FORCE



FLYING SAFETY AWARD

presented to members of the
FIRST FIGHTER-INTERCEPTION SQUADRON and the
NEW JERSEY AIR NATIONAL GUARD
in recognition of their achievement
in having flown 10000 accident-free
hours from 1 FEB 55 to 31 JUL 55

[Signature]
W. J. [Name]
Major General, USAF
Commander

Dec 54 119th Ftr Intep Sq
Dec 54 149th Bmr Sq
Jun 55 149th Bomb Sq
Jul 55 141st Ftr Intep Sq
Dec 55 149th Bomb Sq
Mar 56 149th Bomb Sq
Jun 56 119th Ftr Intep Sq
Mar 58 119th Ftr Intep Sq

HEADQUARTERS
SEVENTH ARMY
SCROLL OF APPRECIATION

Headquarters
Seventh Army



Scroll of Appreciation

is awarded to

awarded to all support or subordinate units for the excellent performance of service during the period December 1954 to June 1955. The selection of these units supports to Seventh Army and appreciation to members that were outstandingly in the success of the Air-Ground Team in Korea.

1955 010 800 of January 1956

[Signature]
W. J. [Name]
Major General, USAF
Commander

Jun 62 141st Tac Ftr Sq

CONAC
FLYING SAFETY
AWARD

CONTINENTAL AIR COMMAND



Continental Air Command
Recognition and Achievement

Flying Safety

141st Tactical Fighter Wing
17 MAY 62 - 16 MAY 63

Sep 56 108th Ftr Intep Wg
Sep 57 108th Ftr Intep Wg

TACTICAL AIR COMMAND
UNIT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Nov 60 - 61 141st Tac Ftr Sq
Jan 62 - 63 119th Tac Ftr Sq
May 62 - 63 141st Tac Ftr Sq

FOURTEENTH AIR FORCE
FLIGHT SAFETY AWARD



Mar 59 119th Tac Ftr Sq
Mar 60 141st Tac Ftr Sq

JERSEY JENNIES TO THUNDERCHIEFS

A lusty infant coughed on the sod and cindered runway of Newark Airport some thirty years ago as the Curtis JN4D's of the 44th Division Aviation started their Liberty engines. That infant has now grown to a maturity measured by the roar of the powerful jet engines of the Republic F-105B Thunderchiefs. From the isolated base at Newark Airport, the number of bases of the New Jersey Air National Guard has expanded to include, in addition, a portion of McGuire Air Force Base and the former Naval Air Station at Pomona, near Atlantic City. Even state lines have been crossed with the assignment of the 192nd Tactical Fighter Group of the Virginia Air National Guard as an integral part of the present-day Wing.

The proud tradition of the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, began with the organization, during September 1928, of the 119th Observation Squadron, Air Corps, New Jersey National Guard. It was at this time that First Lieutenant Kellogg Sloan and Sergeant Robert E. Maloney were assigned by the War Department to organize an aviation unit for the State of New Jersey. This action took place eight years after *New Jersey had been authorized aviation as a part of its defense forces*. The authority granted under the National Defense Act of 1920 was not exercised until 1927-28 because Jersey officials did not feel that the state could support the 44th Division Aviation as it should be.

The designation of this new aeronautical squadron as the 119th Observation Squadron permitted the perpetuation of the history and traditions of the then deactivated 119th Aero Squadron of World War I days.

A survey of every flying field, both in existence and contemplated, was made in order to permit the unit to establish itself in the best possible location. The availability of qualified personnel, suitable training facilities and accessibility to personnel had to be considered, and to this end an intensive survey was made of commissioned residents of New Jersey who held aeronautical ratings. Later, a large list of civilian and commercial pilots augmented the original list of prospects from the Air Reserve Section of the Organized Reserves. The selection of the Metropolitan Airport, Newark, New Jersey, culminated a chain of events with the leasing of a plot of ground, of less than four acres, from the City of Newark. The lease, held by the State of New Jersey, was to run for fifty years at an annual rental of One Dollar a year. First Lieutenant Sloan,

an Army Air Corps officer, was designated as Instructor-Inspector of the unit, and upon arrival in the State was commissioned a Major, Air Corps, New Jersey National Guard.

Work now commenced in earnest with the development of the Squadron's physical layout at Newark Airport. Building efforts were hampered by the nature of the site -- swampland, but a few inches above sea level. This made a finished grade of well above thirteen feet necessary. By June, 1929, however, it was possible to begin examination of the candidates for commissions, and during November enlistments were started. It was now only a matter of awaiting the day when enough buildings had been constructed and put into use to meet the requirements of an inspection for Federal Recognition. This accolade was bestowed on 30 January 1930. Recognized units included the 119th Observation Squadron, 119th Photo Section, and the Detachment, Medical Department, 44th Division Aviation. Thus was born the youngest and the last of the National Guard Aviation units authorized under the 1920 National Defense Act.

Federal Recognition brought with it a flow of aircraft, supplies, uniforms, and spare parts. During subsequent years, O-2H, O-17, O-38B, O-46A, O-47A, O-47B, O-52 and BC-1A aircraft made up the flying arm of the Aviation Section, 44th Division. The year 1932 saw the completion of a new hangar at Newark.

During the first months of 1930 a definite training schedule became operational as pilots were checked out in the aircraft and awarded their aeronautical ratings. In no time at all, the summer of 1930 was facing the unit, and it was ready -- and anxious -- to attend its first summer encampment. The 44th Division Aviation distinguished itself here, since it had only been a few months before that it had suffered the pangs of birth. Already it was ready to take part in summer field training. The word ready has never ceased to be a key word among the men and women of the New Jersey Air National Guard. The first encampment took place at the home base of Newark Airport due to lack of another suitable site. Following the first year, however, encampments were held at the Camp Dix flying field (now McGuire Air Force Base). By 1931, the training of the 119th had become so proficient that it was ordered to participate in co-operative missions with other branches of the National Guard, particularly the 112th Field Artillery, New Jersey National Guard, at Pine Camp, New York, and the 198th Coast Artillery, Delaware National Guard, at Bethany Beach, Delaware. Other missions in support of all arms of the troops at Sea Girt, New Jersey, were flown.

The end of infancy was signaled on 31 January 1931 with the retirement of the organization's first commander, Kellogg Sloan, in the grade

of Captain, United States Army. The reins of leadership were then passed to Major Robert L. Copsey, Air Corps, New Jersey National Guard, who had been serving as the organizations' Operations Officer. Under Copsey's guidance, the 44th Division Aviation progressed in training and accomplishment.

During 1931, the 119th Observation Squadron took an active part in the mass Air Corps Maneuvers, the First Army Maneuvers of 1935, 1939, and 1940. From the very beginning the squadron has also taken part in many humanitarian services beyond the call of military duty. The most notable of these was, perhaps, the Morro Castle disaster of 1934. Airplanes of the squadron flew, immediately after the first flash of news that a ship was burning off the Jersey Coast, directly to the scene and spent many hours assisting rescue ships in locating survivors, despite a low ceiling and rough seas. Many officers and men received high commendation for this work. Later during the winter of 1934, an airliner was lost in the Adirondack Mountains, and the 119th once again gave outstanding service in locating the survivors and in bringing them aid.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, officers and men of the 119th Observation Squadron took part in what the newspapers of the day called a "secret mission". During this time they aided in fighting a forest fire in the area of Lakewood, New Jersey. The entire squadron, with the exception of four officers and seven men, left for the fire with twenty-six motor vehicles, among them a mobile "gas-proof" communications and photographic trailer and a recently acquired 2,000 gallon gasoline trailer used to service planes in the field. This equipment, in addition, of course, to four of the squadron's observation planes piloted by Major Chester A. Charles, then Squadron Commander, and Captains Leon D. Hoffman, Earle W. Estelle, and Charles W. Yerkes.

The successful accomplishment of this mission stood the Jersey fliers in good stead for, during September 1939, the War Department directed the squadron into the field for an additional week of intensive gunnery training at the Cape May Naval Air Station, 24 - 30 November. Despite the freezing weather and great personal inconvenience, over ninety per cent of the squadron reported for duty, returning home at the end of a week during which every day was utilized for flying, and every type of mission flown by all rated personnel. An additional Armory drill per week for twelve weeks was also authorized during the period ending 1 March 1940.

A few months before the induction of the New Jersey National Guard into federal service for World War II, it was noted that the 44th Division Aviation had been built on solid ground.

No matter what may come, the squadron's founders and organizers built wisely and well. A heritage of brave and skillful deeds, a high tradition of service, and a strong sense of esprit de corps have been handed down to each new officer and recruit since the birth of the unit.

During 1932, the New Jersey Guard's Aviation units were honored with a visit from the famous aviatrix, Amelia Earhart Putnam. Visiting Newark Airport during June, the gallant lady of the skies declared a personal interest in the 44th Division Aviation and promised a return visit. She was interviewed on this occasion by a reporter for *The Observer*, a newspaper published by the 119th. On her way to accept the National Geographic Society Medal of Merit, Mrs. Putnam noted:

I have always been particularly interested in National Guard aviation and I would like very much to fly National Guard ships.

She also noted that her Washington, D. C. plans included a visit with Secretary of War, Hurley. "I'll get in a good word for National Guard aviation when I talk to him," she added with a smile.

Another frequent, well-known visitor to the air units of New Jersey during those pre-war days was Major General Hugh Drum, after whom the present-day Camp Drum has been named.

Prior to World War II, summer field training periods were held at Sea Girt, New Jersey with the parade ground serving as the airfield.

During June 1941, a co-operative mission was flown with the 44th Division at the A. P. Hill Reservation in Virginia, and during November and December of the same year, the squadron participated in the Carolina Maneuvers.

The 119th Observation Squadron was inducted into federal service on 16 September 1940, at the beginning of the pre-World War II mobilization. It was inactivated at Grenier Field, New Hampshire on 18 October 1942, and the personnel and equipment transferred to the 518th Bombardment Squadron (H). This organization was redesignated the 13th Anti-Submarine Squadron (H), during the following month, and assigned to the 25th Anti-Submarine Wing (H). By the time the United States Navy assumed the Anti-Submarine mission in 1943, the former New Jersey Guardsmen were scattered throughout the Air Force.

The lineage of the 119th Observation Squadron was transferred when it was redesignated the 490th Fighter Squadron on 15 August 1943. Then, during the following year, the 490th was disbanded at Punta Gorda Army Air Field, Florida, on 1 May. It was, however, reconstituted on the inactive list in June 1945, and again redesignated the 119th Fighter Squadron (SE) on 24 May 1946 and awarded battle credit for participation in the Anti-Submarine Campaign, in General Orders 85, War Department, 10 October 1945. Subsequently, in 1946, it was again allocated to New Jersey and returned to its old "home", the New Jersey Air National Guard.

Just as the 119th Observation Squadron had taken the designation and honors of a World War I Aero Squadron, so the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing was a redesignated World War II unit, the 348th Fighter Group. This Group was constituted on September 24, 1942 and activated on September 30 of the same year. They prepared for combat with P-47s and moved to the Southwest Pacific between May and June, 1943. Assigned to the Fifth Air Force, they operated from New Guinea and Noemfoor until November 1944. During this time, they flew patrol and reconnaissance missions, and escorted bombers to targets in New Guinea and New Britain.

Colonel Neel E. Kearby was awarded the Medal of Honor for action over New Guinea on October 11, 1943. After leading a flight of four fighters to reconnoiter the enemy base at Wewak, Colonel Kearby sighted a Japanese bomber formation escorted by more than 30 fighters. Despite the heavy odds and a low fuel supply, and although his mission had been accomplished, Kearby ordered an attack, personally destroying six of the enemy planes. For covering Allied landings and supporting ground forces on New Britain, December 16-31, 1943, the group was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation. In 1944, they began to attack airfields, installations and shipping in Western New Guinea, Ceram, and Halmahera to aid in neutralizing those areas preparatory to the United States invasion of the Philippines in November 1944. After moving to the Philippines in November 1944, the group provided cover for convoys, flew patrols, escorted bombers, attacked enemy airfields, and supported ground forces. They received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for withstanding assaults by enemy fighters to cover bombers raiding Clark Field, P. I., on Christmas Eve, 1944. They also attacked shipping along the China Coast and escorted bombers to Formosa and the Asiatic mainland. Moved to the Ryukyus in July 1945, and completed some escort and attack missions to Kyushu before the war ended. Moved to Japan in October 1945, as a part of the Far East Air Forces where the group served until it was inactivated on May 10, 1946.

While it was inactivated, the 348th Fighter Group was redesignated the 108th Fighter Group and, on May 24, 1946 it was allotted to the New Jersey Air National Guard.

The first post-war Air National Guard unit was organized in 1946, and federally recognized on 31 October. This was the Headquarters, 108th Fighter Group. On 20 January next, the 119th Fighter Squadron, 119th Weather Station, 119th Utility Flight, and Detachment "B" of the 208th Air Service Group, were federally recognized at Newark Airport. Two years later, on 26 May 1949, the 141st Fighter Squadron and Detachment "A" of the 208th Air Service Group, were activated at Mercer Airport, Trenton.

During 1950, the 119th Fighter Squadron was awarded the coveted Spaatz Trophy as the outstanding squadron of its Wing. This trophy was awarded on a regional basis, one to each of the then existent twelve Air National Guard Wings. The keen competition was based chiefly on the score attained in an "Operational Readiness Test", conducted by a team of Regular Air Force officers assigned by Headquarters, United States Air Force. An excerpt from the inspection report indicates the high standards maintained by the 119th:

It is desired to commend this unit on its spirit. They are proud of their unit and cooperation between sections is outstanding. It is the opinion of this ORT Team that this is an exceptionally good Air National Guard unit.

New Jersey activated its own combat Wing which was federally recognized on 1 November 1950. This was the 108th Fighter Wing. At the same time, the 208th Air Service Group Headquarters and Detachments, and Utility Flights of the 119th and 141st Squadrons were inactivated. The 108th Fighter Wing included the 108th Fighter Group, 108th Air Base Group, 108th Maintenance and Supply Group, and the 108th Medical Group. The 119th and 141st Fighter Squadrons were reorganized, augmented and continued in assignment to the Fighter Group.

On June 27, 1950 the North Korean forces crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded the Republic of Korea. Air National Guard units, as a result of the emergency created by this aggression, began to receive orders for active federal service, and, on 1 March 1951 the 108th received its orders. All of the New Jersey Air National Guard Units were included in this directive, except the 119th Fighter Squadron and the 119th Weather Station. These remained at Newark Airport in State Air National Guard status.

The first active duty station for the 108th Fighter Wing was Turner Air Force Base, Albany, Georgia. There, on 15 March 1951, the Wing was augmented by the assignment of the 149th Fighter Squadron, Virginia Air National Guard, and by the 153d Fighter Squadron, Mississippi Air

National Guard. The Wing continued to be equipped at this time with F47 "Thunderbolt" aircraft.

The Wing was now a part of the Strategic Air Command, and again reorganization confronted the 108th. It was assigned the primary mission of fighter-escort, and was designated as the 108th Fighter-Bomber Wing. This, however, was not the end of the pilgrimage of the 108th. On 16 November 1951, the 108th Fighter-Bomber Wing was transferred from SAC to the Tactical Air Command, and was moved from Turner Air Force Base to Godman Air Force Base, Fort Knox, Kentucky.

A new mission was assigned to the Wing at the same time as the change of assignment. This was the tactical responsibility of providing air support for the foot soldier. Once again, a period of reorganization confronted the 108th Fighter-Bomber Wing in converting from the SAC organization to the "standard" combat wing structure. While assigned to TAC, the fighter units of the Wing participated in Exercise Longhorn as the Aggressor Air Force. In addition, numerous fire power demonstrations were conducted for the ground forces over various Army installations.

The arrival of 1 December 1952 heralded the return of the 108th Fighter-Bomber Wing to the State of New Jersey and on 1 July 1955, the designation was again changed, this time to the 108th Fighter-Interceptor Wing. The same day that saw the return of the Wing to the State, marked the designation of a new Commander, Colonel (now Brigadier General) Donald J. Strait, the present Commander. The new commander had first joined the unit as an airman during January 1940.

Word of a double honor reached the 119th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron on 29 May 1955, when notification arrived that the unit had been awarded the Spaatz Trophy once again, and in addition, was to be the recipient of the Air Force Association Trophy, symbolic of the best squadron in the Air National Guard for the year 1954.

A new addition to the 108th arrived with the activation of the 150th Air Transport Squadron (Medium) (Air Evacuation) on 1 February 1956. This unit was assigned to the 108th Fighter-Interceptor Wing for training, operations, supply and administration. The 150th was redesignated as the 150th Aeromedical Transport Squadron (Light) on 1 February 1957 with no change in mission. This unit was reorganized on 10 October 1958 and assigned on 1 November 1958, to the 106th Aeromedical Transport Group, Floyd Bennett Field, New York, for training in channels of control and for mobilization. Aircraft used by this transport squadron were C46 and, with the designation of "Acro-Medical Transport", C-119J "Flying Boxcars". In 1963 this organization transitioned into C-121 Super Constellations and began to fly world-wide missions under assignments from

the Military Air Transport Service (MATS).

The fighter elements of the 108th Fighter-Interceptor Wing transitioned from F51 "Mustang" aircraft into F-86E "Sabrejets", during the summer field training session of 1955. The same year the New Jersey Air National Guard celebrated its 25th Anniversary while on field training, at Otis Air Force Base, Massachusetts.

During the Fall of 1957, the 108th Maintenance and Supply Group and the 108th Air Base Group moved from Newark Airport to join the 141st Fighter Squadron at McGuire Air Force Base, and they were followed on 1 September 1958, by the Wing Headquarters. This movement left the facility at Newark Airport occupied only by the 150th Aeromedical Transport Squadron, the 108th Tactical Hospital and the 119th Weather Flight. The 108th Tac Hospital moved to McGuire on 1 November 1960.

The McGuire Air Force Base accommodations for the Air National Guard included a modern headquarters building, containing a fully equipped dispensary; a supply building; motor pool, and a modern hangar, as well as other administrative and supply buildings. Messing and billeting facilities are also in use at the McGuire Air National Guard Base.

Prior to movement of the Wing Headquarters to McGuire Air Force Base, the 119th Tactical Fighter Squadron moved from that base to the former Naval Air Station at Pomona.

In 1958 two redesignations took place that affected the Wing. On 26 February the Wing and tactical elements were redesignated from Fighter-Interceptor to Fighter-Interceptor (Day)(Special Delivery). This new name reflected the new nuclear mission assigned to the New Jersey Air National Guard, and its mobilization assignment to the Tactical Air Command. The 401st Tactical Fighter Wing, England Air Force Base, Louisiana, became the Advisory Unit to the 108th in connection with the new mission.

Major General Chester A. McCarty, then Commander of 12th Air Force, visited the Wing during summer encampment at Otis Air Force Base in 1958, and again during 1959. While making these visits, Major General McCarty impressed on the Wing personnel their importance to the TAC mission. When visiting for the second time, the General was accompanied by his entire staff.

The 149th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (D) (SD), Virginia Air National Guard, was assigned to the 108th Fighter-Interceptor Wing on 14 June 1958, and joined the Wing at Otis Air Force Base for field training.

Many of the officers and airmen from the Old Dominion squadron were not strangers to the 108th for, as mentioned previously, the Virginians had served with the Jerseymen during the Korean Conflict. When first assigned to the Garden State Wing, the 149th was equipped with B-26, twin engine, propeller-driven, aircraft. These were replaced by F-84F "Thunderstreaks", with which the entire 108th was by this time equipped.

Assignment of the nuclear mission and F84F aircraft necessitated a period of rigorous transition from the F86E and training in delivery of the nuclear weapon. This involved the spectacular "over-the-shoulder" delivery, toss bombing, and dive bombing, most of which was new to the Jersey pilots. New maintenance programs were worked out where necessary, and the transition to the new aircraft and mission were accomplished without setback to unit operations. The cooperation of the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing was especially helpful during this critical period.

The final redesignation of the unit was made on 10 November 1958, when it was dubbed the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing (Daylight) (Special Delivery).

During 1959 the Wing scored extremely high in an Air Force Operational Readiness Test, and won the National Guard Association award for the most operationally ready F-84F outfit of all Air National Guard organizations similarly equipped in the nation. Several flying safety awards were received by units of the Wing, and a Wing Commander's Flying Safety Plaque was established as an award within the Wing to further stimulate flying safety consciousness.

Three Major projects in which the 108th was involved during 1959 and 1960, were reorganization of two of the Bases, participation in Operation Dark Cloud/Pine Cone II, and in Operation Seawall.

The first of these projects required reorganization of fighter units at McGuire Air Force Base, and at Atlantic City, to conform with Tactical Air Command specifications, and bring the Air Guard operations closer than ever to its M-Day gaining command.

Operation Dark Cloud/Pine Cone II afforded the Jersey Air Guardsmen the opportunity of participating in a full-scale mock brush-fire war of the type in which they would probably be involved should the "balloon go up". New Jersey furnished over thirty-five officers and airmen to Headquarters, Air National Guard Tactical Air Force at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and to the Echo Air Division, Congaree Air Force Base, South Carolina. Among these were the Echo Air Division Commander, Supply Officer, Information Officer, and the Air National Guard Tactical

Air Force Sergeant Major. Aircraft from all three of the 108th's Tactical Fighter Squadrons were placed at the disposal of maneuver commander.

One of the operations of importance to the overall national defense in which the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing (SD) participated in 1960, was Operation Seawall. This joint Air Force, Air National Guard, Army, and Navy exercise was designed to test the capabilities of seaward radar extensions and defense installations of the East Coast. During this maneuver New Jersey aircraft, both F-84F's and C-119J's, operated from Kindley Air Force Base, Bermuda.

Field Training 1961 brought a change of scene to the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing. Instead of traveling to Otis Air Force Base, personnel were airlifted to the Permanent Field Training Site at Travis Field, Savannah, Georgia. There the Wing took over operation of an entire Air Base for the first time since being on active duty during the Korean Conflict.

It was at Savannah that word first came of the worsening crisis in Berlin. When President John F. Kennedy made his historic address of July 25, 1961, members of the Wing were gathered around television and radio sets at the Georgia base. Mention of planned recall of "certain Air National Guard tactical fighter squadrons" brought home to the Guardsmen that they would probably be included in the partial mobilization. It was only a matter of days until the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing was designated a "priority unit" and all personnel "frozen" in their jobs.

With October 1, 1961 set as "M-Day," recruiting began in earnest. Extra training assemblies were authorized as the Wing began to prepare for its active role in defense of the free world. Newspaper stories hinted that the soon-to-be mobilized Air National Guardsmen would be assigned to overseas duty, and everyone pitched in to prepare for whatever job to which they might be assigned.

Sunday, October 1, 1961 was M-Day. Mobilization Ceremonies took place in the Base Gymnasium, McGuire Air Force Base, during which the Wing Commander, Brigadier General Donald J. Strait, addressed the newly federalized Air Guardsmen; messages were read from the Governor of New Jersey, Robert B. Meyner, and from The Chief of Staff New Jersey, Major General James F. Cantwell.

Now known as "former Air Guardsmen", members of the 108th settled down to a full work schedule to meet their readiness date of November First. Their destination was still classified, but shortly before departure of the advance party, all personnel were called together by the

Wing Commander, Brig Gen Strait, and told they were headed for Chaumont Air Base, Haute-Marne, France.

Two weeks after M-Day, an advance detachment headed by Colonel Joseph D. Zink, Commander of the 108th Air Base Group, was airlifted from McGuire Air Force Base to Chaumont. By early November all of the officers and men slated for foreign service were on the job in France.

During deployment of the main body, twenty-six F-84F aircraft of the 141st Tactical Fighter Squadron led by Brig Gen Strait, paved the way for other units assigned to "Operation Stair Step", as this movement had been labeled. This deployment of tactical aircraft was accomplished by "island hopping" in a highly efficient manner which demonstrated excellent leadership, planning, and aircrew proficiency. One innovation utilized in accomplishing this long over-water flight were 12 inch wooden blocks. In order to increase the amount of fuel carried onboard the F84F a project was set up to discover a method of packing the maximum amount of fuel aboard each aircraft. After considerable research and testing, it was determined that if the main gear of the aircraft were to be placed on 12 inch wooden blocks while refueling, the capacity of the 450 gallon drop tanks, plus additional capacity made available in the internal tanks, raised the total fuel load to between 9850 and 9950 pounds. Four sets of blocks were manufactured and shipped to Harmon Air Force Base, Newfoundland, where they were used not only by the 141st Tactical Fighter Squadron, but all other "Stair Step" deploying squadrons.

Chaumont Air Base had been on a stand-by status for some two years prior to arrival of the Jersey Air Guardsmen. Despite shortages of personnel and equipment, the Guardsmen quickly adapted themselves to their new environment and began rehabilitation of the Base.

Upon arrival in France, deployed elements of the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing were redesignated the 7108th Tactical Wing, with Colonel Joseph D. Zink in Command.

Pilots were faced with a challenge in their new flying environment. European weather conditions were not the best, nor were they familiar with the radically different air traffic control systems, limited airspace for training, and the extremely high density of air traffic. Their adaptation to these conditions was accomplished in a short time, and with an exceptional safety record. When training was hampered by weather and lack of adequate range facilities, a training detachment was established at the USAFE Weapons Center, Wheelus Air Force Base, Lybia.

The 7108th quickly developed a combat capability that was

unsurpassed by any similar unit in USAFE. This was demonstrated and proved in February, 1962, when a "no-notice" tactical evaluation was held by Headquarters, 17th Air Force. The Wing showed an outstanding ability to perform its war-time mission. For this, the Jerseymen were awarded the highest possible rating. This performance was of such a high caliber that the 17th Air Force Evaluation Team recommended that other "Stair Step" units visit the 7108th to review their methods of operation.

The following month, March, the 7108th participated in a "no-notice" Operational Readiness Inspection conducted by Headquarters, USAFE. The overall evaluation of the unit was satisfactory and the Wing was judged to be fully capable of accomplishing the war-time mission. All units of the Wing and staff agencies, as well as the detachment at Wheelus. A combat capability of "C-1" was achieved and maintained by the Wing.

Despite bad flying weather encountered during most of the active duty period, aircraft of the 141st Tactical Fighter Squadron flew a total of 2811 sorties and 5938 F-84F flying hours.

In addition to the outstanding accomplishment of its tactical mission, members of the 7108th developed an outstanding relationship with the local populace, stressing friendship, understanding, and mutual respect, this Wing set a high standard of activities, including many public and private functions, and laid great emphasis upon community relationships. Success of this program is evidenced in many visits of officers and airmen to the homes of local residents, and by an incident rate which was almost non-existent. Members of the Wing who resided in local civilian communities were fully accepted by the permanent residents. When the stay in France came to an end, many of the French expressed sincere regret. Many lifetime friendships had been formed prior to redeployment and have been carried on through correspondence up to the present time.

During the ten month, twenty day period of active duty, members of the 7108th participated in seven major exercises as a part of NATO, USAFE, and 17th Air Force. ¹

¹ Cabin Cruiser, Indian Summer (January 1962), Long Thrust II, Big Stick (February 1962), Operation Grand Slam, Indian Summer (April 1962) and Big Stick (April 1962).

The 7108th Tactical Wing redeployed to McGuire Air Force Base during July and August 1962. Control of Chaumont Air Base passed to the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing, reactivated by USAF to replace the Air National Guard units, on July 15, 1962. All unit aircraft and most of the equipment transported to Chaumont during the deployment was transferred to the 366th.

When the units had deployed to Chaumont Air Base, France, the Headquarters, 108th Tactical Fighter Wing, remained at McGuire Air Force Base. Since no aircraft were assigned to the Wing Headquarters, all pilots were attached to the 119th Tactical Fighter Squadron for flying.

A Command Post for the Wing was maintained in Wing Operations. All flights of aircraft assigned to the 119th and 149th Tactical Fighter Squadrons were monitored from that place. In addition, "hot lines" were maintained to the Command Posts of 9th Air Force and Tactical Air Command.

Enroute support was furnished by the Wing Command Post to aircraft of the 110th Tactical Fighter Squadron of St. Louis, Missouri, and the 106th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron of Birmingham, Alabama, during operation "High Top". These F84F and RF84F aircraft arrived at McGuire AFB while enroute from European bases to home stations.

Brigadier General Donald J. Strait, Wing Commander, and Colonel Francis R. Gerard, Deputy Wing Commander, performed special duties from time to time for Headquarters, Tactical Air Command, during the period of active duty.

Wing facilities at McGuire Air Force Base underwent major improvement during the unit's tour of active duty. These involved improvement of dining hall facilities, rehabilitation of converted World War II buildings, as well as aircraft maintenance facilities, and the Tactical Hospital.

The 119th Tactical Fighter Squadron remained at its home station, the National Aviation Facilities Experimental Center, Pomona, New Jersey. Commanded by Major Wesley Hannon, the 119th was placed on a "standby deployment status" while continuing normal training.

Ready for any sudden deployment, the 119th assisted in the overseas deployment of other 108th units in monitoring traffic, flight planning, T33A ferrying, and providing an F84F advisor in the airborne command post, a C-135 patrolling the deployment route.

Each 119th pilot received at least one Standardization/Evaluation flight during the year, and the squadron scored satisfactorily on a "no-notice" ORI by a Tactical Air Command IG Team.

After activation the 119th assumed responsibility for the control and operation of Warren Grove Gunnery Range. During this period, the range was improved considerably -- new strafing targets were developed, a new dive bombing area was cleared and a bunker built for skip-bombing operations.

The 149th Tactical Fighter Squadron was also stationed at home base, Byrd Field, Sandston, Virginia. Unit Commander at the time of mobilization was Major Benjamin F. Armstrong. On March 5, 1962, the Commander was appointed Assistant Director of Operations, Headquarters, 108th Tactical Fighter Wing. He was succeeded in command of the 149th by Major Bernard J. Hughes, a flight commander from the 119th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

Several pilots of the 149th attended advanced F84F training at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, and others the Air Force school for Forward Air Controllers.

During the active duty period, Captain William P. Lemmond scored 100% in strafing from an F84F. According to reliable sources, this may have been the first time such a score had been achieved.

Both the 119th and 149th participated in several major exercises conducted by Headquarters, Tactical Air Command, and by joint commands, including the new STRICOM. During one of these, at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, the 119th participated in an Armed Forces Power Display for the late President John F. Kennedy.²

When they were placed in "standby deployment status" the units were faced with a unique training problem. They had been training for *delivery of special weapons*. Now, with the development of the "limited war" concept, it became necessary to qualify with conventional weapons as well, and be equally ready to support a conventional or nuclear

² Both units participated in Trail Brake, Red Hills, Trackdown, Quick Kick, and Clear Lake. In addition, the 119th assisted in Operation Eglin 1-62, Mesa Drive and Mission 5-20-63. The 149th took part in Banyan Tree and Shock Wave, in addition to those first mentioned.

strike force. By the end of the active duty period, aircrews and support personnel of both units were fully qualified for both types of mission.

During the year of full-time duty, several groups of pilots took part in aircrew rotational assignments to European bases, including Chaumont, where overseas elements of the 108th were deployed.

On August 17, 1962, demobilization ceremonies consisting of a review honoring the officers and airmen of the 108th was held at McGuire Air Force Base.

Governor Richard J. Hughes of New Jersey was the principle speaker at the ceremony as he welcomed back the fighter wing personnel from Chaumont Air Base, France.

Brief remarks were made by Major General Winston P. Wilson, then Deputy Chief of the National Guard Bureau; Major General James F. Cantwell, The Chief of Staff, New Jersey Department of Defense; and Mr. John Lang, Deputy for Reserve and ROTC Affairs for the Secretary of the Air Force.

During the ceremony, Major General Albert Clark, Director of Military Personnel, Headquarters, USAF, presented the Legion of Merit to Colonel Joseph D. Zink, former Commander of the 7108th Tactical Wing, Chaumont Air Base, France. The award was presented for exceptional meritorious service to the United States while a commander overseas. It is interesting to note that General Clark was, himself, a one-time commander of Chaumont Air Base.

The 108th was officially returned to Governor Hughes and Air National Guard status under State control by Brigadier General Frederic C. Gray, Assistant Director of Plans, Headquarters, Tactical Air Command.

Similar reviews took place at Atlantic City honoring the 119th Tactical Fighter Squadron, and at Sandston, Virginia, honoring the 149th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

Once more in Air National Guard status, the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing was faced with the task of complete rebuilding. Only 25,000 pounds of unit equipment had been returned from Europe out of 440 tons of supplies and equipment transported to Chaumont. To complete re-equipping of the unit it was necessary to secure over 6000 line items with an expenditure of over \$245,000.

Since all of the F-84F aircraft had been retained by USAFE, all

aircrews had to begin T-33 proficiency flying, and conversion to F-86H aircraft.

During the seven month period following release from active duty the 108th assisted the regular establishment on two occasions. One was "Sea Wall", an Air Defense Command exercise during which six F-86H aircraft flew penetration tracks from Kindley Air Force Base, Bermuda to the East Coast of the United States. The other was "Operation Daily Double".

"Daily Double" involved deployment of the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing from Chaumont Air Base, France, to Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico. All scheduled operations of the 108th at McGuire were cancelled as facilities and personnel were placed at the disposal of Tactical Air Command. Of particular interest to Jersey Air Guardsmen who assisted in this operation is the fact that included in the seventy-nine F-84F aircraft were those they had left behind upon return of the 7108th to McGuire.

Organization of the 108th under the modified "double deputy" concept was accomplished late in 1962 and early 1963. This reorganization resulted in several unit redesignations. Headquarters, 108th Tactical Fighter Wing is based at McGuire Air Force Base (Brigadier General Donald J. Strait, Commander), along with the 108th Tactical Fighter Group (Colonel Francis R. Gerard, Commander). Subordinate units of the 108th Tactical Fighter Group are: 141st Tactical Fighter Squadron, 108th Combat Support Squadron (TF), 108th Materiel Squadron (TF), and the 108th Tactical Hospital. All of these units are based at McGuire AFB, New Jersey.

At the New Jersey Air National Guard Base, Atlantic City, is the 177th Tactical Fighter Group (Colonel Joseph D. Zink, Commander). Subordinate units at this base are the 119th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 177th Combat Support Squadron (TF), 177th Materiel Squadron (TF), and the 177th USAF Dispensary.

Byrd Field, Sandston, Virginia, the third base housing units of the 108th, is the home of the 192nd Tactical Fighter Group, Virginia Air National Guard (Major Benjamin F. Armstrong, Commander). Assigned to this Group are the 149th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 192nd Combat Support Squadron (TF), 192nd Materiel Squadron (TF), and the 192nd USAF Dispensary.

Several expressions of appreciation and awards were bestowed on the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing and its personnel during and

following the period of active duty.

On November 14, 1961, General Walter Sweeney, Commander of TAC, commended the unit for the "safe and professional manner" by which the deployment to Chaumont was completed. This message concluded, "Congratulations for a job exceptionally well done."

The Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, General Curtis E. LeMay, congratulated the members of the 108th at the time of their demobilization for their "outstanding contribution to the defense of our country during the past year. . . My thanks to each of you for a job well done."

General Truman H. Landon, Commander - In - Chief, United States Air Forces in Europe, in a letter to the 7108th Commander, on July 16, 1962, spoke of the work of the New Jersey Air National Guardsmen:

In common with the Commander in the United States Air Force, I am aware of the personal sacrifices which you have made in leaving civilian occupations and families to provide protection to our nation and the free world during a very serious threat from the Communist Bloc. . . You and your subordinates have demonstrated once again the response of free but disciplined citizens to a call of duty. . . I hope each of you will express my personal appreciation to your family, and to your employer, for this demonstration of duty and dedication.

General Sweeney's message at the time of inactivation noted that "you were called to active duty to bolster the regular forces to prevent aggression and to preserve the freedom of the world. Through your professional skill and dedicated performance, you accomplished the mission. The American people can well be proud of your significant and historical contribution to free world defense."

Eugene M. Zuckert, Secretary of the Air Force, added his commendation to those of other senior commanders of the Air Force on August 13, 1962, when he wrote of "the important part you played in strengthening the defense posture of our nation during a most critical period. . . Your responsiveness and effectiveness were convincing proof of your ability to respond to any requirement of our national defense."

Headquarters, Seventh Army, the organization to which the 141st Tactical Fighter Squadron lent air support in Europe, awarded a Scroll

of Appreciation to that squadron. Signed by Lt. General John C. Oakes, Seventh Army Commander, the Scroll was awarded "for providing close air support in an outstanding and professional manner for the combat elements of Seventh Army during the period 1 December 1961 to June 1962. The mission of close air support to Seventh Army was performed in a manner that contributed materially to the success of the Air-Ground Team in Europe."

Operation Daily Double, by which the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing deployed from Europe, brought another accolade to the 108th. The Commander, Tactical Air Command, stated that the deployment "was made possible primarily through the outstanding cooperation and efforts of personnel at the enroute bases and by units supporting the movement. I wish to personally commend Brigadier General Donald J. Strait, Commander, 108th Tactical Fighter Wing, McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, for his significant contribution to the support of the 366th Wing. It is particularly noteworthy that General Strait cancelled all scheduled operations of the 108th in order to insure a highly successful deployment of the 366th. This spirit of cooperation is indeed gratifying and indicates to me once again the "can do" spirit of our ANG."

A Standardization Evaluation was conducted by the 4450th Standardization/Evaluation Group between October 10 and 17, 1963. In the written examination on all phases of F-86H operation, eleven pilots present for duty answered the 100 questions with passing grades. The average test score was 97%. All other areas of examination were rated satisfactory, except one which was rated outstanding.

The Tactical Air Command Unit Achievement Award was made by the Commander, TAC, to the 141st Tactical Fighter Squadron for their operations between May 17, 1962 and May 16, 1963. This was bestowed "in recognition of a distinguished Flight Safety record. Through professional performance, knowledge and devotion to duty, the members of this unit have materially contributed to the accomplishment of the Command's mission and have reflected great credit on the Command and the USAF."

The 108th Tactical Fighter Group flight line will soon be the home of some 20 Republic F-105 Thunderchiefs -- capable of speeds of over 1500 miles per hour -- Mach 2, in the Air Force parlance.

The first aircraft was formally presented by USAF officials to Brigadier General Donald J. Strait, Commander of the Garden State's 108th Tactical Fighter Wing, in April 1964. Ceremonies turning over the F-105s included participation by high-ranking military and civilian officials, both state and federal. A mural, depicting Republic aircraft

used by the 108th in its 34 years of history, was unveiled at that time and presented by Mr. Mundy Peale, President of Republic Aviation Corporation. The mural was painted by Mario Donaudy, a professional artist associated with Republic Aviation.

The advent of a weapons system such as the F-105 in the New Jersey Air National Guard brought with it major conversion projects. This single-engine aircraft has more systems installed than the B-52 bomber. Reorganization of operational procedures, training of ground crews, re-training of pilots, and conversion of existing and construction of new facilities have been taking place for some time.

The ANG Hangar will soon be rewired to handle heavier voltage and workloads. An engine shop will be constructed to support the increased workloads generated by the J-75 engine. A permanent location for the F-105 Mobile Training Unit has been provided in a converted warehouse. Complete re-warehousing has been accomplished and the building will be given additional lighting improvement. F-105 supplies have been flowing into the Air Guard Base in an endless stream and supply personnel are doing a great job in meeting this tremendous workload.

Receipt of the first aircraft brought a flurry of activity. Maintenance docks must be re-designed and training on the actual aircraft commenced for maintenance personnel. Re-establishing shops has been a major project in view of the increased complexity of the F-105.

Eight civilian technical representatives are on hand to provide factory assistance -- five from Republic, one from General Electric, one from Pratt & Whitney, and a specialist from Bendix auto-pilot.

There are nearly 1200 test items involved in the operation and maintenance of this \$5 million aircraft -- two test items alone have a value of \$250,000.

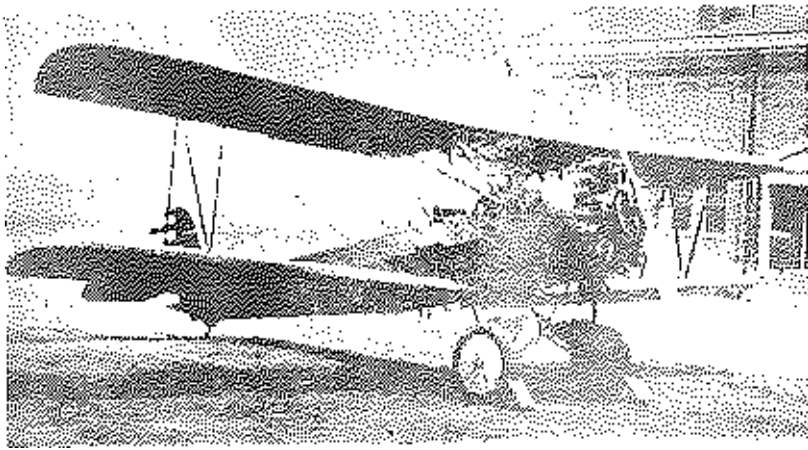
Ground school for the training of the first instructor pilots has just ended, and six pilots, including General Strait, a "double ace from World War II," travelled to Seymour Johnson AFB, N. C., for entry into the flying phase of transition. Seymour Johnson AFB is the home of the 4th Tactical Fighter Wing, the Regular Air Force Advisory unit to the 108th.

Of special significance to the whole F-105 program here is the fact that the citizen-airmen of the New Jersey Air National Guard are the first Air Guardsmen to receive this type of fighter bomber. Once

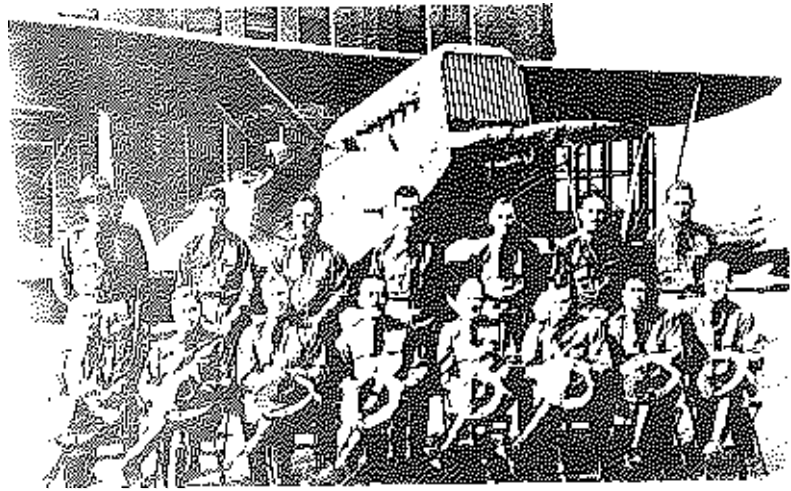
the unit has completely transitioned into these aircraft, the 108th will be on an equipment and operational par with the most modern active duty regular Air Force units. As such it will play a more significant role as a part of the Tactical Air Command aerospace team.

This has been but a brief resume of the highlights in the history of the New Jersey Air National Guard. To say more would require volumes. The 108th Tactical Fighter Wing is a proud unit, with a proud history. The record was made possible only with the help, interest, and cooperation of every officer and airman who has ever been a part of the unit.

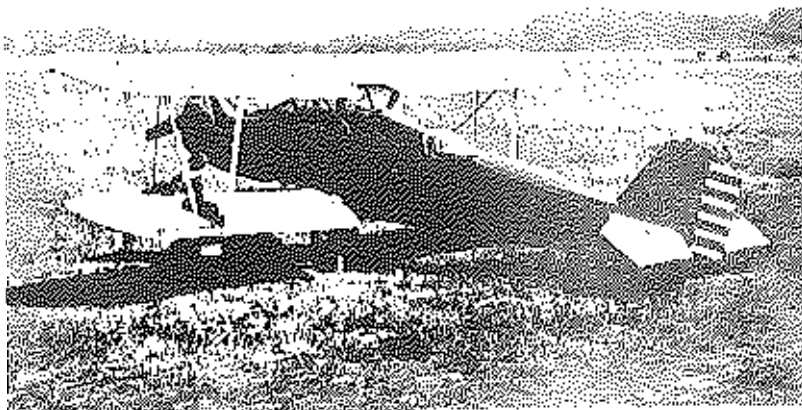
Jerseymen do not rest on past laurels, but continuously look for new fields of challenge so that they may continue to roar "through the skies to victory", in the service of State and Nation.



O-17



O-2H

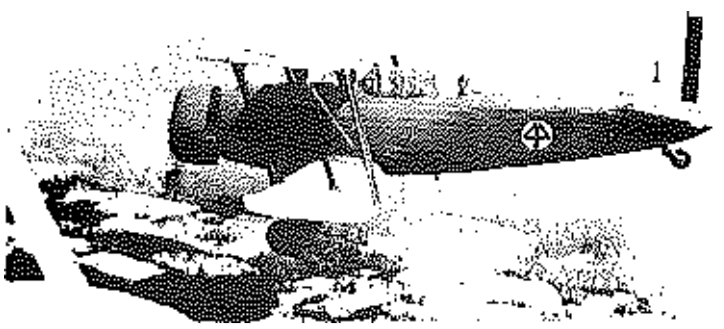
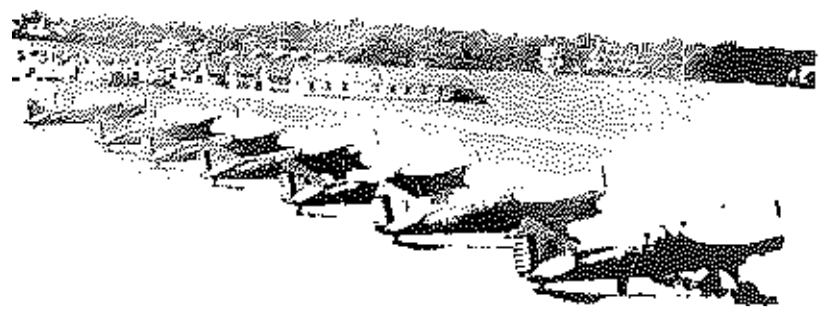


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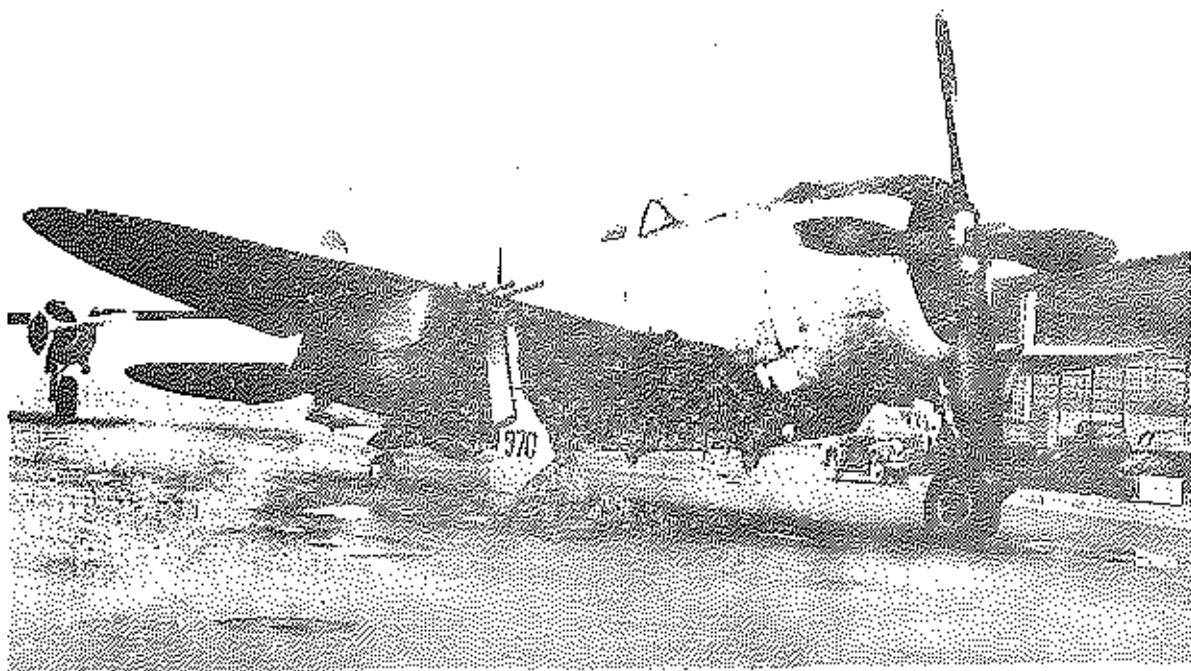


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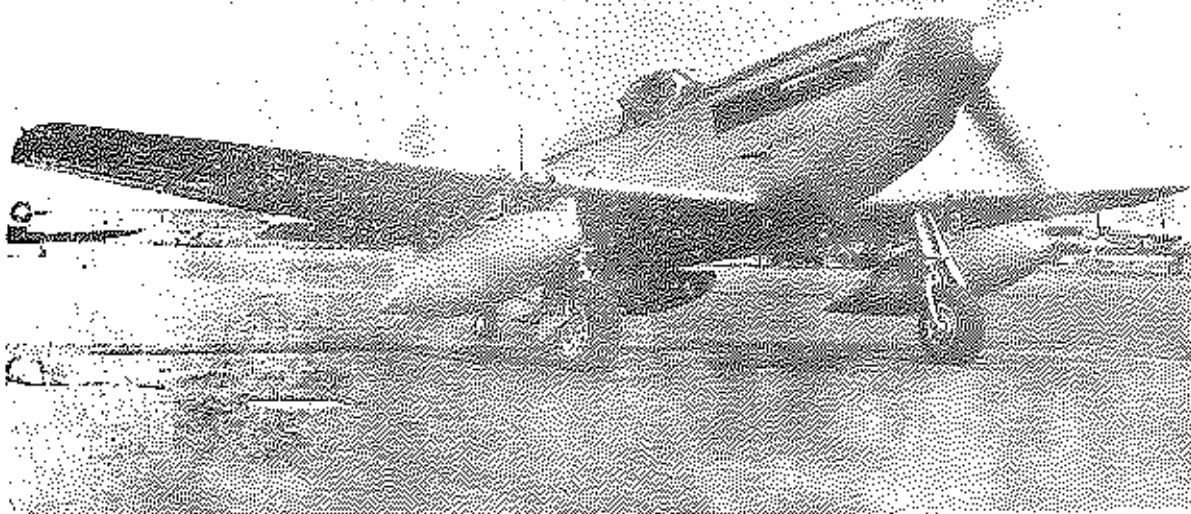
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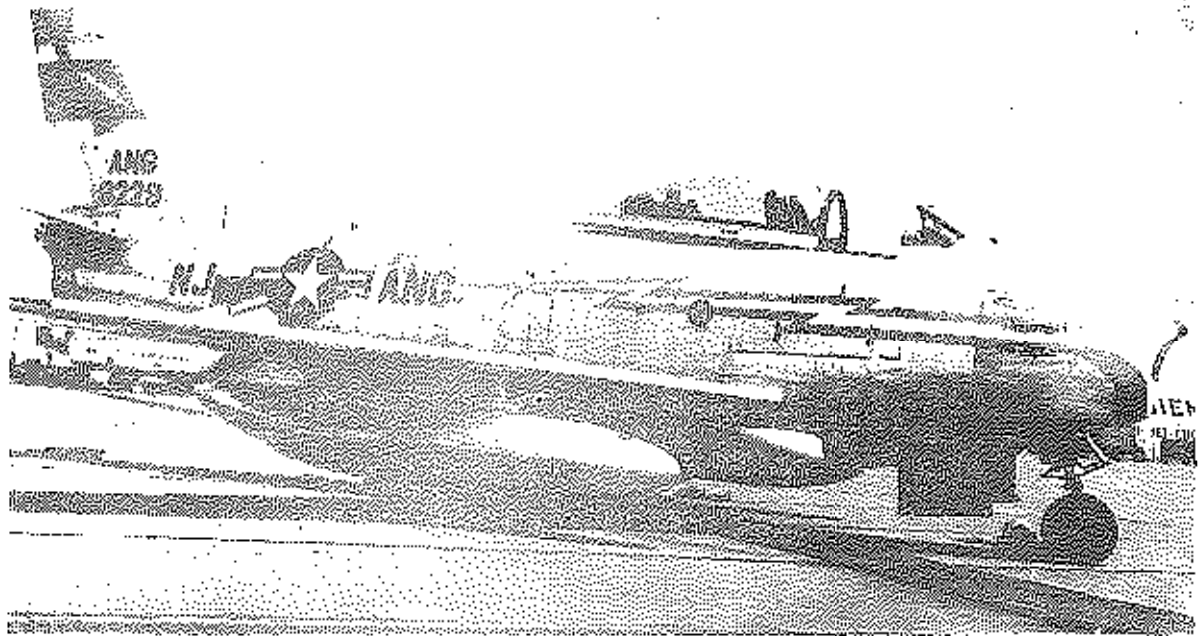
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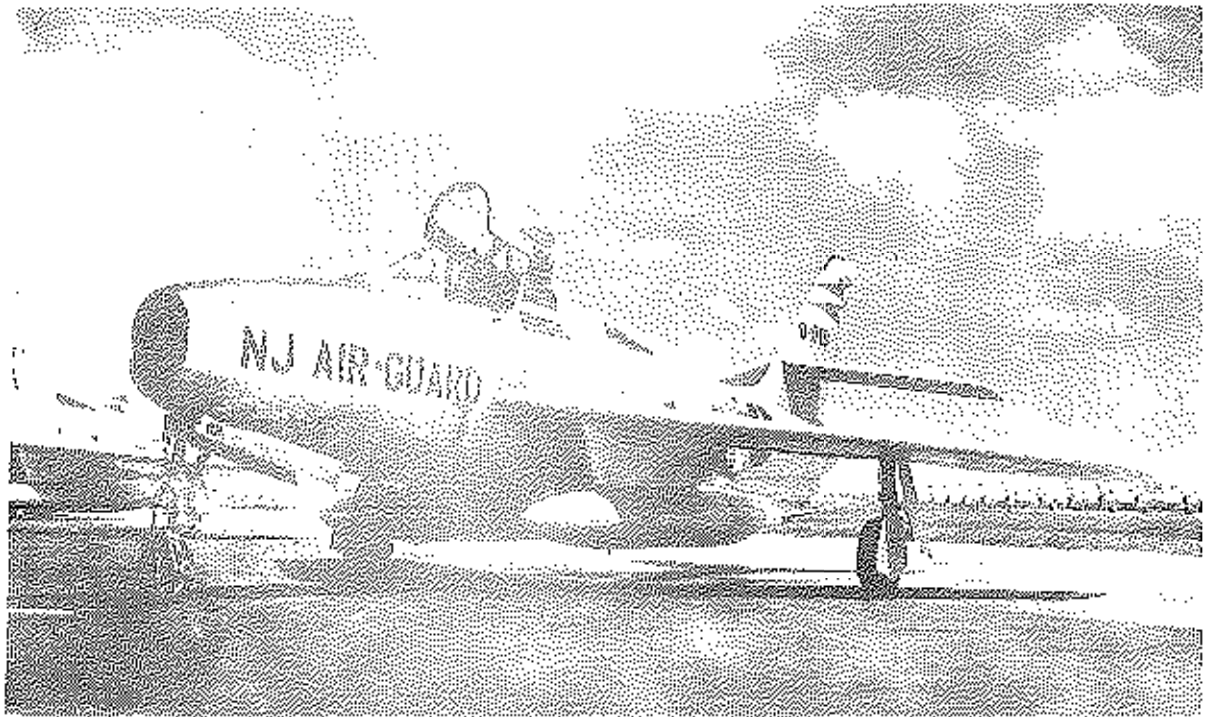
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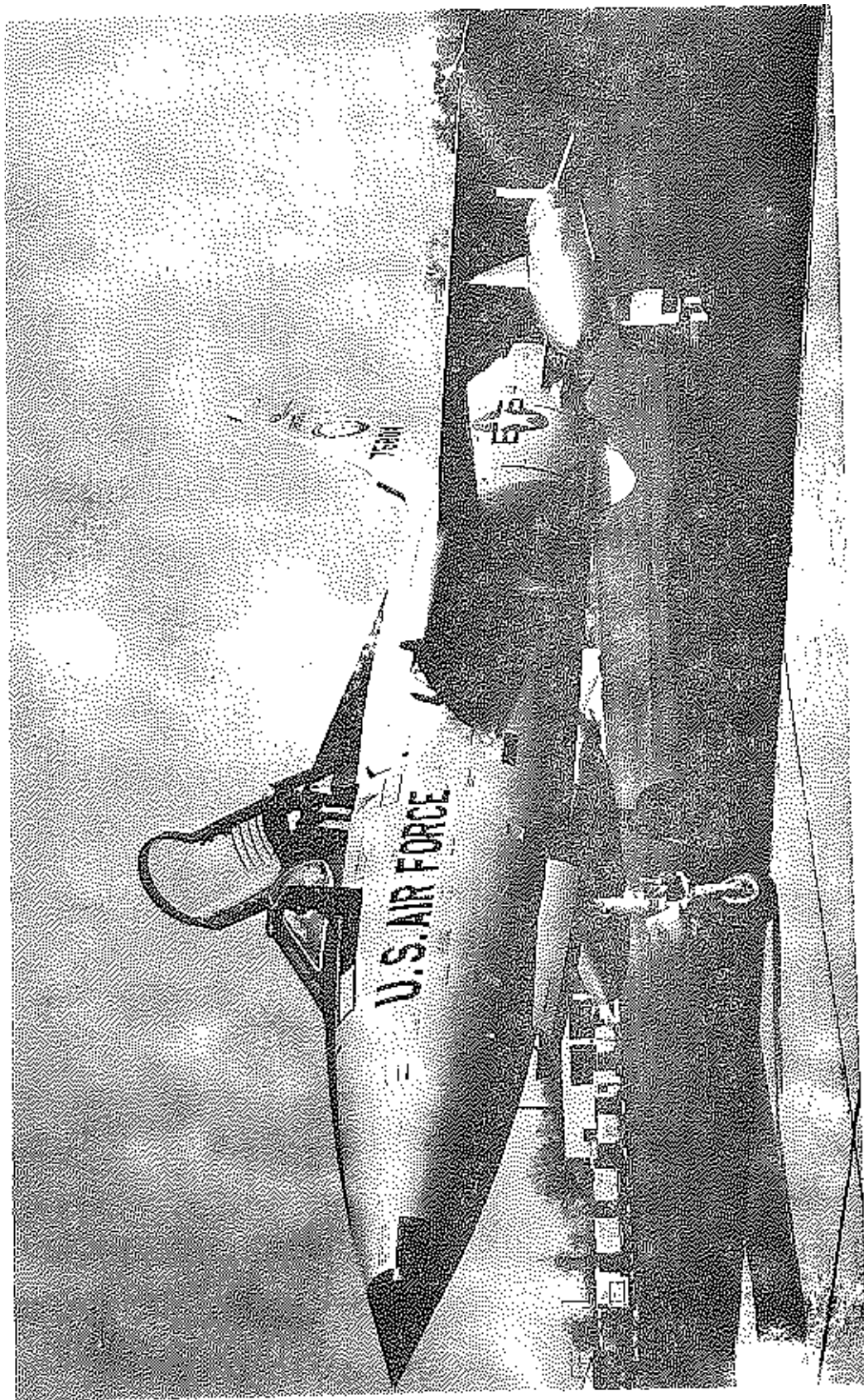
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















F-105B THUNDERCHIEF









Contractor:	Republic Aviation Corporation	Power Plant:	Pratt & Whitney J-75, w/Afterburner
Wing Span:	34 ft 11 in	Thrust:	26,500 lbs
Length:	64ft 3 in	Height:	19 ft 8 in
Speed:	Over 1500 MPH	Ceiling:	Over 55,000 ft
Armament:	Vulcan Cannon, Rockets, Air to Ground & Air to Air Missiles	Range:	Beyond 1500 mi

I am the Guard

Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War . . . of security and honor, for three centuries I have been the custodian, I am the Guard. 

I was with Washington in the dim forests, fought the wily warrior, and watched the dark night bow to the morning.  At Concord's bridge, I fired the fateful shot heard 'round the world.  I bled on Bunker Hill.  My footprints marked the snows at Valley Forge.  I pulled a muffled oar on the barge that bridged the icy Delaware.  I stood with Washington on the sun-drenched heights of Yorktown.  I saw the sword surrendered . . . I am the Guard.  I pulled the trigger that loosed the long rifle's havoc at New Orleans.  These things I knew—I was there!  I saw both sides of the War between the States—I was there!  The hill at San Juan felt the fury of my charge.  The far plains and mountains of the Philippines echoed to my shout . . . On the Mexican border I stood . . . I am the Guard.  The dark forest of the Argonne blazed with my barrage.  Chateau Thierry crumbled to my cannonade.  Under the arches of victory I marched in legion—I was there!  I am the Guard. I bowed briefly on the grim Corregidor, then saw the light of liberation shine on the faces of my comrades.  Through the jungle and on the beaches, I fought the enemy, beat, battered and broke him.  I raised our banner to the serene air on Okinawa—I scrambled over Normandy's beaches—I was there! . . . I am the Guard.  Across the 38th Parallel I made my stand.  I flew MIG Alley—I was there! . . . I am the Guard. 

Soldier in war, civilian in peace . . . I am the Guard. 

I was at Johnstown, where the raging waters boomed down the valley.  I cradled the crying child in my arms and saw the terror leave her eyes.  I moved through smoke and flame at Texas City.  The stricken knew the comfort of my skill.  I dropped the food that fed the starving beast on the frozen fields of the west and through the towering drifts I ploughed to rescue the marooned.  I have faced forward to the tornado, the typhoon, and the horror of the hurricane and flood—these things I know—I was there! . . . I am the Guard.  I have brought a more abundant, a fuller, a finer life to our youth.  Wherever a strong arm and valiant spirit must defend the Nation, in peace or war, wherever a child cries, or a woman weeps in time of disaster, there I stand . . . I am the Guard.  For three centuries a soldier in war, a civilian in peace—of security and honor, I am the custodian, now and forever . . . I am the Guard. 