

# **107<sup>th</sup> TACTICAL FIGHTER WING**

**POSSIBLY ACTIVATED 1 NOV 1950  
INACTIVATED, JAN 1964  
NIAGARA FALLS, NY**

**52<sup>ND</sup> FIGHTER WING, NY ANG, WAS INACTIVATED, 31 OCT 1950, AND A MAJOR REORGANIZATION TOOK PLACE ON 1 NOV 1950, ERGO, IT GOES TO REASON THAT THE 107 FIW WAS CREATED ON 1 NOV 1950 WITH SEVERAL GROUPS ASSIGNED TO IT INCLUDING A MAINT AND SUPPLY GROUP, A MEDICAL GROUP, AN AIR BASE GROUP. SO THE 107 FIG WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 107 FIW**

**LINEAGE**

**STATIONS**

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**MISSION EQUIPMENT**

**COMMANDERS**

Col Robert J. Kirsch

**HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

**EMBLEM**

**EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **CALL SIGN**

## **OPERATIONS**

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.

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 propeller driven Mustangs to the new jet powered Starfires.

In September, Brig General Winston P. Wilson, Chief of the Air Section, National Guard Bureau, visited the new base facilities and announced that certain fighter squadrons would go on a daylight alert status within the Air Defense Command. He also kicked off a large recruiting drive for the Wing, which proved very successful.

Personnel of the 107th Fighter Group, Air National Guard, and attached units will begin moving newly acquired buildings at the northeast section of the Niagara Falls airport on October 4, Col. Robert J. Kirsch, commander of the group, announced today.

The new quarters consist of two Bed Aircraft hangars purchased by the Carborundum company and acquired from that firm.

Since being established at the Niagara Falls airport, the ANG units have been sharing space with the Naval Air station in the former modification center on the western edge of the field.

The decision to move into the new buildings was made at a recent meeting with contractors who are remodeling and improving the structures. Col. Kirsch expects the move to be completed by October 9,

Under present plans, supply and maintenance sections will move first, followed by the operations and administrative sections.

Units to be established in the buildings, known as No. 4 and No. 5, are Headquarters, 107th Fighter Group; the 138th Fighter Squadron, the 136th Utility Flight and the 136th Weather

station, all of the 107th Group. Also Headquarters of the 207th Air Service Group and Detachment "A" of that group.

Col. Kirsch announced that the air guard will have an assembly training period Monday from 7:30 p.m. to 10:15 p.m., the first drill since the return from summer camp at Grenier Field, Manchester, N.H.

Recruiting has re-opened and ail men interested in joining the group will be welcomed at the drill period, Col. Kirsch said.

Colonel Robert J. Kirsch, Commander of the 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing, New York Air National Guard, at the Municipal Airport, Niagara Falls, New York, turned the first spade full of dirt on March 1954 which signaled the start of construction on the new Air National Guard Base facilities.

Joseph E. Bennett Co. Inc., of Brookline, Mass., was awarded the prime contract of 1.5 million dollars for the new base.

Present at the ceremonies were Lt. Colonel Joseph Manske, Commander of the 107th M&S Group, NYANG and ANG project officer for the construction program; Hugh Kramer, resident engineer of the New York District Corps of Engineers; Leo Douchette, general superintendent for Niagara Area, and Joseph E. Bennett, president of Bennett Co. Inc.

The new Air National Guard Base facilities included an aircraft maintenance hangar, 40,000 feet square with a two-story lean-to attached to one side, a supply and armament building with 21,000 square feet of storage space to house base supplies, a four-stall motor service shop, a paint, dope and oil storage building and security fencing around the ANG facilities.

The contract also called for the construction of a 28,000 square yard parking ramp and taxi facilities to tie in with the airport runways. The buildings were to be of permanent type construction with red brick facing. They were built to take care of a full squadron of F-94 Starfires, an all-weather interceptor type aircraft.

Lt Colonel Manske stated that the aircraft hangar would be closed by winter with the remainder of the buildings following shortly after.

Construction plans called for a 280-day calendar construction period for the project.

An additional one million dollar Air National Guard Operations and Training Building at the Niagara Falls Air National Guard Base was constructed on 1 November 1955. This facility was to serve as Headquarters for the 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing and supporting organizations.

On June of 1958 the formal dedication ceremony for the Air National Guard Base at Niagara took place with a parade and speech given by Major General Ronald Brock, Chief of Staff to the Governor.

In April of 1955 the Courier Express featured an article on Lt Col Manske; a bombardier on the 5th aircraft to launch from an aircraft carrier on the Tokyo Doolittle Raid — he was now flying the B25 at Niagara as the chief of Maintenance.

The new base unofficially opened for Air Guard occupancy in June 1955 with almost all the 107th Wing moving into new quarters later that month. On July 4th Captain Arnold Wackerman, now Operations Officer of the 136th, placed second in the Earl T. Ricks Memorial Air Race. He flew an F-94 named the "phffht" from Los Angeles to Detroit in 2 hours 59 minutes and 8 seconds, averaging 491.25 miles per hour on the 1,957 mile course. The race was open to all Air Guard units in the country and to all types of jet fighters. Refueling crews from Niagara were at Denver and Des Moines to help Captain Wackerman on his way.

The 107th Wing went to Hancock Field, Syracuse, in August for two weeks of summer field training. Governor Harriman of New York visited the camp site and came away very with a favorable impression of the wing. The encampment was spent bringing the unit up to combat ready status.

In September the 107th Wing took part in the Annual Air National Guard gunnery meet in Idaho. All four New York fighter squadrons were represented, but the meet was called off before a winner was declared. It was learned unofficially that the 107th was in the lead of the all-weather fighter division when the meet ended. Col Kirsch invited several of the other Air Guard teams to visit Niagara in the spring to finish the gunnery match.

It was announced today by Brig. Gen. Winston Wilson, Chief Air Division, National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C., that certain fighter interceptor squadrons of the 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing, New York Air National Guard (New York Air National Guard) would furnish special teams of full time pilots and air technicians to augment the nation's air defense network.

The 136th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, NYANG, based at the Municipal airport, and commanded by Capt Frank E. Fite of Elba, is expected to go under this plan. Under the new air defense plan the 136th would augment the 518th Air Defense Group, which is presently providing Air Defense for Western New York.

Immediately involved in this program will be 137th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Whites Plains, and the 138th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Syracuse, Goes Into Effect Nov. 1

The new plan will go into effect Nov. 1 in New York State, Gen. Wilson stated. Small groups of fighter pilots and airmen technicians will be placed on full time duty about Oct. 1 to augment the program.

All personnel will be selected on a volunteer basis for periods of not more than 59 days at a time. Pilots and technicians will be rotated to keep the program in effect for an indefinite period.

Under the new plan the New York Air National Guard and the 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing, Niagara Falls, are being given a new, more active role in the Air Defense of the United States.

Their operation will be designed to supplement those of regular air defense units of the United States Air Force.

The 136th, 137th, and 138th have jet all weather interceptors at their respective fields and have them ready to "scramble" into the air to intercept any unidentified aircraft reported in that part of the country.

Gen. Wilson said the new program would not affect the regular Air National training of these fighter squadrons or other activities of the 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing, Niagara Falls.

Expected to cost \$500,000, the new 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing, New York Air National Guard, Operations and Training building is now undergoing foundation planning, design and floor plan layout. The building is scheduled for completion in fiscal year 1956. It is of brick construction, two stories, 280 feet by 180 feet, and will house the operations, and training units of the 107th Wing. These units include the 107th Wing Headquarters, 107th Maintenance and Supply group, 107th Air Base Group, 107th Tactical Hospital and the 136th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. Car Parking Lot Planned

Also in the final development stages are plans for a 230 civilian car parking lot to be constructed directly adjacent to the new Operations and Training building.

Col. Robert J. Kirsch, Grand Island, wing commander, and LtCol. Joseph W. Manshe, project construction officer, are working in close coordination with the Corps of Engineers so as to gain the maximum utilization from this new construction program.

With the addition of the new Operations and Training building and civilian parking lot the cost of the new Air National Guard Base will be over two million dollars. The new base is to include a 40,000 square foot aircraft maintenance hangar to house the F94 Starfires of the 136th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. Attached to three sides of the hangar will be a two-story lean-to providing 16,000 square feet additional area for shops and training rooms. Directly in front of the hangar will be a 27,000 square yard aircraft parking ramp of concrete. Other buildings included in this construction program are a supply warehouse, motor vehicle shop and a paint storage building. The new base will cover over 40 acres north of the Niagara Falls Municipal Airport and will front on Tuscarora road.

The new ANG base will be connected to the airport landing strips by taxi ways now under construction. The Joseph E. Bennett Co., Brookline, Mass., is the prime contractor on the new base.

The construction of the New National Guard Air Base at Niagara Falls and the augmentation of the Air Defense Plan is creating within the 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing, NYANG, an acute personnel problem. Units of the 107th Wing are almost 300 men under strength. These vacancies are in all phases of ANG work. If the 107th Wing is not up to full authorized strength before the Air Defense plan goes into action it will be seriously hampered in its efforts to provide adequate air defense for Western New York and the Niagara Frontier.

In October 1955, the Air Defense Command sent out an alert call to all Air Guard Interceptor Squadrons throughout the country sending pilots and planes scrambling into the air. Within an hour after the alert was sounded the 136th had almost every jet fighter at Niagara airborne and were working with ground controlled radar in an effort to pick up airborne targets. Successful completion of all missions was reported.

That same month the first life saving mercy flight was made by pilots of the 107th Wing. An elderly man was flown to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester minutes after his doctor was unable to diagnose his illness and found that his patient was growing worse. A mercy flight was arranged and within hours the man was resting comfortably in a bed at the Mayo Clinic.

During the first two weeks in November the 107th wing operated a combined recruiting and public enlightenment drive at the Sears Roebuck and Company store in downtown Buffalo. To highlight the exhibit a Thunderjet was brought in from Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio as well as many pieces of local equipment. To wind up the drive the 136th flew air cover over the Sears store and Buffalo while Santa Claus landed in a commercial helicopter in the Sears parking lot. In October of 1957 the 136th Fighter Squadron converted to the F86 Sabre jet. It was said to be nice to fly and easy to maintain. In June of 1958 there was a formal dedication ceremony of the ANG Base. A parade was held and a formal speech was given by Major General Ronald Brock Chief of Staff to the Governor. Summer field training was conducted 19 July to 2 August at Hancock Field in Syracuse.

SYRACUSE, Aug. 20 Gov. Harriman will dedicate the New York Air National Guard Permanent Field Training Site at Hancock Field here Thursday.

The day-long program features a public air show in which National Guard airmen will participate, Harriman will review the 2,000 officers and airmen of the 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing., NYANG, now taking the annual two-week training at the field. The wing is training as a unit for the first time since it was created.

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.

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. Lt. Col. 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.

---

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 24 Oct 2012

Updated: 18 Nov 2012

#### Sources

ANG Unit History. New York. Niagara's 107th Fighter Interceptor Group. Taylor Publishing Company. 1990.  
Dallas TX.