

134 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

384 Bombardment Squadron (Light) constituted, 28 Jan 1942
Activated, 2 Mar 1942
Redesignated 384 Bombardment Squadron (Dive), 27 Jul 1942
Redesignated 530 Fighter Bomber Squadron, 30 Sep 1943
Redesignated 530 Fighter Squadron, 30 May 1944
Inactivated, 16 Feb 1946
Redesignated 134 Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine and allotted to the Air National Guard, 24 May 1946
Activated, 1 Jul 1946
Federally recognized, 14 Aug 1946
Redesignated 134 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 10 Feb 1951
Inactivated, 1 Nov 1952
Activated, 1 Nov 1952
Redesignated 134 Defense Systems Evaluation Squadron, 1 Apr 1974
Redesignated 134 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jan 1982
Redesignated 134 Fighter Interceptor Squadron 1 Jul 1987
Redesignated 134 Fighter Squadron, 1 Jun 1992

STATIONS

Will Rogers Field, OK, 2 Mar 1942
Hunter Field, GA, 4 Jul 1942
Waycross, GA, 22 Oct 1942-18 Jul 1943
Nawadih, India, 20 Sep 1943
Dinjan, India, 18 Oct 1943 (detachment operated from Kurmitola, India, 21 Oct-Nov 1943; 28

May-11 Jun 1944)
Kwanghan, China, 21 Oct 1944 (detachment operated from Hsian, China, 30 Oct 1944-21 Feb 1945)
Pungchacheng, China, 5 May 1945
Hsian, China, Aug 1945 Shanghai, China, 17 Oct 1945-16 Feb 1946
Burlington, VT, 1952

ASSIGNMENTS

311 Bombardment (later Fighter-Bomber; Fighter) Group
Vermont National Guard
67 Fighter Wing
101 Fighter Group/Fighter-Interceptor Group
23 Fighter Interceptor Group (attached to 23 Fighter Interceptor Wing)
101 Fighter Interceptor Group
101 Air Defense Wing
158 Fighter Group/Fighter Interceptor Group/Defense Systems Evaluation Group/Tactical
Fighter Group/Fighter Interceptor Group/Fighter Group
158 Operations Group

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

V-72, 1942
A-31
A-36, 1942
P-51, 1944
F-47, 1947
F-51, 1950
F-94, 1952
F-89, 1958
F-102, 1965
TF-102
EB-57,
F-4, 1981
F-16, 1986
F-35

Support Aircraft

C-54

COMMANDERS

LTC William M. Bowden
Maj Richard B. Spear, 21 Jul 1947
Maj Richard H. Mock
Maj William J. McGinley, 1966

HONORS

Service Streamers

American Theater

Campaign Streamers

India-Burma

China Defensive

China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



530 FS



MOTTO

NICKNAME

Green Mountain Boys

OPERATIONS

The predecessor to the 134th was the 530th Fighter Squadron, 311th Fighter Group was credited with battle participation in the India-Burma Campaign from 2 April 1942 to 28 January 1945; the Chinese Defensive Campaign from 16 June 1944 to 4 May 1945; the China Offensive Campaign from 5 May 1945 to 2 September 1945.

The Vermont Air National Guard was organized at what was then Burlington Municipal Airport on 1 Jul 1946, and was federally recognized as the 134th FS 14 Aug 1946, with LTC William M. Bowden as its first commanding officer. The new unit was assigned to the 101st FG 67th Fighter Wing.

The Senior Air Instructor, Lieutenant Colonel Albert M. Cate of the Air Force, a native Vermonter, reported for duty as early as May 19, 1946.

The new unit was first located in the "Little Red-brick School House" near the present Northern Airways Hangar on Airport Drive. The charter group numbered 27 men who were World War II veterans. They were required to maintain their proficiency and to train new members.

The primary mission was air defense with a secondary mission of ground attack. The first aircraft assigned to the unit were the C-47 and L-5 and AT-6. In April 1947, three P-47s, the first of 25 P-47s arrived. At that time, 150 officers and enlisted men belonged to the unit.

Rescue work on Lake Champlain involved the Guardsmen, who also cooperated with their Army Guard comrades in assisting Rutland during the disastrous flood of June, 1947. The Air Guard also performed mercy flights with emergency patients and transported whole blood and iron lungs where urgently needed.

Summer training in 1947 for the flying Vermonters was conducted at Camp Johnson and the

Burlington Airport from 19 to 23 August 1947 and in later years at other locations, including maneuvers with the 101st Fighter Group at Dow Field, Bangor, Maine, in late August, 1949. Captain Cram described the training program in Maine: "We used to fly off the coast of New Hampshire. We'd have planes that would drag tow targets and we'd be firing gunnery missions on these tow targets. We had a dive-bombing range. We even had a dive-bombing range out in Underbill [Vermont]," he added. "You tried to teach each other."

A \$100,000 grant was approved for the 134th FS. The money was used for two prefabricated hangars, a steel mat ramp in front of the hangars and some small buildings. The land, 27.61 acres or whatever was needed for the hangars at the northeast corner of the field, was deeded from the City of Burlington to the state. Rights to the runways were included in the deed. The Air Guard assisted in the maintenance of the field, the utilities and removal of snow. The city would benefit from use of the ANG snowplows, ambulances, and crash wagons.

The quonset-type hangars were completed in 1948. Till then, crew chiefs had to maintain their aircraft outdoors. Federal funds were also used to extend the runway 700 feet. In 1948, the squadron was given an air-sea rescue mission for Lake Champlain. A team was formed for this contingency using a C-47 and a five-man life raft. 1948 With the completion of the quonset-type hangars in 1948, crew chiefs no longer had to maintain their aircraft outdoors. No one complained about the dirt floors. The first of several runway extensions to occur over the next few years, extended the runway by 700 feet. The year also saw the tasking of an air-sea rescue mission for Lake Champlain. A team was formed for this contingency using a C-47 and a five-man life raft With the ANG's 42 foot crash boat tied up at the Naval Reserve Center and the C-47 at the airfield available for spotting, the Air Guard was an integral part of a rescue system coordinated with the Burlington and State Police.

In 1949 the Air National Guard was reorganized and the Vermont Air National Guard was transferred from the 67th Wing of Massachusetts to the 101st Fighter Wing in Maine. Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire squadrons trained as the 101st Fighter Group at Dow Field, Bangor, Maine from 20 August 1949 to 3 September 1949. The year saw the first "re-enlistees" in the Vermont Air National Guard and didn't end without incident. On the evening of August 11th, two F-47 crashed into each other on the Guard's taxi strip. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured as one plane overrode the other after returning from routine flights. One F-47 was declared a total wreck while the other sustained substantial damage to the main undergear.

The VTANG 1950 and by the end of the year had reached its assigned strength of 353 enlisted men and 63 officers of whom 51 were pilots.

1950 The VTANG's crash-boat and sea rescue team, originally instituted to rescue pilots who crash into Lake Champlain, continued to make their equipment and personnel available for public service. An example of their effectiveness was outlined in a Burlington Free Press article dated September 16, 1950 that told of one mission when a call came in from the city police about 7:30 pm. on June 6th. " In five minutes the crash boat was headed for Colchester Point. A

heavy wind had come up and two young boys were out on the lake in a small boat. As the crash boat left the pier, an AT-6 of the ANG circled overhead. The plane located the boys and radioed that they were safe. Within 25 minutes after they had phoned, the parents received word that their sons were out of danger." This was one of eight incidents that occurred that summer.

On 9 January 1951, the unit received mobilization orders and entered active duty on 1 February 1951. Halfway through the first decade, the unit received mobilization orders on January 9, 1951. The 134th was called to active duty on February 1, 1951. Upon activation, the squadron remained at Burlington and Fort Ethan Allen became the support base with medics, motor pool, supply, and a mess hall. E-5s and under were required to live at the fort while others had the option of living off base. Some reserves were also called in. The unit subsequently became an integral part of the Eastern Air Defense structure, under the control of the 4711th Wing at Presque Isle, Maine. Many members of the 134th FS served in Korea as well as in other areas of the world with the United States Air Force during this period. Major Richard Spear was the Base Commander at Fort Ethan Allen and Major John D. Mattie from the regular Air Force was the Fighter-Interceptor Squadron Commander.

On 1 February 1951, the City of Burlington gave the Air Force permission to take over the Air National Guard flightline facilities, including the wooden hangar and the area surrounding it, for \$1.00 per year. The Air Force initially expended approximately \$2 million for hangars 3 and 4 and runway extensions. Federal monies were also used for navigational aids, fuel facilities, communications, a dispensary, and utilities. In May 1951, the Air Force leased most of the airport facilities for \$15,000 a year and requested more federal money for expansion. The runway was extended from 5,000 feet to 8,000 feet with a 1,000 foot overrun necessitating the moving of 17 houses and cutting off of two streets. More than a million and a half cubic yards of earth and rock were moved to fill a 20 acre swamp where the taxiway and runway extensions were built. A hill in line with the main runway containing more than 110,000 cubic yards of rock was used to fill a huge depression on the southeast corner of the field where a parking apron and alert hangars were built. The earth moving project had to be complete within 130 days. The Air National Guard personnel and equipment who remained at home station were moved across the field to the wooden hangar near where the unit was chartered. This was a small unit responsible for maintaining the home base, handling personnel matters, and maintaining the C-47, which was crew chiefed by Jim Taylor, and used for the air/sea rescue mission.

The alert hangars, classroom, headquarters for base operations, ramps, taxiways, maintenance hangar and shops and a new mile long road from the severed end of Airport Drive south to connect all the new buildings cost the federal government about 5 million dollars. Another military construction bill gave the Burlington Airport additional funds to upgrade the airfield. The Air Force named this new facility Ethan Allen Air Force Base.

The squadron was assigned to the Far East Air Defense Command for the duration of its 21 months of active duty. Many members of the 134th FS served in Korea as well as in other areas of the world with the United States Air Force during this period. The 134th Fighter Squadron, as

a group, remained within the state for defense and served as a training center for pilots who would fill overseas replacement calls. Members of the 134th, as individuals, would receive assignments to other units in Korea or elsewhere.

The 134th Fighter Squadron returned to state control October 31, 1952, before the ending of hostilities in Korea. Lieutenant Colonel Spear resumed command. They started flying F-94s in 1954, which required radar observers as well as pilots. Lieutenant Colonel Spear became commander of the new Tactical Fighter Group headquarters and Major Richard H. Mock was promoted to command the Squadron. When the Group Headquarter was dissolved in April, 1956, the personnel reverted to the Squadron. 1952 On October 31st, the unit was released from active duty and returned to state control. The VTANG was reorganized under the command of Lt. Col. Richard B. Spear, at the same time the Air Force was finishing the runway expansion. With this expansion, Burlington became the only jet airport in Vermont; the Vermont Air Guard was still equipped with F-51s with an air defense mission and the active duty Air Force maintained their presence at Ethan Allen Air Force Base. The release from active duty presented the Vermont Air Guard with a new set of challenges. Upon release, the planes and equipment of the 134th stayed with the Air Force and were used by the 37th Fighter Interceptor Squadron which succeeded the 134th. Additionally, many of the Guard's officers and airmen elected to continue on active duty with the United States Air Force. As a result of this depletion of men and equipment, a new buildup of the Air Guard's strength was necessary. The unit's strength climbed to 200 officers and men; the maximum strength designated for the unit was 450. The unit's aircraft consisted of five F-51H, a C-47, and six T-6. Good news came with the announcement that a delivery of jet fighters was planned for Vermont, early in 1954.

The 134th went to Grenier Air Force Base in Manchester, New Hampshire for the 1953 summer field training. During the first two weeks of October, pilots from Vermont represented the 101st Air Defense Wing at the Nationwide Gunnery Meet held at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho. Summer field training for the 200 men of the 134th took place at Grenier Air Force Base in Manchester, New Hampshire, beginning August 15th. Summer camp, was not all work and no play. The Burlington Free Press of August 23rd, pictured six of approximately 85 airmen, boarding a bus bound for Boston and a Red Sox ball game. Vermont pilots represented the 101st Air Defense Wing at the nationwide Gunnery Meet held at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho. On November 18th, the unit received the first T-33A along with the promise of pending jet fighters. Delivered from Lockheed's Burbank, California, factory, the T-33A marked the beginning of the Air Guard's long range conversion to jets. During this time period the VTANG operated out of the old airport administration building and the wooden hangar now occupied by Innotech Aviation, Inc.

The Vermont Air National Guard received its first T-33A in the spring of 1953. The primary mission while assigned to the 158th was for target support and instrument training. Prior to the arrival of the F-4D at Burlington, the T-33 was used for low level training for the new F-4 crews. While assigned to the Green Mountain Boys, the T-33A aircraft accumulated over 40,000 flying hours during its 30 years of operation. Since its arrival in 1953, the Vermont Air National Guard has had at least one and up to 5 T-33A assigned continually. The last T-33A assigned to the 158th TFG, 53-5398 left Burlington on September 23, 1983. The aircraft piloted by LtCol. David

L.Ladd, Deputy Commander of Operations, was flown to Fresno, CA.

One of the original T-33A assigned to Burlington was 52-9734 which had flown over 8,000 hours. The aircraft was transferred to the 48th FIS at Langley AFB, VA.

With 60 officers and 440 airmen the Vermont Air National Guard participated in "Operation Minute Man" in April, 1955. This exercise tested how rapidly and efficiently National Guard units could mobilize in an emergency. At a given signal all Guardsmen were alerted and rushed from their civilian jobs to their military stations. The Adjutant General's Report for 1956 commends both the Army and Air National guard for mobilizing 90 percent of their number within one hour of the alert. In its first decade of existence the Vermont Air Guard had taken its place alongside its Army Guard counterpart as a source of pride to the state in the nation's defense.

Summer camp was held at Otis AFB, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in 1954, the new training site for all 101st Fighter Group personnel. Total manpower reached 440 airmen and 60 officers. The unit made substantial progress during this period in the procurement of new pilots and navigators for the ANG Aircrew Training Program. In addition they also received a C-45 for use in the Air Defense Mission.

Hangar 890, Supply and Motor Vehicle buildings were completed officially on 15 April 1956. The new facilities cost \$1.5 million. In July the 134th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS) under the leadership of Major Mock was rated as a category "A" combat ready unit.

When the Group Headquarter was dissolved in April, 1956, the personnel reverted to the Squadron. Meanwhile, on the same date, Hangar 890, and buildings for Supply and Motor Vehicles, were officially completed.

In April 1958 their F-94s were either sent to Davis-Monthan AFB for storage/salvage, or to other ANG squadrons. Major Richard Mock was the squadron commander. Mock had four kills while flying with the 317th Fighter Squadron during WWII, and then had spent fourteen months as a POW after being shot down over Hungary.

First Lieutenant Bob Paradise, a radar observer, described the F-89 mission. "I remember that shortly after joining the unit in 1959, the US Air Force had daytime alert and the VTANG had nighttime duty. We would arrive at 4 p.m. for the 6:00 p.m. to midnight and the midnight to 6:00 a.m. shift. Generally, we would fly sorties during the first half of the shift, sleep for the last half, and then go to work or to college classes. Occasionally, alert exercises or "real world" alerts would keep the crews busy all night long. When that happened, those 8:00 a.m. classes and exams were pretty rough. There were only two real scrambles during my tenure in the alert barns. The first involved a B-52 that failed to notify appropriate authorities of a delay in its ETA at the Air Defense Identification Zone. In my haste to respond to this real alert and don my flight clothing, I broke my zipper with my foot. The second incident involved a B-47 with a malfunctioning transponder. In both cases we had to intercept, make visual identification, and

confirm that they were friendly aircraft."

The unit possessed the F-89 from April 1958 to August 1965. Officially named the Scorpion, she was seldom called that by her crews. Lead Sled being a preferred name. Never considered a pretty aircraft on the ground, a favorite pilot assertion was that the F-89 was designed by "a frustrated civil engineer whose specialty was grain silos." In any case, the pilots found her to be a beautiful creature in the air—reliable, stable, and easy to fly. The mission of the unit during this time period was air defense of the continental United States from a long range bomber threat. Standing alert with the F-89 began in 1959, with two aircraft manned during daylight hours only at the alert barns located on the southeast end of the airfield. Alert status expanded to 24 hours a day in 1960, when the regular USAF F-102 interceptors departed Burlington. Many a Vermont guardsman received his college degree by attending classes at UVM or St. Michael's during the day and spending the nights in the alert barn.

Practice scrambles were frequent. The aircraft could easily become airborne within the five minute criteria from the sound of the scramble horn. Getting to the target area was a much slower process, since an abundance of engine power was not one of the F-89's strong features. Training exercises of a large scale were always held during the late evening-early morning hours in order to avoid the heavy daytime commercial air traffic over the northeast. Many a night resulted in three or four sorties flown between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. by an individual crew. The tired feeling one had as he headed home or to class at 8:00 a.m. was usually offset by the remembrance of an hour of Combat Air Patrol some 100 miles north of Montreal. The memory captured the contrasts and colors of the absolute blackness below, of millions of twinkling stars bathing in beams from the Northern Lights, and the awesome sight of the sun rising over the Atlantic as the crew completed its last practice intercept of a simulated hostile bomber some 100-200 miles east of Cape Cod.

July, 1959: Burlington was in the midst of celebrating the 350th Anniversary of the founding of Lake Champlain. As an added attraction for the parade and activities taking place in downtown Burlington, the unit assembled 16 F-89s, along with 16 F-102s from the Air Force, for a flyover. Bad weather came in quickly and in a hurry to land, the first ship in to Burlington Airport, blew his tires at the intersection of the runways. The remaining aircraft circled aloft until nearly out of fuel. In desperation, an unnamed pilot said that he was going to the Barre-Montpelier airport and attempt to land on the "too short" runway. On the ground, but rapidly running out of tarmac, the pilot continued on to the dirt surface and turned his aircraft to the right. The second pilot in turned his ship left, and the others alternated the pattern successfully avoiding any nose to tail collisions. Every aircraft made it in safely and, early the next morning, unit personnel descended on the Barre-Montpelier to dig the planes out of the mud and give them enough fuel to return to Burlington for a complete checkup.

In January 1960 the 134th FIS began to participate in the ADC's runway alert program. From a half hour before sunrise until a half hour after sunset, a F-89 would be parked off the end of the instrument runway with a crew strapped-in the cockpit and awaiting scramble orders. In June 1960 their older F-89Ds gave way to later block F-89Ds and Js from the 59th FIS that was

switching to F-102s at Goose Bay, Newfoundland. A month later the 158th Fighter Group (Air Defense) was federally recognized with Lt. Colonel Robert Goyette as group commander. At this time the 134th FIS went on full time, twenty-four hour alert status.

1960 The first month of the new year brought VTANG participation in the Air Defense Runway Alert Program, along with the first flights of the F-89J. Two aircrews were on daytime alert. Six months later the 134th FIS was recognized as the 158th Fighter Interceptor Group and was placed under the USAF Air Defense Command (ADC). At this time Lt. Col. Robert P. Goyette assumed command of the group and Maj. Rolfe L. Chickering took command of the 134th Fighter Interceptor Squadron; Maj. Neil D. Childs took command of the 158th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron; Maj. Robert M. Hamilton became commander of the 158th Materiel Squadron; and Capt. John P. Tampas became commander of the 158th USAF Dispensary. Alert hangars previously used by the regular Air Force were now manned by VTANG "Jet-Age Minutemen" and the Guard assumed a full-time, 24 hour a day alert status to protect the continental United States from long-range bomber attack.

Many Vermont guard members earned their college degree by attending classes at the University of Vermont or one of the numerous local colleges during the day, and spending their nights in the alert barn. Practice scrambles were frequent. The aircraft could easily become airborne within the five minute criteria from the sound of the scramble horn. Getting to the target area was a much slower process since an abundance of engine power was not one of the F-89's strong features. Large scale training exercises were always held during the late evening-early morning hours in order to avoid the heavy daytime commercial air traffic over the northeast. Many nights consisted of three or four sorties flown between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. by an individual crew. The tired feeling these guard members had as they headed home or to classes at 8:00 a.m. was only offset by the remembrance of an hour of combat air patrol some 100 miles north of Montreal. Other memories captured the contrasts and colors of the absolute blackness below, of millions of twinkling stars bathed in beams from the northern lights, and the awesome sight of the sun rising over the Atlantic as the crew completed its last practice intercept of a simulated hostile bomber some 100-200 miles east of Cape Cod.

1st. Lt. Bob Paradis was a "backseater" sitting alert during this time period and remembers that, shortly after he joined the unit in 1959, they (US Air Force) had daytime alert and the VTANG had nighttime duty. "We would arrive at 4pm for the 6:00pm to Midnight and the Midnight to 6:00 am shift," Paradis said. "Generally, we would fly sorties during the first half of the shift, sleep for the last half and then go to work or to college classes. Occasionally, alert exercises or "real world" alerts would keep the crews busy all night long. When that happened, those 8:00 classes and exams were pretty rough," Paradis added. There were only two "real" scrambles during his tenure in the alert barns. The first involved a B-52 that failed to notify appropriate authorities of a delay in its ETA at the Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Paradis admitted that "in my haste to respond to this 'real' alert and don my flight clothing, I broke my zipper with my foot." The second incident involved a B-47 with a malfunctioning transponder. "In both cases, Paradis said, we had to intercept, make visual identification and confirm that they were friendly aircraft."

The concept and practice of active duty days for the guard, started with alert duty, according to Paradis. "In the event of area! threat, the guard needed to be subordinate to the US Air Force and not to the Governor and State of Vermont. This was accomplished by putting everyone on daily active duty orders. Eventually, this was changed to extended tours."

Summer field training in 1960 was conducted at Otis AFB, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, from 18 June to 2 July. When the unit returned to Burlington, the Maintenance and Operations Squadrons immediately moved into the facilities that had just been vacated by the regular Air Force. The Administrative, Civil Engineering, Supply, Food Service and Motor Vehicle functions remained on the Williston Road side of the air field. Military vehicles were allowed to cross the east end of the runway after receiving clearance from the tower to transport personnel back and forth.

On 12 August 1965, the unit acquired the first of 20 F-102. This gave the VTANG a supersonic capability. Transition into the single engine, single seat jets was accomplished ahead of schedule and without incident. The 158th, for the first time, had supersonic capability. The mission of the F-102 was to strengthen the perimeter defense of the United States. Vermont's squadron had responsibility, through the 21st North American Air Defense Region, to defend the Northeast against airborne intrusion. The Soviet Union possessed an armada of long-range bombers capable of round trips to America's heartland. The 158th's job was to deny this threat. From Watertown, New York, to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Vermont interceptors defended a vital part of America's border. An average alert day was described as follows: "Four of the 30 squadron pilots arrive at the operations command post to start their alert duty at 5:30 p.m. They have arrived after a full day of activity in their professional lives. Some are students at UVM, another is a real estate broker, another is an attorney. Their job now check out their parachutes, survival vests, and helmets, don their flight suits and pile into the alert van. At 5:45 p.m., the van arrives at the "barn" (alert hangar), a unique structure of four sophisticated aircraft hangars surrounding a small living facility. Each of the four pilots heads to his respective fighter where he is met by his crew chief. Hangar doors open, auxiliary power units come to life, and the preflight begins. After an intense inspection of cockpit switches, missile loads, and aircraft system checks, the pilot is satisfied. It's 6:00 p.m. and the four head into their home away from home. "Changing of the guard" is now complete. For the next twenty-four hours, these four pilots, along with their crew chiefs are just five minutes from sitting alert duty, to launching their Delta Daggers should the need arise."

1968 VTANG pilots' Capt. David Ladd, Capt. Mike Pressey, Maj. Clyde Millington Capt. John Pratt and Capt. Ron Morgan, took part in the Air Force Palace Alert program under which F-102 pilots took six month tours of duty at Air Force bases around the world. This enabled the Air Force to augment its F-102 pilot roster without mobilizing any Air Guard units. Ladd served with the 509th FIS of the 405th Fighter Wing, at Clark AFB, in the Philippines, and flew 36 combat missions over N. Vietnam, escorting B-52 while assigned to a detachment in Thailand. Pratt, assigned to the 64th FIS of the 405th FW, also escorted B-52's and flew 63 missions over N. Vietnam with additional missions over the South. Pratt would go on to a second tour at the

102nd Squadron, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. Pressey, was assigned to an Air Defense Unit in Germany, and was there during the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. Ladd noted in the March 1, 1969, issue of the Delta Dagger Dispatch, that the F-102 detachments in Southeast Asia during Christmas - New Year holidays, were better than 60% manned by Air National Guard pilots. Millington's Palace Alert duties took him to the 82nd FIS at Naha AB, Okinawa. The 82nd maintained an alert commitment at Naha, and shared in the air defense of South Korea. Much of Millington's tour of duty involved scrambles, patrols and escort duty over international waters toward Communist China in one direction, and along the coast of North Korea in the other direction. Like Millington, Morgan served with the 82nd FIS at Naha AB, Okinawa and helped provide air defense for Okinawa and Korea, out of Su Won, Korea. The mission of the 82nd also included support cover for U.S. electronics intelligence, leaflet drops and other intelligence operations in Korea.

During 1968 and 1969 several VTANG pilots took part in the Air Force's Palace Alert program under which F-102 pilots took six month tours of duty at Air Force bases around the world. This enabled the Air Force to augment its F-102 pilot roster without mobilizing any Guard units.

In June 1974 the 158th FIG became the 158th Defense Systems Group (DSEG) with a new mission and 20 EB-57 two seat, two engine aircraft. The aircraft were equipped with electronic counter-measures and chaff emitting equipment. The mission, a first for the ANG, was to act as the "friendly enemy" to evaluate both air and ground radar systems all over the United States, Canada, and as far away as Iceland, Korea, and Japan. The unit provided direct operational training of Air Defense aircrews in the accomplishment of their mission when their systems were severely degraded as might be expected during an attack by enemy bombers. They became professional targets, training fighter pilots through the United States and Canada to overcome a potential enemy's radar-jamming techniques. They frequently flew far from home, using complex electronic jamming equipment in simulated attacks over friendly territory to test and evaluate the interception capability of other Air National Guard units.

The changeover did not occur without misgivings and resentment among Vermont Air Guardsmen. The EB-57 airframe was obsolete, the two-engine, two-seated jet "designed somewhere back in 1943-44," and "rapidly approaching museum capability status," according to a column in the Green Mountain Sentinel. This in itself seemed to represent a backward step from the relatively more recent F-102s. Colonel John D. Leonard, the group commander, sensed that the men's attitude was "why us; we have been doing a good job and are recognized as one of the better units; why do we get aircraft that are older than the ones we presently have?" Leonard's response: "Frankly, I think that we got the mission because we have been doing a good job."

The justification usually given for the reorganization and apparent degrading of the VTANG is that the Air Guard nationwide could now accomplish its own training missions without calling on the Air Force to supply fake targets, as had previously been necessary. The VTANG would be responsible for supporting three air divisions covering one-half of the United States as well as the Weapons Center at Tyndall AFB, Florida, and Army electronic sites. Colonel Leonard

considered this a great challenge: "We do the same job as the regular Air Force units, but with one-third the people and at one-third the cost." In any event, when the VTANG accepted its "target" mission, it was doing something which was new to the entire Air National Guard, Service at Home

Units operating specially equipped EB-57s were Defense Systems Evaluation Squadrons (DSES), in theory replacements for tow target units, giving better training against ground and airborne defense systems, realistically simulating an ECM supported attack. Throughout the 1960s there were a number of these units based around the US and a few overseas locations. Eventually most were absorbed into two squadrons of the Aerospace Defense Command.

Summer field training in 1960 was conducted at Otis AFB, MA, from 18 June to 2 July. When the unit returned to Burlington, the Maintenance and Operations Squadrons immediately moved into the facilities that had just been vacated by the regular Air Force. The Administrative, Civil Engineering, Supply, Food Service and Motor Vehicle functions remained on the Williston Road side of the air field. Military vehicles were allowed to cross the east end of the runway after receiving clearance from the tower to transport personnel back and forth.

On New Year's Day, 1960, the Vermont Air National Guard grew up; it was 13 and one half years old. The active Air Force's Ethan Allen Base had closed and the Air Guard took over the mission of providing air defense for the northeastern United States. To accomplish this, two two-man crews were on active runway alert from half an hour before dawn to half an hour after sunset, ready to take to the air in minutes in their F-89D. Their job was to identify and intercept any unknown flying objects penetrating the perimeter. They were hunters.

Field training was conducted in Burlington beginning in 1961 and individuals were allowed to complete their training during optional periods throughout the year. In October of 1962, the VTANG was awarded the Operational Readiness award for having the greatest degree of operational readiness of any F-89 unit in the country.

Work was completed on the 5470,000 weapons storage site on the east side of the field in 1964. This enabled the Air Guard to stock either conventional or nuclear weapons.

On 4 March 1965, three months after his promotion to Colonel, Group Commander Robert P. Goyette and First Lieutenant Jeffrey B. Pollock were killed in an F-89 crash. Lieutenant Colonel John W. McHugo was named Group Commander.

The F-89 left Burlington during the fall of 1965. Although her air-frame was still more than sturdy, her reaction time was considered too slow for the increasing capabilities of the threat. She was just too slow and too low powered to meet the enemy far enough out. Additionally, her fire control system was considered outdated, although the RO (Radar Observers) swore to the end, that the Hughes Radar System was too stupid to know it was being jammed and thus, succeeded everytime. Nevertheless, a proud reminder of her breed returned to the ramp in 1985 when tail number 883 was rescued from the wreckers at a target range and was lovingly

restored by the very aircraft maintenance personnel who once serviced her between missions.

On 12 August 1965, the unit acquired the first of 20 F-102. This gave the VTANG a supersonic capability. Transition into the single engine, single seat jets was accomplished ahead of schedule and without incident.

Shoring up and strengthening the defense of the United States was an ongoing process. The Vermont Air National Guard was included in this process. A squadron of 18 F-102 fighter interceptors, replacing the aging F-89s, arrived in Burlington to strengthen perimeter defense of the United States. The mission of the F-102 was just that continue as a link in the chain defending the U.S. perimeter. Vermont's squadron had responsibility, through the 21st North American Air Defense Region, to defend the Northeast against airborne intrusion. The Soviet Union possessed an armada of long-range bombers capable of round trips to America's heartland. Our job was to deny this threat. From Watertown, New York to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Vermont's interceptors defended a vital part of America's border.

It's 5:30 p.m. and an average day. Four of the 30 or so squadron pilots arrive at the operations command post to start their alert duty. They have arrived after a full day of activity in their professional lives. Some are students at UVM, another is a real estate broker, another is an attorney. Their job now check out their parachutes, survival vests, helmets, don their flightsuits, and pile into the alert van. At 5:45 p.m., the van arrives at the barn a unique structure of four sophisticated aircraft hangars surrounding a small living facility. Each of the four pilots heads to his respective fighter where he is met by the crew chief. Hangar doors open, auxiliary power units come to life, and the preflight begins. After an intense inspection of cockpit switches, missile loads, and aircraft system checks, the pilot is satisfied. It's 6:00 p.m. and the four head into their home away from home. "Changing of guard" is now complete. For the next twenty-four hours, these four pilots, along with their crew chiefs, are just five minutes from sitting alert duty to launching their "Delta Dagger" should the need arise.

During 1966, Major Denis E. Lambert was assigned to the post of Group Commander for the 158th Fighter Group, and Major William J. McGinley was appointed Squadron Commander of the 134th Fighter Interceptor Squadron.

In June 1967, Brigadier General Richard B. Spear retired as Base Detachment Commander after serving in that capacity for 20 years. Lieutenant Colonel Richard. H. Mock succeeded General Spear. On 1 January 1968, Colonel Mock named Lieutenant Colonel Andrew M. Bostock as Group Commander of the 158th.

During 1968 and 1969 several VTANG pilots took part in the Air Force's Palace Alert program under which F-102 pilots took six month tours of duty at Air Force bases around the world. This enabled the Air Force to augment its F-102 pilot roster without mobilizing any Guard units.

A major construction program was undertaken in 1969 including an \$800,000 operations complex and several other projects. The objective was to transfer all ANG activities to the

northeast side of the field and to consolidate operations. The move to the northeast side was completed in early 1973.

In early 1973 Lieutenant Colonel Bostock, the Flying Safety Officer for the Group, logged the 25,000th accident-free hour since the last major aircraft accident, which occurred in November 1967.

In April, 1974, the Green Mountain Boys found themselves no longer hunters but the hunted. As the "friendly enemy," flying EB-57, the Vermont Air Guard was now known as the 158th Defense Systems Evaluation Group. They became professional targets, training fighter pilots through the United States and Canada to overcome a potential enemy's radar-jamming techniques. They frequently flew far from home, using complex electronic jamming equipment in simulated attacks over friendly territory to test and evaluate the interception capability of other Air National Guard units.

The changeover did not occur without misgivings and resentment among Vermont Air Guardsmen. The EB-57 airframe was obsolete, the two-engine, two-seated jet "designed somewhere back in 1943-44," and "rapidly approaching museum capability status," according to a column in the Green Mountain Sentinel. This in itself seemed to represent a backward step from the relatively more recent F-102s. Colonel John D. Leonard, the group commander, sensed that the men's attitude was "why us; we have been doing a good job and are recognized as one of the better units; why do we get A/C [aircraft] that are older than the ones we presently have?" Leonard's response: "Frankly, I think that we got the mission because we have been doing a good job."

The justification usually given for the reorganization and apparent degrading of the VTANG is that the Air Guard nationwide could now accomplish its own training missions without calling on the Air Force to supply fake targets, as had previously been necessary. The VTANG would be responsible for supporting three air divisions covering one-half of the United States as well as the Weapons Center at Tyndall AFB, Florida, and Army electronic sites. Colonel Leonard considered this a great challenge: "We do the same job as the regular Air Force units, but with one-third the people and at one-third the cost." In any event, when the VTANG accepted its "target" mission, it was doing something which was new to the entire Air National Guard, Service at Home

The EB-57B that were assigned to the 158th DSEG were equipped with electronic countermeasures and chaff emitting equipment. The 134th Defense Systems Evaluation Squadron received its new aircraft in June 1974 and took on its new mission to act as an "Aggressor Force". The purpose was to evaluate both air and ground radar systems throughout the United States, Canada and other nations such as Iceland, Korea and Japan.

In June 1974 the 158th FIG became the 158th Defense Systems Group (DSEG) with a new mission and 20 EB-57 two seat, two engine aircraft. The aircraft were equipped with electronic counter-measures and chaff emitting equipment. The mission, a first for the ANG, was to act as

the "friendly enemy" to evaluate both air and ground radar systems all over the United States, Canada, and as far away as Iceland, Korea, and Japan. The unit provided direct operational training of Air Defense aircrews in the accomplishment of their mission when their systems were severely degraded as might be expected during an attack by enemy bombers. The unit won the Flying Safety Award, the Aerospace Defense Command "A" Award, and the Outstanding Unit Award.

1976 Tragedy struck on the afternoon of March 17th, when a VTANG EB-57 crashed east of Tyndall AFB, Florida. Capt. Charles W. Diggle, III., of Randolph, VT, pilot, and Capt. Bertrand R. White, Jr., of Glens Falls, NY, electronic warfare officer, were both killed while on a routine electronic target mission for the F-106 assigned to the Aerospace Defense Command Weapons Center.

1978 In March, Operation Team Spirit took 64 guard members to Kwang Ju, Korea, for a two-week deployment as part of a joint exercise between Korean and American forces. The VTANG was the only ANG unit invited to participate in the exercise. The itinerary was Burlington, VT, to McChord AFB, Washington; to Shemya AFB, Alaska; to Midway, Wake and Guam Islands; then to Kadena AFB, Japan; and finally, Korea.

The last deployment for the 158th DSEG took place during August 1981 when 29 members and 4 EB-57s deployed to Keflavik, Iceland for two weeks. Initially equipped with 17 EB-5B and 3 B-57C, the unit lost two aircraft during separate accidents in 1976 and 1980. EB-57B 52-1499 was delivered to the Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson AFB, OH, on August 20, 1981. The aircraft, piloted by LtCol. Dave Hurlbut, was the first EB-57 to part the Green Mountain Boys. On November 23, 1981, a first group of three EB-57B to be delivered to Air Force Bases for static display were launched. EB-57B 52-1500 was kept in Burlington for display on the base after accumulating 8433.2 flying hours.

The 134th DSES, began giving up their Canberras in October through December 1981, the last two departing Burlington, Vermont, on December 14, 1981 for desert storage at Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona. These were both 'C' models; 53-3831 and 53-3856. The pride that this unit had in their Canberras was reflected in the way they had these two B-57Cs painted in their final years of service. They were "restored" and operated in their original all-over black paint scheme just as they had been when they left the factory in 1955, over 26 years before their retirement.

During the B-57 days, deployment was the name of the game. The unit's contract with the regular Air Force was to keep a minimum of eight of its electronic warfare airplanes "on the road" at any given time, providing target forces and electronic counter-measures training to all components of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) as well as Pacific and European based American Air Forces. In order to support this mission, it meant that spare crews, mechanics, supply technicians and a large array of tools, equipment, and spare aircraft parts had to be loaded into a C-130 or C-141 and follow the strike force, usually 4 EB-57's, to a forward staging base, often in another country. There, while the rest of the world was sleeping, these support groups would quietly and efficiently bring the flightline to life as they prepared to

launch the "friendly enemy," the air crews of the Green Mountain Boys, into the darkness in another attempt to find a crack in our nation's border defenses. Jet fuel was loaded, oxygen filled, chaff tanks bulged at the seams with tiny metallic strips designed to confuse the unsuspecting interceptor pilots. One by one, every system was checked and rechecked until the crew chiefs were content that their 'bird' was ready to safely and effectively carry out its assigned training mission. They worked like freedom depended on it ... it did. Meanwhile in the operations building, the aircrews of the 'friendly enemy' were at work pouring over charts, flight plans, performance data and target intelligence (much the same information as a Soviet bomber crew might be getting at that very moment). These Green Mountain boys were every bit dedicated to getting through to the target. Their job was realism. They made sure they planned, flew, and reacted just as a Soviet bomber crew might in the same situation. They had to be sure they provided the American and Canadian interceptor crews they were trying to defeat with the best and most realistic training Yankee ingenuity could provide.

The planning done, the hour arrived, the pilots and electronic warfare officers don their suits and helmets, and walk out to the waiting strike force. The flightline, ablaze with lights, takes on a new aura of sound and activity. The aircrews meet with the crew chief, the real owner of the airplane they will fly. He is the third member of a trio of professionals. He represents shop mechanics, motor pool, supply, administration, fuels, etc., everyone you don't see. . . . He represents the hopes, dreams, hard work and dedication of the 750+ members of the Guard whose jobs never take them to the flightline but who are there in spirit. He is those guardsmen who support the mission and without whom he would never be able to tell the two waiting crew members that "old 500 is ready to fly tonight's mission."

The craft accepted, the pilot and electronic warfare officer squarely shoulder the responsibility for the success or failure of the hours of dedicated hard work that has been done by so many to enable the Vermont Air Guard to get to this point in the checklist.

The switches are thrown, the eerie red glow of cockpit lighting dims momentarily, as the aircraft is seemingly engulfed in a shroud of black smoke from the starter cartridges. The engines are running, the wheel chocks are pulled, a thumbs up from the crew chief (his silent wish of good luck, safe mission and safe return) and at precisely 1:54 AM, "IDOL 401." as this B-57 will be known for the next two hours, rolls out of the chocks. . . .

Capt. Bertand R. White, Jr. and Charles W. Diggle III were killed in a EB-57 accident near Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., on March 17, 1976. An engine failure destroyed the aircraft during a high speed, low-level mission. Neither ejection was successful.

Feb. 3, 1980 was the first day of the 158th's Unit Training Assembly weekend. A typical winter Canadian arctic high pressure system brought very cold, but clear weather to all of the Northeast. Capt. Robert W. Noble, pilot, and Lt. Col. Howard E. Travis, EWO, departed Burlington as a single ship at 1:30 p.m. on a routine training mission. Noble had joined the VTANG the year before after a tour as a USAF F-4 instructor pilot stationed in England. Travis was Chairman of the Physical Science Department at So. Burlington High School at the time and

a long time Green Mountain Boy. He had previously flown and pulled air defense alert at Burlington in the F-89 during the 1960's. After a short low-level flight across Lake Champlain, the crew initiated a heavy weight, simulated engine out approach to runway 35 at Plattsburgh Air Force Base. Heavy weight meant that there was a full load of 18,000 pounds of fuel in the plane, and simulated single engine approaches were required training events for the crew to practice engine out procedures. The Canberra engines were 26 feet apart, which resulted in a big asymmetrical thrust problem when only one was operating. During these approaches the pilot retarded one engine throttle to idle and used lots of rudder to hold the Canberra wings level. Something went horribly wrong towards the end of this approach. The aircraft violently rolled after departing controlled flight on very short final approach, and Noble or Travis, or both, initiated ejection. The sequence in the EB-57 was that the single canopy blew off first, followed by the ejection of Travis in the rear seat and then Noble in the front seat. Ejection seats have an explosive charge that very rapidly blows the seat clear of the aircraft. An attached lanyard then pulls a pin and a rocket motor ignites, accelerating the seat hundreds of feet before the parachute automatically deploys. Travis' ejection was at very low level and the trajectory parallel to the ground. Upon separation from the aircraft his seat began to hit small trees that were part of a grove just off the south end of the runway. The impact with the first tree turned his seat so that the back was absorbing the blows coming from impacts with more trees at the same time it was decelerating. His chute never deployed and he was found sitting on the edge of his seat by a passing police officer. Travis' boots were high in the trees. Astounding, miraculous? Both and more. It is believed that no one else has ever survived a similar non-chute deployment ejection. The very short timing delay between the back seat firing and then the front became the difference, in this case, between surviving and not. Noble tragically died during the ejection. Travis was found to have several broken bones, enormous internal bruising and was in shock after being flown by helicopter to the local hospital. The aircraft was totally destroyed. Fortunately, there were no occupied structures in the vicinity, and the South Plattsburgh Fire Department was able to control the blaze after some three hours. The next day, in a very crowded briefing room full of aircrew and maintenance people, the 158th's Flight Surgeon, then Maj. Don Majercik, gave a briefing in which he described Travis' injuries and what was being done medically for him. Travis was 44, and in great physical condition, but he was a very badly injured man. His spleen had been immediately removed, but after his kidneys failed the surgical team was not able to perform a further operation to reconnect several pieces of pelvis that had been crushed at the joint of the femur. The internal bruising was so severe that it kept clogging the dialysis machine. It took five weeks of dialysis before the kidneys partially recovered and the leg joint pieces healed. Majercik attributed Travis' survival to his condition and lifestyle. Always seen eating salads, oranges and fruit juice at lunch time around the squadron as part of his personal fitness program, Travis was the exception to us double-cheese pizza and soft drink people. (In the days after the accident it was amazing to see the change of diet among a lot of folks who worked in the operations building.) Today, the long recovery now a memory, Travis is still in excellent condition. Knee injuries from the accident precluded running for exercise, but he became an avid rower. Travis and his wife, Jackie, enjoy kayaking and sailing on Lake Champlain near their home in Grand Isle, and similar activities in the Florida Keys during the winter. So, if you happen to notice a tall, fit and tanned kayaker making pretty good time across the water in the islands of Lake Champlain in the summer, you

just might be looking at one very happy and content Howard Travis, Lt. Col., Vermont Air National Guard, (Ret.); a survivor from the "57 Days".

In 1980 the 158th began a transition to 20 F-4Ds. For the first time in its history the VTANG would no longer be a part of the Air Defense Community. The unit became part of the Tactical Air Command (TAC) with the primary mission of ground attack and close air support.

Beginning in 1982, weekend Unit Training Assemblies often included mobility training to ready the unit for training deployments and potential overseas deployment in case of an emergency. Sorties usually brought the aircraft to Fort Drum, New York to drop practice bombs and strafe ground targets. The 158th Tactical Fighter Group deployed to Gulfport, Mississippi in January 1983 to prepare for the upcoming Operational Readiness Inspection. This marked the unit's first large-scale deployment in 23 years. The previous large deployment had been for summer camp at Otis AFB, Massachusetts in 1960. Three F-4Ds with six aircrew and nineteen support personnel placed fourth in the "Gunsmoke 83" competition for ANG F-4 teams in May. More than 500 personnel, with their equipment, deployed to Gulfport in March, 1984 for the ORI. An ice storm in Vermont delayed the beginning of the inspection for two days. Despite the late start, the inspection ended with the unit setting a field record for the most F-4 sorties flown in one day 82, and all with no aborts!

18 F-4 were assigned to the Vermont Air Guard. No longer was it necessary to provide air defense interceptor duty—in many respects it became obsolete. The task now was to equip and train the Vermont unit for deployment anywhere in the world in defense of U.S. interests.

Honing the skills necessary to provide effective aerial defense and combat skills required constant practice. No longer did one aircraft do one job. The F-4 was able to perform many tasks well, and the pilots and Weapon System Officers (WSOs) required constant practice. Whether it involved Combat Air Patrol, Battlefield Air Interdiction, Close Air Support, Maritime Coastal Interdiction, or Air Defense, the crews had to be able to perform any or all of it skillfully.

It's 6:30 a.m. on a typical Tuesday morning. The four pilots and four WSOs arrive in the squadron for the initial flight briefing—weather, airfield status, type of sortie to be flown, and current items of interest. After receiving this initial information from the supervisor of flying, it's off to the more detailed flight briefing. Flight lead will now spend close to two hours describing the detailed mission. Each member's responsibilities, low level training route description, local area hazards and restrictions, practice gunnery range tactics and techniques, formation positions, radar and search patterns, air and surface threat reactions, and radio procedures are discussed in detail. 8:30 a.m. into the life support room and donning all flight equipment—parachute harnesses, anti-G suits, helmets, and survival vests. At 8:50 a.m. the eight crew members are strapped into the cockpits awaiting lead's call. "Maple 91 Flight, crank 'em up." At 9:00 a.m., the four F-4s head to the quick-check area for last minute air worthiness checks by the ground crew. At 9:10 a.m. all four are airborne and heading down Lake Champlain to the start of the low level training route. The flight descends to 500 feet and accelerates to close to 500 knots. The training route takes them through remote sections of

Northern New York, and 18 minutes later, on to the gunnery range at Fort Drum. Twenty minutes of gunnery practice, and the flight heads home practicing radar intercepts and aerial combat skills. It's 10:15 a.m. and the crews head into the operations building for a thorough flight debrief. With each successive flight, each pilot and WSO becomes better skilled, and better trained.

The Vermont Air National Guard flew the F-4D from 1981 until 1986. The 134th Tactical Fighter Squadron received its first three F-4s on October 9, 1981. The first F-4D, 66-7457 was piloted by Col. John D. Leonard, Air Commander of the VT ANG and the first to qualify on the D. His backseater was Maj. Ken Ritt, the Air Force Advisor to the VT ANG. In May 1983, the 158th TFG placed 4th overall during the Air National Guard F-4 shootoff called "Gunsmoke 83" held at Volk Field, WI. In addition to the competition, the 158th TFG was the first unit to ever fire the .30-mm GE Gun Pod off the F-4D. The last F-4D left Burlington in the Spring of 1986.

The 158th TFG was deployed to Gulfport, Mississippi, in January 1983 to prepare for the upcoming first Operational Readiness Inspection with the F-4D in the new Tactical Air Command mission. This was the first large-scale deployment of the unit since summer camp at Otis AFB in 1960.

The unit was again deployed to Gulfport in March 1984 for the Operational Readiness Inspection. The 158th TFG passed earning a field record for the most F-4 sorties in one day with 82 completed and no aborts.

The 158th TFG received its first F-16A on March 12, 1986. The first official flight of Vermont's F-16 took place on June 3, 1986 with LtCol. David C. Hurlbut in F-16A #767 and Capt. Scott D. Baldwin in F-16B #044. The unit kept flying the F-16A until 1990 when the unit's aircraft were brought up to ADF standard. During that transition, the 134th FIS received some other F-16s on loan and the first production F-16A, 78-001 was assigned to the unit for a short time. 1986 On April 1st, the flight line of the VTANG changed with the arrival of the F-16 and the subsequent departure of the F-4D's. The first official flight of the F-16 was June 3rd with Lt.Col. David C. Hurlburt and Capt. Scott D. Baldwin making a formation take-off in an A Model, tail number 767, and a B Model, tail number 044; the very last F-4 flight was flown by pilot Lt.Col. David Ladd and navigator Capt. J. J. Totman on August 20th. The Falcon brought with it an increase in part-time Guard positions of over 100 personnel and an estimated \$8.2 million in new construction and facility upgrades. Guard members in all AFSC's, not just pilots, attended a wide variety of schools, from maintenance to water survival. Slowly, as the pilots returned from F-16 schools, the arrival of F-16's increased. At the beginning of July, only 5 planes were assigned, but by the end of September, all 20 were accounted for.

VTANG pilots realized the full meaning of the mission when, on October 20th, Captain Scott D. Baldwin and First Lieutenant Niall G. Campbell intercepted two Soviet TU-Bear "F" aircraft over the Atlantic Ocean.

1987 This was a change of mission from Air to Ground, to Air to Air, the mission that the VTANG has performed for most of its history. Alert facilities were created during the first half of the year and the 134th FIS came up on alert on July 1st. The full meaning of the mission was realized on October 20th when Capt. Scott D. Baldwin and ILt. Niall G. Campbell, intercepted two Soviet TU-95 Bear over the Atlantic Ocean. The following describes the intercept in detail: Lieutenant Campbell: "It was ten of two in the morning when we received the phone call telling us to get up and get over to OPS as soon as possible. Two minutes later the actual scramble horn went off, meaning that we had 12 minutes to get airborne. Scotty and I both put on our flight gear, went to the airplanes, cranked the airplanes and took off within the allocated time. We were airborne in approximately eight minutes. We proceeded up to Gander where we met up with a tanker from Loring AFB. We took gas from him and proceeded off to a CAP point northeast of Newfoundland and stayed there until the Soviets were within a certain range. After topping off our gas tanks we proceeded out and intercepted the two Russian bombers. We stayed with them for approximately one hour and then headed back to Burlington. The whole mission took a little over seven hours. We arrived back a little past nine in the morning, so it was a good long sortie."

Capt. Baldwin: "Definitely stressed our bladders. Basically all I would add to the mission was that when they called us up and told us to come over to OPS we thought we had a little time to relax. As we were getting dressed the horn went off and you get quite an adrenaline rush. It was pretty exciting all the way through intercepting the Bears and escorting them. It's one of those things that I imagine everyone in this unit will get an opportunity to do, but I am sure glad we were the first. As I say, it was real exciting up to and including when we left the Bears. On the way home you start getting the feeling that it was an awful long mission. I personally almost fell asleep three times driving home and I only live about four miles from the base. It was very tiring. The whole experience was very exciting and rewarding. It is one of those missions that it is OK with me if we don't have to repeat it every day."

Two F-16s intercepted two Soviet TU-95D Bear Bombers over the Atlantic Ocean on March 1st. This intercept brought the total of intercepted aircraft to 31 since the units change of mission in April 1988.

1991 The 158th became the first guard unit to be deployed for a second time to Howard Air Force Base, Panama, in support of Operation Coronet Nighthawk, when 15 officers and 45 enlisted personnel deployed between May 25th and June 22nd. The personnel were in support of 6 F-16A/B's from the unit.

1991 The reduced tensions with the Soviet Union impacted the DET's role in coastal intercepts. DET 1's Maj. Gregory A. Pick reported that as of the time they left Bangor, Maine, in August, there had not been a Russian "Bear" scramble in a year and a half. The unit's scramble activity included aircraft in distress, aircraft lost off air traffic control radar and unidentified aircraft. Late August and early September, saw 158th participation in the Green Flag Exercise at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. Green Flag is a large scale employment exercise involving 5-10 AF/ANG units and focusing on electronic combat and countermeasures. The deployment was broken into two waves, with a total of 67 personnel. All squadrons were represented in support of 13

pilots and 6 aircraft. Eight aircraft, 12 officers, and 50 enlisted personnel deployed to Tyndall AFB, Florida, for Weapons Systems Evaluation Program (WSP) support and Dissimilar Air Combat Training (DACT). The unit had eight live AIM-7M's authorized for firing and each was fired by a pilot who had not fired live rounds.

1992 Members of the 134th and 158th participated in the Sentry Buccaneer/Air Defense deployment to San Juan, Puerto Rico, from January 13th to February 29th. The purpose of the deployment was to find an alternate site for Howard AFB; it was determined that Puerto Rico was not a cost-effective alternative for patrolling Central America. The 158th participated in exercise Amalgam Chief 92-2 at CFB Bagotville, Quebec, Canada, during the first week of June. Five F-16A's, were supported by 5 officers and 7 enlisted personnel as part of Bagotville's Canada East Evaluation, which is Canada's equivalent to the USAF's Operational Readiness Inspection.

Colonel David Ladd turned the reins of command of the 158th Fighter Group over to Lieutenant Colonel John K. Scott on December 5th 1992. At the same time, Lieutenant Colonel John R. Strifert accepted command of the 134th Fighter Squadron. The first part of 1993 focused on preparing the unit for an Operational Readiness Inspection scheduled for June. Ability to Survive and Operate exercises filled the drill weekends. Exercises included shelter stays and a variety of flying scenarios that tested employment and air sovereignty. During the inspection, 247 members deployed to Alpena ANG Training base in Michigan as the forward base crew. The group included 23 pilots and 12 F-16As. The results of the inspection proved very successful to everyone concerned.

1993 On February 11th, at 4:00pm, two Vermont Air Guard F-16's took over the escort duties for a Lufthansa Airbus A310 that had been hijacked over Europe, with a final destination of JFK International Airport, New York. Capt. Douglas E. Pick, flight leader, and Capt. Richard N. Harris, Jr., followed the Lufthansa jet until it landed safely at JFK, then returned home.

1993 An Alert Force Evaluation was conducted by Headquarters Air Combat Command, augmented by North American Defense System (NORAD), at Burlington, on March 23rd. The scenario involved two F-16's scrambling on an unidentified, suspected drug smuggling aircraft. The F-16's intercepted and took a hand-off from 102nd FW personnel. 158th personnel then were asked to continue to shadow, to identify the aircraft and, if possible, to take pictures.

1993 Forty Air Guard members participated in Amalgam Chief held at Bagotville, Canada, between May 3rd and 7th. Six F-16A's were flown during the exercise, which was also hosted by NORAD.

1993 It was officially announced in August that the 158th had been selected to go off 24-hour alert at Burlington. As of July 1st, the unit would no longer fly intercepts for the northern tier, although the DET 1, stationed at Langley AFB, Virginia, would continue to do so. Maj. William H. Etter accepted the command of the 134th FS on August 1st. Maj. Etter, an F-16 pilot, had been with the unit since 1987. He served as an active duty pilot from 1980 to 1987, and was

previously training officer for the 134th. An F-16A belonging to the VTANG crashed on August 27th, while on its way to DET 1. The aircraft was over the Atlantic Ocean when it developed a problem. The pilot landed at the Cape May Municipal Airport, but the runway was too short. The plane hit a highway and continued past the runway to crash in the marsh. Fortunately, the pilot, Maj. Michael Scott was able to eject uninjured. Maj. Gen. Donald E. Edwards, Vermont's Adjutant General, commended Maj. Scott's skill in keeping the incident from being much worse than the loss of the plane. The 158th participated in exercise Coronet Nighthawk in Panama from November 5th, to December 5th. The deployment involved 6 F-16A's, 11 pilots, and 188 enlisted personnel. For the first time since 1980, the 158th lost a pilot in operational flying. 2Lt. Stephen L.C. Taylor crashed on November 29th, while on a training mission out of Kingsley Field, Klamath Falls, Oregon. Lt. Taylor was flying an F-16A during flight training with the 114th Fighter Training Squadron.

In 1994, the 134th said goodbye to the F-16 ADF with a 14-ship flyover during the February UTA and started another transition to the C model. The 134th received F-16C block 25.

The Vermont air National Guard F-16s participated in a joint operation with Canadian Air Force CF-18s early in February as they intercepted 4 Soviet bears outside Canadian airspace. According to the office of the Adjutant General of the state of Vermont, the F-16s took off from the Vermont air National Guard base at Burlington at 9:30 PM February 3 and joined 2 Canadian aircraft from Bagotville Québec in intercepts off the coast of Newfoundland. Canadian and Vermont Air Guard aircraft each intercepted 2 Soviet aircraft allowing the Soviets to come no closer than 412 km from the coast of Newfoundland. The Soviet aircraft were escorted clear of Canadian and United States airspace. At no time did the aircraft enter the protected air space. The Vermont air guard aircraft required refueling in its operation and were assisted by KC-135 from Loring Air Force Base and directed by US Air Force airborne warning and control system aircraft. The F-16s assigned to the 158 TFG Vermont air National Guard.

1996 The unit acquired two Block 25 F-16's from Tucson, Arizona. Four Fabrication Section Personnel accompanied the planes to the Sioux City ANG to strip, sand, prime, paint and stencil the entire aircraft. This was a first for personnel of the unit and saved the ANG thousands of dollars.

By mid 1998, the mission of the 158 Fighter Wing changed from an air-to-air combat unit to an air-to-ground mission. Vermonters began to train in Tucson, Arizona as the Air Force had no slots in their traditional schools. As a result of the transition, Detachment 1, then stationed at Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, no longer existed. After 10 years and homes in Bangor, Maine and Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, the detachment received de-activation orders. Training to the air-to-ground mission continued to date. In the fall of 2000, the Vermont Air National Guard deployed to Saudi Arabia as part of an Aerospace Expeditionary Force. With Vermont in the lead, guard units from New Jersey and Texas joined Vermont to form a rainbow of units to cover the 90 time period. Together the three units patrolled the skies in Southwest Asia as part of Operation Southern Watch. The Vermonters took the first 30 day period and split the time into two periods. Personnel rotated into the country in two shifts

while some members remained in country the entire time to provide continuity throughout the period.

Lieutenant Colonel Scott Baldwin found himself faced with an in-flight emergency one evening while participating in night flying exercises. Rather than abandon the aircraft when the throttle assembly broke loose, LTC Baldwin remained with the aircraft until he could run it out of fuel. He dumped the external tanks into Lake Champlain when they ran dry and then coasted onto the airfield at Burlington completely unpowered. He landed in a shower of sparks from the dropped tail hook dragging on the runway but landed the aircraft safely and with minimal damage. He credited his training and the excellent support he received from the ground while he ran the fuel down. 2009

An F-16 Fighting Falcon, deployed with the 134th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, takes off for a combat mission in Southwest Asia, Dec. 13, 2016. The unit was able to fly combat operations within 15 hours of arriving at the deployed location.

When the 134th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron arrived at the 407th Air Expeditionary Group in early December, few people outside the two units would have expected them to generate combat airpower 15 hours after landing. But that is exactly what the Airmen in Southwest Asia did. "Typically it will take at least 48 hours to start running aircraft through and provide combat effective aircraft, but the nation called and asked us to produce those aircraft in a much shorter time frame," said Lt. Col. Brian Lepine, the 407th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron commander. For Airmen already stationed at the 407th AEG, this was validation of the beddown capabilities they had worked hard to fine tune throughout their deployment. "The whole time we have advertised that we can accept aircraft and generate combat airpower within 24 hours," said Maj. John Green, the 407th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron commander. "We've always said, 'we are going to set you up for success and you are going to be ready to rock when you hit the ground,' and that is what we've done." Having aircraft and personnel ready to fly combat missions in support of Operation Inherent Resolve less than a day after arrival is a more complicated task than it may seem on the surface.

One major challenge presented to the unit was the phased cycles of maintenance required by the F-16 Fighting Falcons. In addition to other incremental maintenance, these jets require an extremely detailed inspection after every 300 hours of flight. It is critical that aircraft deployed here hit that mark at staggered intervals to keep a healthy squadron in the fight. "They are going to look at every nook and cranny and make sure that there is not chafing of the wires and look at areas that we don't typically look at post- and pre-flight," Lepine said. "Typically for a guard unit, that will be every year and a half. We are going to do every aircraft in the time we are here at least once on that phase line."

Knowing the F-16 would be flying so many more hours than usual, the unit did not want to bring jets that are due for major maintenance overhauls during the deployment. Because of this, an Air National Guard unit ordinarily has about 12 months to prepare for deployment – the 134th EFS had one month. To ensure there would be enough capable jets available to meet the high demand for the air-to-ground capabilities the unit is providing, ANG units from across the nation offered to help. In addition to personnel from various units, Alabama, New Jersey and

Wisconsin all provided F-16s for the mission. "Those Airmen out there were doing that heavy maintenance for us as well, so it really was a collection of all of us pulling together," Lepine said. "When we called in those resources, they weren't just polishing canopies. They were making sure that the aircraft were ready to go."

While maintainers were prepping jets at home, the 407th AEG worked with an advanced team of Airmen from the fighter squadron to ensure the base was ready when they arrived. Many of those Airmen are full-time guardsmen who had to quickly leave their civilian lives behind to get here on time.

"Our Airmen had to drop all of what they were doing to do that," Lepine said. "They had to go to their civilian employer and say I am not coming to work in about a week." But the Airmen encountered few problems in doing so. "It was very heartwarming to know that the community where we live in the Burlington, (Vermont), area is so in support of us being here," he said. "That relieved a lot of the pressures from the Airmen." One of the first teams to arrive in theater was the munitions unit. "We have munitions in place, but we needed a team to get here to build the munitions up," Green said. "Those guys showed up and they were fired up and started building bombs." During the condensed preparation phase, it was not uncommon to see an Airman working a 15-hour day according to leadership, but it was worth it in the end. "It was very cool and rewarding to see our teams come together and accomplish the things that we did," Green said. 2016