

178 RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

392 Fighter Squadron constituted, 26 May 1943
Activated, 15 Jul 1943
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945
Redesignated 178 Fighter Squadron, and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946
Received formal recognition on 16 January 1947
Redesignated 178 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1 Jun 1951
Redesignated 178 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 1 Jan 1953
Redesignated 178 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Hamilton Field, CA, 15 Jul 1943
Santa Rosa AAFld, CA, 11 Oct 1943
Sacramento Mun Aprt, CA, 10 Dec 1943-8 Mar 1944
Stony Cross, England, 5 Apr 1944
Ibsley, England, 7 Jul 1944
Carentan, France, 31 Jul 1944
Cricqueville, France, 15 Aug 1944
Peray, France, 7 Sep 1944
Clastres, France, 13 Sep 1944
Juvincourt, France, 28 Oct 1944
St Dizier, France, 6 Feb 1945
Codans, France, 16 Mar 1945
Frankfurt/Eschborn, Germany, 11 Apr-Jul 1945
Seymour Johnson Field, NC, 9 Sep-7 Nov 1945
Fargo, ND

ASSIGNMENTS

367 Fighter Group, 15 Ju11943-7 Nov 1945
133 Fighter Wing

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-39, 1943
P-38, 1944
P-47 1945
F-51, 1947
F-94, 1954
F-89, 1958
F-102, 1966
TF-102
F-101, 1969
F-4, 1977
F-16, 1990
C-21, 2007

Support Aircraft

AT-6
C-47
B-26
L-5
T-29

COMMANDERS

LTC Richard D. Neece
Maj Robert M. Johnson
LtCol Donald H. Flesland, 1968-69
LTC Wallace D. Hegg, #1977
LTC Michael J. Haugen, Apr 1986-Jun 1989
LTC Richard J. Utecht, 1994-1995
LTC Ricky D. Gibney, 2006-2008

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

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

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

France, 25 Aug 1944

Germany, 19 Mar 1945

Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army

6 Jun-30 Sep 1944

16 Dec 1944-25 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1972

1973

EMBLEM



MOTTO

NICKNAME

The Happy Hooligans

Hooliganism - When it all started is difficult to pin down. A positive I.D. emerged sometime in the 60s with the assumption of command by (the then LtCol) General Duane S. "Pappy" Larson to the 178. A personification of the North Dakota frontier spirit as a moniker, its roots lie within the Steve Canyon comic strip character of Happy Easter and His Hooligans. It is manifested in an attitude of comradery, more closely knit than most, possessing an undercurrent of the campaigner and his rugged philosophy of "can do"

OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 9 May 1944-8 May 1945.

North Dakota had tried for years to acquire an aviation unit, but its efforts failed in 1922 as did those of Earle R. Sarles, adjutant general, in the mid-1930s. General Edwards told one air supporter in 1940, "Our drawback is that we do not have a city in the state that can support an air unit." Postwar policy guaranteed each state at least one flying unit.

Traditionally, the states held the right to select home stations for all organizations; but in 1946, the National Guard Bureau stipulated that Fargo, the state's largest city, would serve as the squadron's new home. General Edwards and Governor Aandahl did not disagree. As the adjutant general told a Devils Lake man, "Plainly and frankly....If Fargo, with 32,000 population is able to handle this Air Squadron in the opinion of the War Department, it is the only city in North Dakota that can." Fargo's Chamber of Commerce mounted an impressive campaign, sending a notebook of aerial photographs of Hector Airport and detailed statistics on the city's population and labor force. One segment of the airport contained hangars, barracks, and other buildings manned by an Army Air Force plane-ferrying command during the war. Fargo offered these as the Air National Guard's facilities.

General Edwards, Maj Landom, and Cpt Johnson made three trips to Fargo in Jul and Aug to recruit pilots and mechanics. Because of the complexities of the air service and the state's unfamiliarity with aviation, Edwards turned over the organizational effort to Col Neece. (With tongue in cheek, the adjutant general wrote one correspondent, "It has been said that any resemblance which the Air Corps bears to the Army is coincidental and not intentional.") Fargo's reluctance to sign a contract for Air National Guard facilities at Hector Airport delayed organization. Neece could not begin recruiting until all were assured that the Air National Guard would have a home. He told Edwards men asked him every day when they could sign up. "The majority of those I have had conversations with are extremely interested in the unit," he explained, "and once the 'go-ahead' is given I am sure we will be able to make rapid progress." On 30 Oct 1946, General Edwards wrote Neece, "Enclosed please find authority to organize the Squadron and its allied units."

Received formal recognition on 16 Jan 1947 Harsh winter weather prevented flying operations for some time. With no aircraft and very few people, our first home was a borrowed drill floor in the Army Guard Armory in downtown Fargo. We grew fast in those early years, from a starting effort of 23 officers and 44 airmen we burgeoned to 50 officers and 299 airmen by the end of 1947. We moved to Hector Field that year and there flew, fixed, and otherwise supported T-6, F-51s, B-26 and C-47s. From primitive summer camps and evening drills with minimum equipment we grew.

First of the fighter planes assigned to Fargo's 178th fighter squadron, P-51 which arrived at Hector airport from Kelly Field, TX, Friday, flown by Maj W. J. Stangel, of the regular army. Fresh from the factory and fully equipped, the fighters are furnished with all combat devices, including machine guns.

Headquarters for the prospective fighter squadron was set up in the Fargo Army Recruiting

Station located downtown.

The same year the North Dakota Air National Guard signed an agreement with the City of Fargo for the use of surplus military facilities at Hector Airport. The squadron's airport installations consisted of a leased hangar, a city-operated firehall, and several pre-fab buildings which were to house operations, supply, headquarters, link trainer and dispensary. At this time the hangar consisted of four bare walls and little else.

Adequate training and storage facilities for the Air National Guard posed serious problems as well. The old ferry command had left only one immediately usable building, an unheated hangar neither large enough to store airplanes nor small enough to use for offices and classrooms. During the winter of 1947 and again in winter 1947-1948, icy-handed mechanics struggled to carry out airplane maintenance in-below-zero weather. Many of the squadron's F-51s spent the entire winter buried in snow, and airmen dug tunnels from the operations building to the flight line so pilots could get to the few planes that were able to fly. Using all of his persuasive powers to convince the Air Force to build a modern hangar and repair shop for the 178th, General Edwards pointed out that Air National Guard units in other states had received, free of charge, fully developed airfields abandoned by the Air Force after the war. North Dakota did not benefit from the turnover because that service had not built air bases in the state. "In view of the fact that Federal funds were employed to construct the great preponderance of the bases now being used for the Air National Guard, there would be no inequity present if Federal funds were now used to build hangars for North Dakota," he argued. Edwards enlisted the aid of Senator Milton Young in his campaign, but even the senator's efforts failed to move the Air Force. The National Guard Bureau did provide \$250,000 in 1948 to heat the existing hangar and construct offices and classrooms and another \$150,000 to improve concrete aprons.

The first flight of a North Dakota Air National Guard aircraft was made on 20 Jan 1947 by the 178th Fighter Squadron Commander, LTC Neece, in an AT-6. A month later the first F-51 assigned to the squadron was received from Kelly Field, Texas, and by 2 May 1948, the aircraft inventory had grown to a total of 40, including 28 F-51s, 4 AT-6s, 2 C-47s 4 B-26s, and 2 L-5s. Fifty officers and three hundred enlisted men from the 178th Fighter Squadron, 178th Utility Flight, 178th Weather Station, and Detachment B, 233rd Air Service Group

13 June 1948 marked the first day of the 178th's first summer encampment. It was held at home since the practice of holding summer camps at an air base on a wing strength basis did not originate until the following year.

The squadron's entire personnel, which at this time totaled about 200 officers and men, lived on the post during the encampment. A squadron mess was set up and meals served on a regular schedule coordinated with training activities. This novel time schedule allowed the unit to get a maximum of activity in during the daylight hours. When the squadron held its reveille at 0600 hours it actually was only 4 a.m. in the city of Fargo one mile away. It's not easy for several flights of F-51's and B-26's to creep quietly into the air. Two of the airports runways

point directly over portions of the city and many an irate citizen awakened at what, to him, was 4:30 or 5 o'clock in the summer morning, made the telephone wires hot with a complaint to operations. The complaints were handled as diplomatically as possible and the training flights kept on.

In July of 1948, Major Donald C. Jones was appointed commander of the 178th Fighter Squadron, relieving LtCol Neece, who had been acting in that capacity in addition to his duties as Air Force Senior Advisor. That summer, construction was started to increase the Air Guard facilities.

The winter of 1948-1949 was a particularly bad one for North Dakota as well as the central part of the United States, which suffered one of the worst blizzards in history. Roads were blocked; people, livestock, farms, and communities were isolated. Food, medical supplies, and help were needed immediately. The North Dakota Air Guard, true to the spirit of the "Guard", was instantly on hand dropping hundreds of tons of feed for livestock, food for the stranded, and relief for the distressed.

On 3 February 1949 Governor Fred A. Aandahl ordered the 178th to begin a hay lift out of Minot. The squadron responded immediately and a C-47, along with several crews, was alerted to leave for Minot. It was during this period that the 178th hit one of the high points of squadron history. During the hay lift the 178th more than justified its two-year existence. The unit responded to the distress call swiftly and efficiently. The first C-47 was quickly joined by another along with several more crews to maintain, service and fly the hay lift missions. By the end of the first week, Governor Aandahl reported there were more requests for help than the two planes could handle. Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa immediately offered the services of their Air National Guard squadrons and put crews on call for a time when Squadron Commander Jones of the 178th should find it necessary.

In the spring of 1950, weather embarked on another destructive tear through North Dakota. Heavy winter snows had piled up in the valleys and a sudden period of warm spring weather poured torrents of water into the rivers. One of the worst floods in the state's history was the result. The part the 178th played in this disaster was not big, but was none the less important. An urgent call had gone out for sandbags to keep the rising water away from key power plants and other public utilities in stricken areas. The bags were needed in a hurry and the 178th was the logical outfit to make the delivery. Ten thousand sandbags were ferried by C-47's and dispersed to needy agencies.

Just a few days after the 178th returned from Camp Williams, the war broke out in Korea. Rapidly increasing world tension from this date on brought a succession of calls to active duty to National Guard and Reserve units of all types. The 178th was not to receive its call until six months later Apr 1951. Even so, the unit did receive indirect representation on the fighting front. Eight of the squadron's F-51's were transferred to the Pacific Theater of Operations in September. The planes were ferried to California by squadron members and there they were modified, loaded aboard aircraft carriers and sent to Korea. The groundwork for mobilization of

the 178th wasn't laid any too soon. In mid-January orders were received at squadron headquarters that the 178th North Dakota Air National Guard Squadron was to become a part of the U.S. Air Force effective 1 April 1951. The unit was assigned to the Strategic Air Command. Fifty-one officers and 340 airmen made the transfer. The Air Force and Air Guard had no experience with mobilization, and the move to Georgia was poorly organized. Essentially, Homer Goebel recalled, it was 'fall out in Fargo and fall in at Georgia.' The Air Force had not well integrated Air National Guard units into its command structure before the war and, as the 178th's commander, Maj Robert M. Johnson, reported, "some difficulty was encountered in working into an entirely new wing organization and converting to the Strategic Air Command Fighter Wing structure." The 178th stayed at Moody until mid-Oct 1951, going through an intensive training period. Pilots flew daily, taking gunnery practice, while maintenance crews worked to keep the planes flying. In Oct, the squadron accompanied the 146th Wing to George Air Force Base, Victorville, California, for reassignment to the Tactical Air Command.

Thereafter, the Air Force selected individual airmen and pilots to go to Korea and other Air Force bases in the United States and Europe. By Apr 1952, few original members remained, and those who did feared the 178th might not be reconstituted in North Dakota. Cpt Marley Swanson wrote General Edwards at that time requesting data on the squadron's future. As one of the few North Dakota officers left, Swanson had airmen coming to him regularly with questions about their chances for pilot training and opportunities for permanent technicians' jobs after the war. "Also, I am vitally interested in the reforming of the unit back in Fargo," Swanson noted. The adjutant general's office could not give him much information. Ultimately, the Air Force released the 178th in Dec 1952 and returned it to North Dakota as a Guard unit, but most Air Guardsmen had finished their duty tour before that and had gone home individually.

The Air Force conducted a limited experiment in 1953 in which selected Air National Guard units maintained a runway alert program with planes and pilots on duty several hours a day, prepared to scramble and intercept unidentified aircraft entering United States airspace. During 1953, meanwhile, the North Dakota Air National Guard rebuilt itself. Owing to the scarcity of pilots, North Dakota began participating in the Air Force's Aviation Cadet program. The squadron selected promising young airmen, often students at North Dakota Agricultural College in Fargo, and sent them to pilot training schools. This training was particularly important, for many World War II pilots were too old, by Air Force standards, to fly fighter planes and had to be replaced. Also, the Air National Guard was going to switch to jet fighters soon, and the older men had no experience with them.

Following the Korean Conflict from January 1953 to July 1954, the 178th Fighter Squadron was reorganized under a table of organization of 25 pilots and 123 airmen, Robert M. Johnson, commanding. Homer G. Goebel returned as the Chief of Staff for the North Dakota Air National Guard. We had to start over from scratch. The few officers and men who returned with the unit at the end of the Korean Emergency formed the nucleus of the North Dakota Air National Guard of today. The F-51 that served the fighting forces so well in World War II and Korea was once again the unit equipped aircraft. For a while the unit had more planes than pilots.

In August of 1954, the North Dakota Air National Guard became an active member in the defense structure of the United States. Two fully manned, combat equipped fighters were placed on 14-hour Air Defense Command Alert. The North Dakota Air Guard was assigned the responsibility of defending the skies from hostile attack from Duluth, Minnesota; to Rapid City, South Dakota; to Great Falls, Montana.

Like their counterparts in the Army Guard, airmen discovered that they seldom received equipment in good condition from the active force, and what they did receive could be called new only in the sense that they had never previously had the models sent by the Air Force. Jet fighters assigned from 1954 onward were in a pretty sorry state when we got them," James Buzick recalled. The men invariably had to overhaul the planes completely, including engines, hydraulic systems, electronic equipment, and even airframes. Every aircraft model change meant a complete turnover in spare parts, which numbered in the thousands. The sad condition of the aircraft compelled the Air National Guard mechanics literally to learn them from the inside out and they became adept at repair and maintenance.

The Fighter squadron quickly grew in size and was reorganized in 1954 with an Air Defense mission. In addition to pilots, the fighter squadron was authorized radar observers for the first time. That year the North Dakota Air Guard converted from the propeller driven F-51 to faster, radar-equipped jet aircraft. Before long, the F-51 was just a fond memory. The T-33 trainer and the two seat, pilot and radar observer operated F-94-A and -B, were soon defending the North Dakota skies.

To accommodate the faster and more complex jet aircraft, the runway was extended some 2,000 feet. Later, larger ramp space, a new hangar, a crash station, support mission buildings, associated roads and fences were constructed.

The facilities, including a fire-crash station, a 7,000-foot concrete taxiway and huge concrete ramp in front of the hangar, cost approximately \$1,500,000 and will enable the squadron to better accomplish its mission of aiding in the nation's air defenses.

Participation in air defense with jet aircraft necessitated enlarging and improving Hector Field. The Air National Guard rebuilt and expanded the runways, aprons, and taxiways in 1953 and 1954 and constructed a new hangar in the latter year, for total of \$1,883,600 in improvements. Further runway construction came in 1958, at a cost of nearly \$950,000. Additions in 1958 and 1959 included a warehouse and a new operations and training building. By 1961, the Air National Guard held real property at Hector Field valued at \$5,000,000, nearly all of it provided by the federal government. Operating expenses at the end of the 1950s exceeded \$2,000,000 annually, with drill pay approaching \$500,000 yearly and the salaries for permanently employed air technicians over \$800,000. In 1957, the Air Guard held \$19,460,000 worth of supplies, equipment, and aircraft, and a total of \$29,000,000 in 1961. The Air National Guard thus became a substantial government investment in less than ten years after the Korean War at a level John Fraine, Frank White, or Gilbert C. Grafton would have found unimaginable.

In 1958, the 178th FIS converted from the F-94C to the F-89D. The North Dakota Air National Guard, by this time, was performing a 24-hour ADC alert mission, providing at least 2 manned combat-ready fighter interceptor aircraft to intercept, identify, and destroy unknown aircraft around the clock. The following year the F-89J replaced the F-89D. The "J" model provided increased range and speed, superior radar, and highly improved armament. Instead of conventional rockets, the F-89J carried two MB-1 rockets armed with nuclear warheads.

After the initial difficulties of reorganization in 1953 and 1954, the Air National Guard had little trouble in maintaining its numbers. It grew from 263 officers and enlisted men in 1953 to 798 in 1961, or ninety-three percent of its authorized strength. The squadron halted its recruiting efforts in 1959 because it had nearly attained its quota of men and had 92 potential recruits on a waiting list, which grew to 150 men a year later. In part, the Guard needed the waiting list because, beginning in 1957, all its enlistees had to take six months of basic and advanced training with the active forces before joining their local units. The Air Force had limited training facilities and could accept only so many new men each year. Post-Korea draft laws also stimulated enlistments, as they required drafted men to serve a total of six years combined active and reserve duty. Many men chose the six months of basic training and completed their remaining time in the Guard. Many men found the Air National Guard attractive because of the skilled jobs available to permanent technicians, all of whom also had to belong to the Guard. By 1960, nearly twenty percent of airmen were permanent employees, a far higher percentage than in the Army Guard. Employment opportunities offered a valuable recruiting tool, and the Air National Guard clearly drew high-quality recruits. In 1958, for example, only four percent of enlisted airmen lacked a high school diploma while thirty-six percent had one or more years of college education.

The F-102 arrived in 1966. The mission remained Air Defense with a continuation of 4-ship runway alert.

A few years later, in 1968, Melhouse removed the Air National Guard base detachment commander and the fighter group commander after the 119th Fighter Group had failed two operation readiness tests. At the request of Governor Guy, the adjutant general sent a retired Air Force general to investigate conditions at Hector Field and make recommendations. When the inspector advised removing the current commanders, both World War II veterans, and replacing them with a younger man who would serve as both base and group commander, Melhouse selected Lieutenant Colonel Alexander P. Macdonald for the dual command. "Initially," Melhouse remembered, "I received much criticism for the change," but Governor Guy shielded him from political attack and Colonel Macdonald rejuvenated the Air National Guard

The 119th Fighter Group rebounded quickly after 1968 under Colonel Alexander P. Macdonald's leadership. In the early 1970s, the North Dakota Air National Guard won an unprecedented number of Air Force and Air National Guard achievement awards and became the first Air Guard unit ever to win the Aerospace Defense Command's William Tell Meet twice in a row.

This biennial competition included Air National Guard, Air Force, and Canadian Air Force fighter- interceptor squadrons in an overall contest for superiority in aerial shooting, aircraft maintenance, and weapons loading. In 1974, the 119th became the first Air Guard outfit to win the Hughes Award, which went to the Air Force or Air National Guard unit with the highest overall efficiency in maintenance and training. It broke precedent again in 1974 when it became the first Air Guard organization to win the Daedalian Maintenance Award for achieving the best weapons system maintenance record. Numerous other Air Force and National Guard Bureau awards won in the 1970s attested to the 119th's successful training program.

The North Dakota Air National Guard was not called in 1968, and it did not suffer continual reshuffling as did the Army Guard. The type of aircraft it flew determined its yearly numbers and organization.

The 119th Fighter Group lost over 100 officers and enlisted men in 1968 when it converted from the F-89J to the F-102A. Though the latter plane was supersonic and "the most sophisticated aircraft in...the unit's history," the changeover to a single-seat plane reduced strength. Two years later, the F-101B, a two-seat aircraft, replaced the F-102A, and the Group's membership jumped by 150. The Air National Guard first exceeded 1,000 officers and enlisted men in 1973 and, thereafter, under the total-force policy, consistently maintained a force of over one hundred percent its authorized number.

North Dakota's airmen left for their first out-of-state field-training deployment in ten years when over four hundred men and unit aircraft flew to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, in 1969 to participate in an Air Defense Command exercise. On 27 August 1969, the unit's C-54 transport plane was lost on a flight out of Elmendorf. Lieutenant Colonel Donald H. Flesland, commanding officer of the 178th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Captain Eddie E. Stewart, Master Sergeant Ingvold Nelson, and Master Sergeant Floyd D. Broadland were lost with the aircraft. The wrecked C-54 was found three years later. The remains of Ingvold Nelson were identified and interred separately; the remaining three crewmen were buried in a common grave. More frequent out-of-state deployments came in the 1970s, chiefly for the annual "Combat Pike" weapons-firing exercises, a fifteen-day tour at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. Other occasionally scheduled deployments for operational readiness testing and special exercises took airmen on active duty for up to thirty days a year in the late 1970s, yet another consequence of the total-force program.

23 March 1972 A McDonnell F-101B Voodoo of the 119th Fighter Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard, crashes into the house of Gerald Reed at 1121 26th Street N, Fargo, North Dakota, killing pilot 1st Lt. Burton T. Humphrey, and injuring Mrs. Reed. Systems officer 2nd Lt. Sanford O. Borlaug ejects from the plane and survives with injuries.

7/3/2007 - FARGO, N.D. (AFPN) - Members of the 119th Wing flew its first unmanned aircraft system mission as an MQ-1 Predator flew July 2 from Fargo. Airmen of the North Dakota Air National Guard squadron is flying the Predator after converting in January to new missions of unmanned aircraft and the C-21 cargo aircraft. The Predator is a medium-altitude, long-

endurance, remotely piloted aircraft primarily used for interdiction and reconnaissance. The 119th Wing converted from the F-16 Fighting Falcon jet mission to Predators and C-21s. The C-21 is an interim aircraft leading up to the joint cargo aircraft, expected to be available by 2011. "This is an example of how truly incredible the members of the North Dakota National Guard are," said North Dakota Gov. John Hoeven. "Our Soldiers and Airmen continue to make significant contributions on the frontlines in Iraq and Afghanistan, and now they are able to do it right from Fargo." "This week marks the beginning of a new era and an exciting future for the North Dakota Air National Guard. The 119th Wing is at the forefront of future unmanned aircraft systems," said North Dakota National Guard Adjutant General Army Maj. Gen. David A. Sprynczynatyk. "The hard work and dedication of the Happy Hooligans have made this a very successful transition. The 119th Wing is leading the way and will stay relevant for years to come." "The North Dakota Air National Guard has flown fighters for 60 years, but now, we're bringing all of the skills from the fighter mission into the Predator mission," said Col. Robert Becklund, the 119th Wing commander. "This is a dramatic and cultural change for our unit and we're proud to be a part of this new and exciting mission." Members of the wing have been training for the new positions of the Predator mission. "It is great to be a part of this air and space power mission," said Lt. Col. Rick Gibney, the commander the reconnaissance squadron. "It is exciting and rewarding to be a part of this mission that involves the war on terrorism, homeland security and domestic contingencies."

Yankees Replace Hooligans: Airmen of the Connecticut Air National Guard's 103rd Airlift Wing, the Flying Yankees, at Bradley ANG Base in East Granby left last month on a deployment to Southwest Asia, the unit's first overseas stint with its new C-21 transports. The Connecticut Air Guardsmen, all of whom volunteered for the two-month tour, relieved members of the North Dakota ANG's 119th Wing, the Happy Hooligans, who spent two months performing their own inaugural C-21 rotation in the combat theater. Just as the 119th Wing did, the 103rd AW dispatched its own mechanics with the C-21s from its 118th Airlift Squadron and is not relying on contractors in theater to keep these aircraft flying. "We've proven that we can effectively provide maintenance at home station and now have the opportunity to demonstrate our capabilities in a deployed location," said Lt. Col. Jerry McDonald, commander of the 103rd Maintenance Group. One Notch in the Belt: Members of the North Dakota Air National Guard's 119th Wing, the "Happy Hooligans," on July 27 completed the final sortie of their first rotation in the combat theater with their C-21 transports. "It's the first time the Happy Hooligan tail flash has flown in combat," said 1st Lt. Lee Teigen, one of the C-21 pilots. These Air Guardsmen carried out more than 200 sorties during 90 missions, moving more than 400 persons during this two-month tour, during which they operated from an air base in Southwest Asia as part of the 379th Expeditionary Operations Group. "One of the interesting things about flying into Afghanistan is seeing the buildup of troops and resources in the country," said Maj. Caleb Christopherson, a C-21 pilot from the wing's 177th Airlift Squadron. The Happy Hooligans have flown the C-21 since 2006. The wing, which is based at Hector International Airport, in Fargo, N.D., relinquished the last of its F-16s in 2007 courtesy of BRAC 2005.

The Air Force has formally assigned a new flying mission to the North Dakota Air National Guard's Happy Hooligans, cementing an agreement the service made with the state's

Congressional delegation that will put C-27 Spartan joint cargo aircraft with the Hooligans in addition to their new unmanned aerial vehicle mission. In a joint release July 29, Sen. Byron Dorgan (D) called the news a "strong statement" that USAF intends to have the unit "keep playing a central role in military operations around the world." Between now and the time the Hooligans can expect to begin receiving the new C-27 aircraft, the unit is flying C-21 business-type airlift aircraft. Sen. Kent Conrad (D) noted that the unit's airmen "have long been recognized as some of the finest pilots anywhere in the world," and added, "I applaud the Air Force's commitment to keeping the Hooligans in the air, flying vital missions." The unit, now known as the 119th Wing, had flown various fighter aircraft for more than 50 years until stripped of its F-16s by BRAC 2005. Both Dorgan and Conrad met separately on July 29 with Acting Air Force Secretary Michael Donley to discuss the USAF vision for North Dakota bases, including plans to activate an additional B-52 squadron at Minot Air Force Base and assign the new tanker to Grand Forks Air Force Base, in addition to its new UAV mission.

In another unprecedented win, the N.D. Air National Guard's 119th Wing has again been named one of the best in the nation. The Wing was presented with the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award at the N.D. Air National Guard base in Fargo, N.D., Aug. 6. It is the 14th time the unit has taken home the award, a nearly unheard of feat with other units earning an average of three to five such designations. Each year, the 119th Wing competes with similar units across the nation for the distinction, and only four out of 31 units earn the honor annually. "Having witnessed all of your accomplishments, I'm not surprised to be here again today to present the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award," said Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general. "Your flying record alone is outstanding, having surpassed 206,000 flying hours in 2010, and I know you've grown that even more this year." The Air Force Outstanding Unit Award is presented to units that have made achievements of national or international significance, including successful involvement with combat and military operations or exposure to hostile actions by an opposing foreign force. Among the many accomplishments cited in the 119th Wing receiving the award for the 2010 fiscal year are its combat and support operations for Air Combat Command, Air Mobility Command and Air Force Global Strike Command. During 2010, 36 of North Dakota's citizen-Airmen deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism, homeland defense missions and stateside emergency support. The 119th Wing also extended its exemplary flying record to more than 38 years encompassing 206,667 flying hours and 108,811 mishap-free sorties. Additionally, the 177th Airlift Squadron was named the 2009 Joint Operational Support Airlift Squadron of the Year while the Minot-based 219th Security Forces Squadron became the first unit to receive nuclear certification for securing Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. Gov. Jack Dalrymple, Sprynczynatyk and Col. Rick Gibney, 119th Wing commander, spoke at the ceremony and placed a streamer on the unit flag to signify the accomplishment. All unit members will receive the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award ribbon to wear on their dress uniforms, as well, and the 14th such ribbon will be added to 119th Wing aircraft. The 119th Wing earned the same honor in 1973, 1974, 1979, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2010. 2011 Above, Gov. Jack Dalrymple presents the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award plaque to Col. Rick Gibney, 119th Wing commander, as Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, N.D. adjutant general, stands by his side at the N.D. Air National Guard, Fargo, N.D., Aug. 6. Below, Sprynczynatyk, left, places an Outstanding Unit Award

streamer on the 119th Wing flag as Gibney lowers the flag into place while Brig. Gen. Cecil "Bud" Hensel, N.D. National Guard Joint Force Headquarters air component commander, center, and Chief Master Sgt. David Harmon, 119th Wing command chief, far right, look on. 2011

On 22 February 2009, at approximately 1235 Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), an MQ-IB Predator remotely-piloted aircraft, serial number 02-003090, impacted the ground in an unpopulated region of Iraq while conducting a combat support mission for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The mishap remotely-piloted aircraft (MRPA) was forward deployed from the 432d Air Expeditionary Wing, Creech Air Force Base, Nevada. A North Dakota Air National Guard aircrew from the 119th Wing, 178th Reconnaissance Squadron based at Hector International Airport (IAP), Fargo, North Dakota (ND) was flying the MRPA at the time of the mishap. The MRPA was destroyed on impact. The estimated cost of aircraft damage is \$4,456,200. There were no ground injuries and there was no known damage to other government or private property. After normal maintenance and pre-flight checks, the MRPA taxied and departed for its mission. The launch occurred without incident and control of the aircraft was passed from the Launch and Recovery Element at Joint Base Balad, Iraq to the Mission Control Element (MCE) at Hector IAP, ND. Within the MCE, control of the MRPA passed between four successive aircrews, and the mission continued without any observed incident or malfunction for over 8 hours. The fourth crew, the mishap crew (MC), consisting of a pilot and a sensor operator, assumed control of the MRPA at approximately 1200 GMT. At the time of the mishap, the MRPA was flying a preprogrammed mission over a classified area in Iraq. The MRPA had been in this orbit for over 1.5 hours prior to the mishap. At 1225 GMT, the MC experienced a lost link condition with the MRPA. A lost link condition refers to a situation in which the Predator aircraft cannot transmit or receive data or commands from any control element via satellite or line of sight communications. The MC was unable to recover the communications link with the MRPA. At approximately 1235 GMT, the MRPA impacted the ground and was destroyed. The Accident Investigation Board President determined, by clear and convincing evidence, that the cause of this mishap was an electrical failure within the Primary Control Module (PCM). This failure caused the aircraft to lose all communications capability. This failure simultaneously triggered pre-programmed flight termination commands, which placed the MRPA in an unrecoverable spin and ultimately resulted in the MRPA impacting the ground. Because the wreckage was not recovered in its entirety, the AIB did not have access to the PCM and was therefore unable to determine the root cause of the PCM failure.

From a top secret building on the Air National Guard base in Fargo, pilots with the North Dakota Air National Guard are flying remotely piloted aircraft around the world. "Our pilots are currently flying the Predators," said Capt. Penny Ripperger, with the N.D. Air National Guard's 119th Wing Public Affairs in Fargo. "They fly them in areas like Iraq or Afghanistan the Predators are not physically in North Dakota." "We fly two orbits, 25/7 from Fargo in these areas. To date, (as of Tuesday) the 178th has flown more than 47,728 combat support hours in the Predator. This persistent 'eye in the sky' provides invaluable ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) support to combatant commanders," Ripperger said. She said nine airmen from the 178th Reconnaissance Squadron, a unit of the 119th Operations Group, have received

a total of 35 Air Achievement Medals. The first mission was flown remotely from the Fargo Air National Guard base during the week of June 24-30, 2007, Ripperger said.

The 178th Reconnaissance Squadron includes operations of the MQ-1 Predator. The MQ-1 Predator is a medium-altitude, long-endurance, remotely piloted aircraft. The MQ-1's primary mission is interdiction and conducting armed reconnaissance against critical, perishable targets. When the MQ-1 is not actively pursuing its primary mission, it acts as the Joint Forces Air Component Commander-owned theater asset for reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition in support of the Joint Forces commander.

The Air Force lost an MQ-1B Predator remotely piloted aircraft in a crash last year near Kandahar AB, Afghanistan, due to engine failure, announced Air Combat Command on Monday. The Predator was on an information-gathering mission on July 14, 2014, when the engine failed, rendering the aircraft incapable of producing sufficient thrust to remain airborne, according to ACC's release, which summarizes the findings of the command's abbreviated accident investigation board report. The airplane was destroyed on impact at a loss of approximately \$4.6 million, states the release. Since no portion of the wreckage was recovered, investigators could not determine why the engine failed. The Predator was assigned to the 432nd Wing at Creech AFB, Nev. Airmen assigned to the North Dakota Air National Guard's 178th Reconnaissance Squadron in Fargo were controlling the aircraft at the time of the mishap. 2015

North Dakota had tried for years to acquire an aviation unit, but its efforts failed in 1922 as did those of Earle R. Sarles, adjutant general, in the mid-1930s. General Edwards told one air supporter in 1940, "Our drawback is that we do not have a city in the state that can support an air unit." During World War n, the Army Air Corps gained a semiautonomous status within the Army when the War Department created the Army Air Force in 1942.

Airmen looked to the postwar years with hopes of seeing a completely separate Air Force standing equal to the older services, the Army and Navy, but this did not occur until Congress approved the National Defense Act of 1947. War Department planners, however, pushed by the National Guard Association, provided for an Air National Guard in its postwar planning on the assumption that Congress would create an independent Air Force. Postwar policy guaranteed each state at least one flying unit. Traditionally, the states held the right to select home stations for all organizations; but in 1946, the National Guard Bureau stipulated that Fargo, the state's largest city, would serve as the squadron's new home. General Edwards and Governor Aandahl did not disagree. As the adjutant general told a Devils Lake man, "Plainly and frankly If Fargo, with 32,000 population is able to handle this Air Squadron in the opinion of the War Department, it is the only city in North Dakota that can."

Fargo's Chamber of Commerce nonetheless mounted an impressive campaign, sending a notebook of aerial photographs of Hector Airport and detailed statistics on the city's population and labor force. One segment of the airport contained hangars, barracks, and other buildings manned by an Army Air Force plane ferrying command during the war. Fargo offered these as the Air National Guard's facilities. The state, the National Guard Bureau, and Fargo's city council then entered a lengthy wrangle over proper compensation to the city for these buildings, the negotiations lasting from June through November 1946

before the city finally signed a contract with the National Guard Bureau. Meanwhile, former adjutant general G. Angus Fraser wrote Edwards recommending the Fargo Air Force recruiter, Lieutenant Colonel Richard D. Neece, Jr., as the state's first air instructor. Fraser told the adjutant general, "I don't want you to feel that I am butting into things," but he thought Neece was "one who appears to know how to get along with civilian groups. " The colonel had an excellent war record, had commanded a combat squadron, and had graduated from the Command and General Staff School in August 1945. When Edwards accepted Fraser's advice, Neece became senior air instructor in July.

General Edwards, Major Landom, and Captain Johnson made three trips to Fargo in July and August to recruit pilots and mechanics. Because of the complexities of the air service and the state's unfamiliarity with aviation, Edwards turned over the organizational effort to Colonel Neece. (With tongue in cheek, the adjutant general wrote one correspondent, "It has been said that any resemblance which the Air Corps bears to the Army is coincidental and not intentional. ") Fargo's reluctance to sign a contract for Air National Guard facilities at Hector Airport delayed organization. Neece could not begin recruiting until all were assured that the Air National Guard would have a home. He told Edwards men asked him everyday when they could sign up. "The majority of those I have had conversations with are extremely interested in the unit," he explained, "and once the 'go-ahead' is given I am sure we will be able to make rapid progress."

On 30 October 1946, General Edwards wrote Neece, "Inclosed please find authority to organize the Squadron and its allied units." He advised the colonel to meet with the Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups and place newspaper advertisements calling for enlistments. "I am of the opinion," Edwards commented, "we are losing valuable time. We should be ready to be federally recognized within 30 days."

The Air National Guard received formal recognition on 16 January 1947 when the 178th Fighter Squadron, the 178th Utility Flight, the 178th Weather Station, and Detachment B, 233rd Air Service Group were activated. The entire command included twenty-three officers and twenty-six enlisted men. Although an active Air Force officer, Colonel Neece, the only regular officer to head a North Dakota National Guard organization during peacetime, received permission to take command of the unit. Captain Homer Goebel led the 233rd Air Service detachment and, as a full-time state employee, acted as base supply officer.

The airmen originally held their drills in the basement of Company B's Fargo armory, not moving to Hector Field until April. Though they had no planes in January, in early February they received an AT-6 trainer, and soon thereafter F-51 propeller-driven fighter planes started to arrive. Harsh winter weather prevented flying operations for some time, but the squadron nonetheless was the first full Guard unit to train regularly. Postwar restructuring essentially took a year to complete.

By the spring of 1947, the North Dakota National Guard was intact on paper with all units assigned to home stations and all headquarters organizations activated. Enough prewar officers returned to give the Guard a seasoned leadership. Unlike the first years after World War I, Congress, the War Department, and the National Guard Association readily reached agreement on basic policies. The rapid development of the Air Guard was particularly encouraging. General Edwards displayed effective organizational and political skills throughout the whole effort, guiding the return to peacetime with a sure hand. Despite the prospects for steady expansion and a stable future, the Guard failed to grow at the expected rate in the late 1940s, largely because Congress reneged on its implied promise to fund a larger force, cutting all military appropriations in 1948 and 1949 and forcing the Guard to halt recruiting.

One provision of the National Security Act of 1947 established full-fledged reserve programs for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, in addition to the Army and Air National Guard. All reserve forces competed with the Guard for veterans and new men. The Naval Reserve gave the Guard a difficult time in Fargo in 1947 when it founded a two-hundred man reserve unit.

To the anger of General Edwards, the Navy attempted to take away Company B's armory by offering Fargo a \$100,000 renovation plan and a \$750 monthly rental fee. "They also stated," Edwards wrote contemptuously, "that if it would not interfere with naval operations, the National Guard could remain in the basement." Fortunately, Company B, not the city, owned the armory, but Edwards could not get over the fact that "the officer in charge of Navy affairs in the state makes the statement quite freely that the Navy has plenty of money."

A two-hundred-man Naval Reserve and an Army Reserve unit soon to be activated in Fargo meant, Edwards noted in August 1947, "we have been unable to get enough enlistments to organize Company B." Guard leaders worked hard at recruiting, holding open house at their armories, showing World War II combat films, speaking regularly at local high schools, and using newspaper advertising. They turned increasingly to the radio as a means of spreading the word on the National Guard. When Colonel Neece checked out the first Guard pilot on the F-51, the local radio station transcribed the process and broadcast it several times. "We had quite a few calls from interested parties . . . due to the broadcast," Neece told Edwards.

Adequate training and storage facilities for the Air National Guard posed serious problems. The old ferry command had left only one immediately usable building, an unheated hangar neither large enough to store airplanes nor small enough to use for offices and classrooms. During the winter of 1947 and again in winter 1947-1948, icy-handed mechanics struggled to carry out airplane maintenance in below-zero weather. Many of the squadron's F-51s spent the entire winter buried in snow, and airmen dug tunnels from the operations building to the flight line so pilots could get to the few planes that were able to fly.

Using all of his persuasive powers to convince the Air Force to build a modern hangar and repair shop for the 178th, General Edwards pointed out that Air National Guard units in other states had received, free of charge, fully developed airfields abandoned by the Air Force after the war. North Dakota did not benefit from the turnover because that service had not built air bases in the state. "In view of the fact that Federal funds were employed to construct the great preponderance of the bases now being used for the Air National Guard, there would be no inequity present if Federal funds were now used to build hangars for North Dakota," he argued. Edwards enlisted the aid of Senator Milton Young in his campaign, but even the senator's efforts failed to move the Air Force. The National Guard Bureau did provide \$250,000 in 1948 to heat the existing hangar and construct offices and classrooms and another \$150,000 to improve concrete aprons.

War first touched the Air National Guard in late 1950 when the Air Force requisitioned eight of its F-51 fighters, but the Army did not call the 178th Squadron to service until April 1951. After a month of duty at Hector Field, the squadron went to Moody Air Force Base, Valdosta, Georgia, with assignment to the 146th Fighter-Bomber Wing, Strategic Air Command. Fifty-one officers and 340 airmen made the transfer. The Air Force and Air Guard had no experience with mobilization, and the move to Georgia was poorly organized. Essentially, Homer Goebel recalled, it was "fallout in Fargo and fall in at Georgia." The Air Force had not well integrated Air National Guard units into its command structure before the war and, as the 178th's commander, Major Robert M. Johnson, reported, "some difficulty was encountered

in working into an entirely new wing organization and converting to the Strategic Air Command Fighter Wing structure."

The 178th stayed at Moody until mid-October 1951, going through an intensive training period. Pilots flew daily, taking gunnery practice, while maintenance crews worked to keep the planes flying. In October, the squadron accompanied the 146th Wing to George Air Force Base, Victorville, California, for reassignment to the Tactical Air Command. Thereafter, the Air Force selected individual airmen and pilots to go to Korea and other Air Force bases in the United States and Europe. By April 1952, few original members remained, and those who did feared the 178th might not be reconstituted in North Dakota.

Captain Marley Swanson wrote General Edwards at that time requesting data on the squadron's future. As one of the few North Dakota officers left, Swanson had airmen coming to him regularly with questions about their chances for pilot training and opportunities for permanent technicians' jobs after the war. "Also, I am vitally interested in the reforming of the unit back in Fargo," Swanson noted. The adjutant general's office could not give him much information. Ultimately, the Air Force released the 178th in December 1952 and returned it to North Dakota as a Guard unit, but most Air Guardsmen had finished their duty tour before that and had gone home individually. The airmen's concern for the squadron's future highlighted the Defense Department's controversial Korean War manpower policy, which had a direct relationship to the larger cold-war policy.

Even the popular Air Guard faced recruiting problems in 1953, particularly in winning back the younger men who had experienced their first mobilization. James Buzick estimated that sixty to seventy percent of nonprior service airmen did not rejoin the Air National Guard.

The Air National Guard lost nearly all its pilots, particularly the captains and lieutenants, to active Air Force duty. (All told, 17 of the 50 officers of the 178th Squadron stayed on extended active duty.)

The Air Guard rebounded faster than the Army National Guard, its recovery due partly to the continuing public perception of the Air Force as a more romantic service than the Army, but more importantly to changes in how the regular service itself saw the Air National Guard. Until the Korean War, the Air Force treated the Air Guard as a poor second cousin. Regular airmen had opposed creating a state air arm because it saw no need to share aviation with the states. Fighter and bomber squadrons obviously had only a national mission, and even before the Korean War federal funds accounted for ninety-seven percent of Air National Guard costs. This money came from the Air Force's budget and its leaders resented giving money to the states. They also disliked dealing with state adjutants general through the National Guard Bureau's Air Guard division, for they saw the bureau as merely a tool of the Army. Given these conditions, an unenthusiastic Air Force kept Air National Guard spending as low as possible, made little effort to incorporate it into national contingency planning, and oversaw Guard training indifferently. These practices, to quote a recent study, by 1950 had caused state aviation units to become little more than "glorified flying clubs formed into forty-eight little state Air Forces." Though the Korean mobilization was a fiasco and the Air Force could not readily use Guard wings and squadrons because they had had such poor training and administration, Air National Guard pilots and ground crews individually carried out their duties effectively. Their performance indicated that Guardsmen could be used to augment active units.

Congress would not abolish the Air National Guard; this meant, in any event, that the Air Force had to work with it, and the active service set out to better integrate the Air National Guard into its structure.

Cold-war policies aided the Guard's improved post-Korea status. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's "New Look" military policy, aimed at diminishing defense costs led to cuts in all the regular services and put greater emphasis on reserve components. Although the Air Force took some reductions, it fared better than the other services in the 1950s budget battles. The Air Guard benefited in both instances: its federal budget more than doubled between 1950 and 1960, rising from \$114.7 million to \$233.4 million over the decade. By 1960, Air National Guard units "were regularly involved in the everyday business of running the Air Force." Guard squadrons directly served in fighter and reconnaissance assignments and did reserve duty for troop carrier, airlift, and aeromedical evacuation missions. These changes became evident in North Dakota after 1953.

On 1 January 1953, the National Guard Bureau redesignated the 178th as a fighter interceptor squadron to serve as part of a combined Air Force-Air National Guard air defense program. The Air Force conducted a limited experiment in 1953 in which selected Air National Guard units maintained a runway alert program with planes and pilots on duty several hours a day, prepared to scramble and intercept unidentified aircraft entering United States airspace.

During 1953, the North Dakota Air National Guard rebuilt itself. Owing to the scarcity of pilots, North Dakota began participating in the Air Force's Aviation Cadet program. The squadron selected promising young airmen, often students at North Dakota Agricultural College in Fargo, and sent them to pilot training schools. This training was particularly important, for many World War II pilots were too old, by Air Force standards, to fly fighter planes and had to be replaced. Also, the Air National Guard was going to switch to jet fighters soon, and the older men had no experience with them. North Dakota shifted from propeller-driven F -51 fighters to F -94 Lockheed Starfighter jets late in 1954. It had already joined the runway alert program in August, which required the 178th Squadron to keep two combat-ready planes on the runway for fourteen hours daily.

Practice alerts and scrambles allowed plenty of flying time and kept ground crews busy maintaining aircraft . Though the alert program involved only a small portion of the squadron at anyone time, pilots shared the duty so all could log flight time throughout the year. In 1958, the Air National Guard's air defense role expanded to a twenty-four-hour alert with two planes at the ready. Most important of all, even if limited to only two planes per squadron, the program was 'the first large-scale effort to integrate reserve units into the regular peacetime operating structure of the armed forces on a continuing basis." To that extent, the Air National Guard had become part of the Air Force's daily operations and not merely a partially manned training unit with a reserve role only in wartime. Participation in air defense with jet aircraft necessitated enlarging and improving Hector Field. The Air National Guard rebuilt and expanded the runways, aprons, and taxiways in 1953 and 1954 and constructed a new hangar in the latter year, for a total of \$1,883,600 in improvements. Further runway construction came in 1958, at a cost of nearly \$950,000. Additions in 1958 and 1959 included a warehouse and a new operations and training building. By 1961, the Air National Guard held real property at Hector Field valued at \$5,000,000, nearly all of it provided by the federal government. Operating expenses at the end of the 1950s exceeded \$2,000,000 annually, with drill pay approaching \$500,000 yearly and the salaries for permanently employed air technicians over \$800,000. In 1957, the Air Guard held \$19,460,000 worth of supplies, equipment, and aircraft, and a total of \$29,000,000 in 1961. The Air National Guard thus became a substantial government investment in less than ten years after the Korean War at a level John Fraine, Frank White, or Gilbert C. Grafton would have found unimaginable.

After the initial difficulties of reorganization in 1953 and 1954, the Air National Guard had little trouble in maintaining its numbers. It grew from 263 officers and enlisted men in 1953 to 798 in 1961, or ninety-three percent of its authorized strength. The squadron halted its recruiting efforts in 1959 because it had nearly attained its quota of men and had 92 potential recruits on a waiting list, which grew to 150 men a year later. In part, the Guard needed the waiting list because, beginning in 1957, all its enlistees had to take six months of basic and advanced training with the active forces before joining their local units. The Air Force had limited training facilities and could accept only so many new men each year. Post-Korea draft laws also stimulated enlistments, as they required drafted men to serve a total of six years combined active and reserve duty. Many men chose the six months of basic training and completed their remaining time in the Guard. Many men found the Air National Guard attractive because of the skilled jobs available to permanent technicians, all of whom also had to belong to the Guard.

By 1960, nearly twenty percent of airmen were permanent employees, a far higher percentage than in the Army Guard. Employment opportunities offered a valuable recruiting tool, and the Air National Guard clearly drew high-quality recruits. In 1958, for example, only four percent of enlisted airmen lacked a high school diploma while thirty-six percent had one or more years of college education. For several years after the Korean War, the Air National Guard followed the Army pattern of weekly three-to four-hour training drills, but then shifted to weekend training assemblies in 1958. The latter permitted sustained training in a realistic military setting and particularly suited Air National Guard work, which stressed aircraft maintenance and repair. Though Guardsmen did not initially like the once-a-month meetings, they eventually adapted to it.

The Air Guard took its annual field training outside the state from 1954 through 1959, traveling each year to York Field, Wisconsin. Once again, however, the Air Force broke Army practice, and in 1960 its fighter interceptor squadrons began holding field training at home station. Air National Guard Chief of Staff Colonel Homer Goebel reported after the 1960 session at Hector Field, "Our field training operation was considered more successful than those of previous years." The men found maintenance easier there, they saved time by not moving, and pilots logged twice the flight time as in 1959. Under the air defense program, a Guard interceptor squadron's home station was also its wartime assignment, and it made sense to take field training there. For all intents and purposes, Hector Field became a small, permanent air base under continuous operations. The technicians worked daily, carrying out repair and maintenance, and flight operations occurred regularly.

Like their counterparts in the Army Guard, airmen discovered that they seldom received equipment in good condition from the active force, and what they did receive could be called "new" only in the sense that they had never previously had the models sent by the Air Force. Jet fighters assigned from 1954 onward "were in a pretty sorry state when we got them," James Buzick recalled. The men invariably had to overhaul the planes completely, including engines, hydraulic systems, electronic equipment, and even airframes. Every aircraft model change meant a complete turnover in spare parts, which numbered in the thousands. The sad condition of the aircraft compelled the Air National Guard mechanics literally to learn them from the inside out and they became adept at repair and maintenance.

The Air National Guard flew the F-94, successively models A through C, from 1954 to 1959, then converted to the F-89D, the latter described by Colonel Goebel as "a larger bulky twinjet interceptor" and referred to by the pilots as "beasts." Because of the F-89's "protracted take-off roll and subsequent low rate of climb," Goebel reported in 1960, "We have been receiving an increasing number of complaints ... regarding low flying jet aircraft." They solved the noise problem by moving and extending

the runway. The Air Guard's overall success after the Korean War had significance, partly because the Air Force came to see it as an integral part of the active service's operations and planning, but also because innovations like the runway alert program and the weekend training assembly offered examples for the Army Guard to adopt.

By the early 1960s, the Air Force was evolving a policy that would make the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve ready reserve forces directly assigned to Air Force tactical and strategic commands with immediate wartime assignments. The Air Force wanted to have reserve components fully equipped, well trained, and near war strength, so if mobilization came, these units could move from home station to war assignment without intermediate training, which they had needed in World War II and the Korean War.

North Dakota would have a new adjutant general to guide the Guard through the many changes. Governor William L. Guy astonished many Guardsmen and politicians when he appointed Major LaClair A. Melhouse to the adjutant generalcy in November 1962.

In 1968, Melhouse removed the Air National Guard base detachment commander and the fighter group commander after the 119th Fighter Group had failed two operation readiness tests. At the request of Governor Guy, the adjutant general sent a retired Air Force general to investigate conditions at Hector Field and make recommendations. When the inspector advised removing the current commanders, both World War II veterans, and replacing them with a younger man who would serve as both base and group commander, Melhouse selected Lieutenant Colonel Alexander P. Macdonald for the dual command. "Initially," Melhouse remembered, "I received much criticism for the change," but Governor Guy shielded him from political attack and Colonel Macdonald rejuvenated the Air National Guard. Changes were inevitable after twenty-five years of one man's administration, and General Melhouse bore the brunt of criticism for altering long-established policies, which almost surely would have happened no matter who took the adjutant generalcy. Many forgot that Heber Edwards only held the rank of major when he took office, and that he, too, had moved quickly to put his stamp on the Guard. Given Edwards's long and effective tenure, any man who succeeded him would have had difficulties.

After President Lyndon Johnson announced in July 1965 that carried on continuous operations with its higher percentage of full-time technicians and on-duty air alert detachments, it found it more convenient and useful to space annual training throughout the year, with portions of the 119th Fighter Group reporting for fifteen days active-duty training at separate times. Year-round training allowed the group commander to use personnel "for peak workload periods and encourage 100% attendance." Armory training, or the Unit Training Assembly, as the Air Force called it, emphasized individual study in a wide variety of military occupational specialties. Classroom work and correspondence courses served as preparation for the major Unit Training Assembly activity, on-the-job training, a necessity in the highly technical air arm. The 119th Fighter Group rebounded quickly after 1968 under Colonel Alexander P. Macdonald's leadership. In the early 1970s, the North Dakota Air National Guard won an unprecedented number of Air Force and Air National Guard achievement awards and became the first Air Guard unit ever to win the Aerospace Defense Command's William Tell Meet twice in a row. This biennial competition included Air National Guard, Air Force, and Canadian Air Force fighter- interceptor squadrons in an overall contest for superiority in aerial shooting, aircraft maintenance, and weapons loading. In 1974, the 119th became the first Air Guard outfit to win the Hughes Award, which went to the Air Force or Air National Guard unit with the highest overall efficiency in maintenance and training. It broke precedent again in 1974 when it became the first Air Guard organization to win the Daedalian Maintenance Award for achieving the best weapons system maintenance record. Numerous other Air

Force and National Guard Bureau awards won in the 1970s attested to the 119th's successful training program. North Dakota's airmen left for their first out-of-state field-training deployment in ten years when over four hundred men and unit aircraft flew to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, in 1969 to participate in an Air Defense Command exercise.

On 27 August 1969, the unit's C-54 transport plane was lost on a flight out of Elmendorf. Lieutenant Colonel Donald H. Flesland, commanding officer of the 178th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Captain Eddie E. Stewart, Master Sergeant Ingvald Nelson, and Master Sergeant Floyd D. Broadland were lost with the aircraft. The wrecked C-54 was found three years later. The remains of Ingvald Nelson were identified and interred separately; the remaining three crewmen were buried in a common grave.

More frequent out-of-state deployments came in the 1970s, chiefly for the annual "Combat Pike" weapons-firing exercises, a fifteen-day tour at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. Other occasionally scheduled deployments for operational readiness testing and special exercises took airmen on active duty for up to thirty days a year in the late 1970s, yet another consequence of the total-force program. Preparation for combat dominated training from 1945 to the mid-1960s.

Since the Guard's combat-reserve function loomed so large during the cold-war years, both the states and the federal government paid little attention to the service's second major mission, that of assisting state and local governments to quell disorders, enforce the law, and cope with natural disasters. Yet the need to control urban and industrial disturbances was the major reason that had led to the National Guard's development after the Civil War. Fortunately, because of its rural, agricultural economy, North Dakota did not experience the often bitter conflicts between Guardsmen and industrial workers that occurred in so many states from the 1870s to World War 1. The North Dakota National Guard's first exposure to military aid to civil authority came during the depression-ridden 1930s under Governor William Langer. After World War II, the Guard sporadically assisted civil governments.

In February 1949, Governor Fred G. Aandahl ordered the 178th Fighter Squadron to use its C-47 transport planes to conduct relief operations in the state's northwestern section. Heavy snows had isolated ranchers, and airmen dropped food, fuel, and hay during a thirty-one-day operation out of Minot. Major Donald Jones, the squadron commander, lost his life when his F-51 plane crashed as Jones flew from Minot back to Fargo, the only Guardsman to die during disaster relief operations.

USAF Unit Histories
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