

172 ATTACK SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

375 Fighter Squadron constituted, 28 Jan 1943

Activated, 10 Feb 1943

Inactivated, 10 Nov 1945

Redesignated 172 Fighter Squadron, and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946

172 FS (SE) extended federal recognition 16 Sep 1947

Redesignated 172 FIS

Redesignated 172 Fighter-Bomber Squadron

Redesignated 172 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 12 Apr 1958

Redesignated 172 Tactical Air Support Squadron, 11 Jun 1971

Redesignated 172 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

Redesignated 172 Airlift Squadron, 1 March 2009

Redesignated 172 Attack Squadron

STATIONS

Richmond AAB, VA, 10 Feb 1943

Langley Field, VA, 27 May 1943

Millville AAFld, NJ, 20 Jul 1943

CampSprings AAFld, MD, 15 Aug 1943

Richmond AAB, VA, 1 Oct-11 Nov 1943

Bottisham, England, 30 Nov 1943

Little Walden, England, 28 Sep 1944 (operated from St Dizier, France, 23 Dec 1941- Feb 1945)

Chievres, Belgium, 1 Feb 1945

Little Walden, England, 9 Apr-26 Oct 1945

Camp Kilmer, NJ, 9-19 Nov 1945

Kellogg Field, Battle Creek, MI, Battle Creek, MI
W. K. Kellogg Airport, Michigan, 29 August 1947
Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, 7 May 1951 – 1 November 1952
W. K. Kellogg Airport (later Kellogg Air National Guard Base), Michigan, 1 Nov 1952

ASSIGNMENTS

361 Fighter Group, 10 Feb 1943-10 Nov 1945
127 Fighter Group, 29 Aug 1947
128 Fighter Interceptor Wing, 10 Feb 1951
56 Fighter Interceptor Group, 1 May 1951
4708 Defense Wing, 6 Feb 1952 – 1 Nov 1952
127 Fighter-Bomber Group (later 127 Fighter-Interceptor Group), 1 Nov 1952
110 Fighter Group, 1 April 1956
127 Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 1 Jul 1958
110 Tactical Reconnaissance Group (later 110 Tactical Air Support Group, 110th Fighter Group), 1 Oct 1962
110 Operations Group, 1 Oct 1995 – present

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-47, 1943
P-51, 1944
F-86
F-89
RB-57
O-2, 1971
OA-37, 1980
A-10, 1992
C-21, 2009
MQ-9, 2013

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

Maj Frank W. Steiner
Maj Norman A. Osborne, #1976
LTC Thomas G. Cutler, #1986
LTC Michael Loews, #2010

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Europe

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

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



375 Fighter Squadron emblem



On a disc Celeste, the historical emblem of the 172 Fighter-Bomber Squadron (1954), a patriotic Uncle Sam-Donald Duck character Proper, clutching in his dexter hand a lightning bolt palewise throughout Or, and in his sinister hand, a stylized pistol Sable, surmounting a cloud formation Argent, his dexter foot resting upon a lightning bolt bendwise a sinister of the third, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached below the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "172 AIRLIFT SQ" in Yellow letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel.

The patriotic Uncle Sam-Donald Duck character clutching a lightning bolt and pistol, resting upon another lightning bolt and cloud with his feet signifies the unit's historical lineage to the 375th Fighter-Bomber Squadron of World War II and the unit's global air power employment.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

It all began on 21 December 1946 when 29 men were sworn into Battle Creek's "National Guard Air Corps" at Percy Jones General Hospital by Col F. Anderson, State Guard Air Force Commander. Fifteen former Air Corps Officers were appointed in the new unit on the same day.

The unit designation was the 172 Fighter Squadron. Commander of the unit was Capt Ross M. Norwood. Federal Recognition came on 16 September 1947 and the 172 was assigned a hangar and several other buildings on the northwest section of Kellogg Field. The Federal Recognition Orders were the signal to begin the business of becoming a ready reserve component of the United States Air Force.

Recruiting took a high priority. The original authorized strength of 86 officers and enlisted men (33 in the fighter squadron; 9 in the utility flight; and 44 assigned to Det B of the 227th Air Service Group) was soon expanded to an authorized total of 50 officers and 300 enlisted men. Captain Elmer Leinaar was commander of the Utility Flight and Lts Robert Amy and Walter Forbes were assigned to recruiting duties. Public Information Officer was Lt Alvie Nicholson.

Hangar facilities at Kellogg Field were considered sufficient to provide for the anticipated arrival of 25 P-51; four A-26; two AT-6; two L-5; and one C-47. Arrival of the first six P-51s (D models) in December of 1947 from the 109th Ftr Sq at Minneapolis, Minn was greeted with enthusiasm by the men of the 172 and was a big boost to recruiting.

By late spring of 1948 the number of planes assigned to the Squadron had grown to a total of twenty: 12 P-51s, three AT-6s, and one C-47. In mid-June formation flight training was underway and preparations for their first field training session were receiving the full attention of the Battle Creek Guardsmen. Moving several tons of equipment 200 miles for use during a two-week period was not accomplished without encountering some difficulties but move they did. And on the first day of August the ground crews saw the planes off and climbed into their motor vehicles for the trek to Camp Grayling, Michigan for the Michigan Air Guard's first encampment. Highlight of the two-week period was a combined tactical operation with the 66th Fighter Wing. The remainder of the time was spent practicing aerial gunnery and bombing missions on the lower Oscoda range along Lake Huron; instrument flying and fighter tactics. Training in the support elements progressed in a very satisfactory manner and the Battle Creek Guardsmen returned to their home base proud of their ability to function as a unit and ready for another year of intensive training.

Our first major accident occurred July 22, 1948. Lt Kenneth Cowles, one of the first members of the 172, was killed when his L-5 crashed in a cemetery in Marshall, Michigan.

In an effort to bring the Squadron up to full strength (300 enlisted men & 49 officers) a recruiting contest was initiated in late 1948. Top recruiters would be given a free trip to the New Orleans Mardi Gras. The recent delivery of five more P-51s (bringing the total to 22) made filling the 105 enlisted and 17 officer vacancies a most urgent endeavor. The Battle Creek Guardsmen had acquired a reputation for being one of the most active outfits in the country and didn't anticipate any difficulty in filling their ranks. The recruiting of 16 enlisted men and 10 officers during December brought the Battle Creek Squadron to tops in the State and won the Mardi Gras trip for Cpl Ronald Knight and Pvt Glen Winton, 1st place; SSgt Sam Beronja and SSgt Robert Brewer, 2nd place; and 3rd place went to SSgt W. A. Styer.

Remodeling of the base facilities throughout the year added to the overall sense of activity. After nearly two years of expanding the need for more shop and office space was evident. A two-story barracks building was remodeled to house the admin offices and the flight surgeon. A former day-room was joined to another building near the flight line to gain room for Operations offices and a weather station. Renovating of the warehouse and motor pool, and revamping several other buildings to provide storage space, used up the \$64,000.00 allotted by the Bureau and we were still operating in temporary buildings constructed during WW II.

Our second summer encampment came to a successful conclusion with 18 of the Mustangs returning to home base in formation flight. The Squadron's low average in air-to-air gunnery brought about plans to fly practice missions each Sunday. Air-to-ground gunnery was much more successful with Lt John Flagg scoring 62% and Lt Joe Palmer getting 61%. Ground crews were kept busy keeping planes operational for a total of 994 flying hours over the two-week period.

There was an announcement that the Detroit units would receive jet aircraft in the near future but no such plans for the Battle Creek based units were being considered because of the short runways and inadequate facilities at Kellogg Field. Air Guardsmen and other interested local officials began laying the ground work that would eventually bring about expansion of the Base. A dispute over the service contract between the Air Guard and the city of Battle Creek caused some rumors of moving the Squadron to another location but eventual compromise by both parties assured the 172 a home for a long time to come.

At the beginning of the year the National Guard strength was at an all time high and the Battle Creek Air Guard units were among the leaders in recruiting programs. Early in the year hopes ran high that the Air Force Academy would be located in the Battle Creek Area and the Air Guard was instrumental in supplying the Corps of Engineer Survey Team with aerial & ground photos and data to aid them in their selection of a site.

While later developments placed the AF Academy in Colorado the data and photos provided by the 172 has proved an invaluable source of information over the years. In March plans were

being formulated to extend the runway at Kellogg Airport to a length that could accommodate jet aircraft. Also plans were underway, and requests for Federal funds made to renovate the World War II hangar and buildings housing the 172. Word received later in the month of a drastic reduction in the authorized funds did not dampen the spirits' of the Air Guardsmen and they recruited 26 new members in one week to bring the unit within a few men of full strength.

APRIL- 1950 On the first all-day training period in April affording suitable weather, the 172 Ftr Sq flew 61 sorties for a total of 93 hours flying time. With a total of 22 F-51 in commission, all flights, including a squadron mission of 12 planes, were completed without mechanical mishap.

Returning from the squadron mission, the pilots of the 12 Mustangs tried a new landing pattern which proved successful. All 12 aircraft were set down on the strip within a period of approximately four minutes.

As the fiscal year came to a close runway extension plans were in full swing and the 172 reached its authorized strength of 303 enlisted men and 48 officers. A request was made for four additional officer positions and in June the Unit became the first Air Guard unit to reach full strength.

Release of additional funds by Federal and State sources made it possible to award a \$59,900.00 contract to a local contractor for improving and repairing the Air Guard buildings.

War clouds gathering over Korea brought the 172 to a stand-by alert status.

In July the 172 announced plans to accept applicants for pilot training under the provisions of a new Air Force policy that would allow the Air Guard to have pilot trainees under the Aviation Cadet program.

In August, ten of the unit's F-51 were requisitioned by regular Air Force units for use in the Korean war and rumors of a pending recall were being heard throughout the state.

Announcement in October of the increase in authorized strength of the 172 by 145 enlisted men in order to create a self-sufficient unit seemed to be a strong indication that the unit was slated for recall to active duty and on December 19th public announcement was made that the 172 Fighter Squadron would "report for duty" with the United States Air Force on 1 February 1951.

September 23, 1949, Captain Elmer Leinaar, Lt Mort Schmidt, and SSgt Joe Huston, teamed up to fly two iron lungs from Battle Creek to Detroit and one from Fort Wayne, Indiana to Grand Rapids, Michigan to aid polio victims.

NOVEMBER- 1950 Additional plane service was needed for victims of an automobile accident which happened in Newberry, Michigan. The "Guard" came to the rescue. Lt Bill Haddock and Lt Walter Goff and Joe Guston, Fit Engineer, along with a registered nurse flew to Newberry,

picked up the patients, and returned to Battle Creek enabling the patients to get the needed hospital care.

DECEMBER- 1950 Lt David Huggett and Lt Bill Bouton flew an emergency flight to Boston, Massachusetts to get a dome-type iron lung for polio victim Mary Vestergard. She was a 14 year old girl who was paralyzed from the neck down. The pilot and co-pilot encountered a severe storm and icing conditions in a mountainous area on their return trip from Boston.

The time span for this period of history for the Unit was the few weeks of 1951 prior to Federal Activation on 1 February 1951 through December 1952 when all but a handful of men had returned to reestablish the Air National Guard in Battle Creek, Michigan.

The call to active duty affected approximately 400 men from the Battle Creek area and nearby communities. The men were based at Battle Creek for approximately 4 months and then moves were made in all directions. The largest group was transferred to Selfridge AFB, Michigan and were again commanded by the local commander Lt Col Ross M. Norwood. Others were transferred to Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio, some to Oscoda, Michigan, Newfoundland, Japan, Korea and Germany. Many volunteered for overseas assignments. The first pilot to volunteer for overseas duty was Captain James Kennedy.

While the unit was still based at Battle Creek, many additional civil service personnel were employed to help deactivate the organization plus maintain the base while it was still here.

Ten additional drills were scheduled in the month of January in preparation for entry into active duty service.

The 172 Fighter Squadron became a part of the 56th Fighter Wing at Selfridge AFB, Michigan. The majority of personnel were away from the Battle Creek area for approximately 18 months. The 172 Fighter Squadron was redesignated as the 172 Fighter Interceptor Squadron in May 1951.

The Guard was snowed under by applications for enlistments before the Unit was called into active service on 1 February. The Air Force had so many volunteers they had to initiate a quota system.

Civil Aeronautical Auth. maintained a 24 hours control coverage of the field while our unit was still located at Kellogg Field during 1951.

The last of the planes left for Selfridge AFB, Michigan on 8 May 1951. Last of the units stationed at Kellogg Field left by 30 May 1951 with the exception of the Base Support Unit - they left in October 1951.

The Air National Guard Base was closed for operations from October 1951 to April 1952 with the exception of Security Guard Service which was maintained during the deactivation period.

Plans were still progressing between the Federal Government and the City of Battle Creek for the extension of the present runways at Kellogg Field to a length of 7000 feet (in anticipation of acquiring jet aircraft.) At an estimated cost to be between 300/400 thousand dollars. A statement made in 1951: "It is expected the airlines will begin using jet-propelled aircraft within the next 10 years and Kellogg Field will be ready to serve them." The Airport Board of Battle Creek plans a major project to be completed on the field each year in order to keep up a good municipal airport for this community. In 1950 the high intensity runway lights on the southwest-northeast runway and medium intensity lights on northwest-southeast runway were completed.

Return of the 172 Ftr-Bomber Sq to Kellogg Field and completion of the airport's new jet runway extension were heralded at an informal luncheon in November in Battle Creek by Michigan military officials and Battle Creek and Calamazoo civic leaders.

Following the luncheon, the group met at the airport and journeyed the more than a mile and a half of paved runway and gravel overrun in dedication ceremonies, Two weeks earlier, many of the same officials had made the trip for final inspection of the project. Through its foresight in making construction of the jet runway extension by the Michigan National Guard possible, Battle Creek is one of the first cities in Michigan to have such a runway. "We are extremely proud of this event and occasion," Horace F. Conklin, chairman of the Battle Creek airport board, said. He said the jet runway was made possible through the expenditure of more than one-half million dollars by the Michigan National Guard, adding, "We are proud to have had the opportunity to work with them to make this fine runway possible." Mr. Conklin pointed out that Battle Creek would not have the airport facilities it now enjoys if it had not been for the activity and development at the field by the Air Force and the Air National Guard. Col Norman H. Wiley, commander of Percy Jones Hospital, said that the hospital is "extremely interested in the airport."

Approximately 85 percent of our patients come in by air, and the airport here is one of the reasons why Percy Jones is maintained in Battle Creek and is apt to stay in Battle Creek," Colonel Wiley said. Two weeks earlier, officers present for final inspection of the runway included Lt Col Harry E. Northrup, acting USP&DO; Lt Col Jay I. Nowlen, assistant to the USP&DO; and Maj Versel Case, Jr., assistant to the quartermaster general. Also present were Colonel Nicol and Captain Randall.

Lt Col Ross M. Norwood, commander of the 172 Ftr-Bomber Sq, which was reactivated at Kellogg Field on 1 November, stated that he and other members of his organization were glad to be back in Battle Creek after completing 21 months' active duty with the Air Force.

In October 1952, the 172 Fighter Squadron and its three supporting units were released from active duty, designated the 172 Fighter Bomber Squadron and received F-86.

Approximately 1,000 people attended official welcoming home ceremonies for the 172 Ftr Bomber Sq late in January at the Regent Theater in Battle Creek.

On 16 February Lt Col Ross M. Norwood, who had been commander of the 172 since its beginning, left the squadron to assume the duties of liaison officer between 10AF and the Air National Guard. The four-year appointment made Col Norwood one of the first ANG officers in the nation to be recalled to active duty to fill positions created by the 1952 Armed Forces Reserve Act.

Command of the squadron was passed to Major Robert W. Flagg. Major Flagg joined the 172 in 1948 as operations officer and when the unit was recalled to active duty in Feb 1951 he moved to Selfridge AFB where he commanded the 56th Air Base Group and the 575th Field Maintenance Squadron. He returned to the 172 on 1 Nov 1952 and once again assumed the duties of operations officer.

The first two-week summer encampment for the 172 since 1950 was held at Camp Grayling, Michigan 16 through 30 August. Younger members of the squadron got their first taste of day-to-day military life and put to test the training they had received during drill periods over the previous several months. Officers of the Battle Creek Squadron were particularly anxious to meet the problems presented by this year's maneuvers and results were gratifying. The pilots completed their training missions in record time and work of the ground crews and various sections went smoothly and efficiently.

Repairs were at a minimum on aircraft and other equipment. The supply setup drew high commendations from officers of other sections of the wing. The food service section was complimented for its operation of the mess hall, and other sections were commended for their efficient work.

Many of the 172's sections operated independently, with minimum liaison with wing headquarters and other elements of the wing. Among those independently operating were engineering, food service, communications, armament, operations, supply, and squadron headquarters. Other sections, because of the nature of work involved or because of lack of manpower in other elements, worked as part of the wing sections. These included medical technicians, who manned ambulances on the flight line; fire fighters, who manned crash equipment; air police; motor vehicle section; and photographic section.

From the standpoint of personnel problems, the squadron established an excellent record. Disciplinary action was at a minimum. The men were better supplied with bedding and clothing than ever before. Personnel records were brought up to date and illness and accidents were negligible.

The only member of the 172 who was reported 'lost in action' during the squadron's 21-month tour of active duty for the Korean conflict returned to the United States after being released as

a prisoner of war. Lt Dennis Haley of Lansing, Michigan, was reported missing in action when his C-47 went down over Korea. During the prisoner of war exchange Lt Haley was released. With Lt Haley now accounted for, squadron records show that only one of the 400 men who went on active duty with the unit on 1 Feb 1951, lost his life during the 21-month period. He was Lt William Bouton of Kalamazoo, Michigan, who was killed in a civilian auto accident while stationed at Selfridge Field. He was fatally injured while driving to Pentwater to see his mother.

Monthly stag nights at the club and regularly scheduled family nights were also a part of the squadron's efforts to renew the camaraderie they had enjoyed since their early days.

Gamma globulin to be used to inoculate children in three upper-Michigan communities (Marquette, Negaunee and Ishpeming) against infantile paralysis was the cargo of the squadron's C-46 in a day-long flight that took Lt Col R. W. Flagg, Maj William C. Thomas, TSgts Claude Hill and Randall Bennish and Amn Pete Atzman from Battle Creek to Willow Run Airport (where the medicine was picked up) to Marquette and then back to Battle Creek.

The squadron's C-46, piloted by Maj W. C. Thomas with Capt G. G. George as co-pilot and TSgt Randall Bennish as crew chief, made a four-day round trip to Long Beach, Calif, to deliver supplies and equipment for the International Boy Scout Jamboree held at Santa Ana, Calif.

1954 This year marked the 172's transition into the 'jet age' when they traded their tired and true F-51 for the F-86. The "51s" had been the squadron's primary aircraft since their federal recognition in Sep 1946; had served them well in Korea; and were a welcome part of their return to home base in November 1952. The sense of sadness felt by every member of the Battle Creek squadron at the loss of their beloved 51s was dulled somewhat by the excitement of acquiring the F-86. Transition was not easy. Training money was scarce and long hours were spent setting up and carrying out home base training programs. Every available training slot was utilized by pilots, mechanics and ground support elements, and those who went to formal schools returned to Battle Creek and taught the other members of the squadron. The dedication to duty that was an integral part of the attitude of the Battle Creek Guardsmen from their earliest days was demonstrated once more by the speed and accuracy of the home base training program's effectiveness.

The squadron felt the sharp sting of death twice in this year of transition. On 19 March, Lt Robert B. Smith, of Lansing, died when his F-51 Mustang crashed in the mountains near Tazewell, Virginia. Lt Smith had only been with the 172 for six months but he was a veteran pilot and his loss was felt by all the squadron.

Captain George G. George, of Lansing, Operations Officer in the squadron and the air technician detachment, died when his F-86 crashed in the mountains near Albuquerque, New Mexico, on 21 July. Capt George had flown 72 combat missions in the European theater during WW II and was a member of the 172 at the time of the unit's recall to active duty in Feb 1951; in Korea he was assigned to the 4th Interceptor Command and logged 129 combat hours in the F-86. He

returned to the 172 1 Nov 1952 and, at the time of his death, was on his way to Ontario, California where he was to be an alternate for the Rick's Trophy Race.

A change of scene for this year's encampment. Having outgrown the flying field at Grayling with the acquisition of jet aircraft the squadron would begin performing field training at the permanent training site at Alpena, Michigan. Intensive training was the order of the day every day. It began when the motor convoy left Battle Creek in the wee hours of the morning on the first day of encampment in order to make the reporting time of 1600 hours some 350 miles from home. Daily trips back to home base in the support aircraft to pick up the hundred-and-one items you never think you need at packing time became a routine happening. In spite of the little upsets, all planned training and missions, with pilots averaging 32 hours flying time each, were completed and the Battle Creek Guardsmen returned home with a feeling of accomplishment.

1955 A two-month recruiting drive launched early in the year to bring the 172 up to authorized strength was aimed primarily at young men interested in pilot training. A more comprehensive training program had been instituted for en-listed men in the unit, with each recruit being required to complete 175 hours of basic training. At that time we had approximately 160 enlisted men in basic training programs.

From out of the sky over Battle Creek on a quiet Sunday afternoon hurtled two torpedo-shaped fuel tanks from one of the 172's F-86. One bounced off the roof of a house on Upton Avenue and the other landed in the yard across the street. The empty, 50-pound, 12-foot long tanks were accidentally jettisoned by the pilot as he approached the base for a landing. The normally busy residential street was empty of people and cars at the moment the tanks plummeted to earth. While a thorough check of the ship's system was being made for a possible malfunction it was felt that the proximity of the Salvo switch to the flap handle warranted an intensive refresher training course be initiated to avert such accidents in the future.

In April Lt Col Robert W. Flagg relinquished his command of the 172 to become commander of the 127th Fighter Interceptor Group at Romulus, Michigan. Capt Chester W. Douglass of Kalamazoo was named the unit's new commander. Even though Col Flagg performed his weekend drill duties with the 127th at Romulus he remained at Battle Creek as Base Detachment Commander of the Air Technician Detachment.

June of this year brought us reorganization a new aircraft and a new name. The squadron traded their F-86 for the F-89 became the 172 Fighter-Interceptor Squadron. Transition to the fighter-interceptor mission had actually begun in April when the first Scorpions were delivered. Shortly after the reorganization on 6 June the F-89s were grounded due to the requirement for engine modifications. Curtailment of training was only partial since the squadron had three T-33s and was able to borrow aircraft from other states.

On June 6, 1955, the 172 Fighter Bomber Squadron at Kellogg Field, Battle Creek, Michigan, converted from F-86s to F-89Cs and became designated as a fighter interceptor squadron. At this time they were

under the command of Captain Chester Douglass. (Rank escalation had not yet reached the ANG, and many of their squadron commanders were still Captains, whereas in the regular Air Force, many were Lt. Colonels.)

Movement to Alpena Training Site started at 0300 on 30 July with a convoy of 12 trucks; at 0615 five charter buses departed from Kellogg Field carrying personnel and their gear; at 0630 a private car convoy began the long trek north and at 0800 the pilots took off in ten-T-33s, mostly borrowed. The pilots' training got off to a running start when they left home base. Departing in three flights of three planes each, the T-33s headed for Chicago on the first leg of the flight, which was to take them over Madison, Wisconsin, and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, before they began a simulated bombing attack on the base at Alpena. Flight training, during encampment, was concentrated on instrument flying and ground-controlled approach landings, utilizing the radar controls at Wurtsmith AFB, Oscoda, Michigan. Aircrews logged an average of 45 hours per pilot during the two-week period. The unit's 110 basic trainees, in competition with basic trainees from the Detroit based units, gained numerous commendations for their ability to grasp and solve basic military problems and their military bearing, and were awarded the "Best Flight" guidon. Excessively hot weather during the first week was eased somewhat for the line men by the ingenuity of TSgt Lyle Holley and SSgt Wayne Gregory, both from Battle Creek, and MSgt John Cizmas from Detroit, who scrounged and rehabilitated an old electric water cooler and hooked it up on the flight line with a garden hose and extension cords.

Hurricane Connie's threat to the east coast sent twenty-five Navy Neptune patrol bombers from Brunswick, Maine, inland to Kellogg Field where the 172 made room for them on the parking ramps. Kellogg Field had been selected as refuge for planes based at coastal points subjected to hurricanes and the twenty-five Neptune, with four New York ANG B-26, was the first large group of evacuated planes to arrive. Their stay here was about one week we were just beginning to get used to the look of a full ramp when "Connie" moved away from the east coast and the Navy returned to their home station. Supplying communications, transportation, and generally 'making room' for twenty-nine bomber crews had been a little hectic but we missed them when they left.

In September the owners and occupants of a house located across Highway US-12, but just 2,400 feet from the end of the southwest runway, obtained a temporary injunction that grounded our jets for a total of 84 days. Aircrews were able to keep current by flying from Alpena and Willow Run but a flying unit that can't fly does put in some long days waiting. The time was not wasted, by any means. Since our primary aircraft, the F-89, was already grounded by the National Guard Bureau for engine modifications all ground training was intensified and this respite, unwelcome as it was, served to speed up the learning of our new mission. The injunction was lifted in late December. Seven of the squadron's twenty-four Scorpions were operational, but the remaining seventeen were still awaiting the engine change. Twenty mechanics from Brookley Field, Mobile, Alabama were assigned to the 172 to assist in installation of the new engines and completion date was set for late February. Even with all the problems encountered throughout the year we were 100 men stronger than we had been in January. Basic training was taken over by the Air Force with most of the new airmen going to

Lackland AFB, Texas for six full weeks of training. This lightened the training load considerably and left more time for mission work.

1956 - With the F-89s all airworthy and training progressing at a better than normal rate, change was once again in the offing. Announcement by Maj Gen George C. Moran, Michigan Adjutant General, that the 172 would be expanded to an Air Defense Group in the early spring with a large increase in manpower pointed up the need to continue recruiting efforts. Notification was received from the National Guard Bureau that the new group would be designated the 110th Fighter Group (Air Defense) with a strength of 19 officers and 79 airmen; the 172 Fighter Interceptor Squadron would have 57 officers and 180 airmen; the 110th Air Base Squadron, 8 officers and 124 airmen, the 110th Materiel Squadron, 15 officers and 426 airmen; and the 110th USAF Infirmary, 7 officers and 34 airmen. With the reorganization the overall strength of the unit increased from 539 to 926. The enlistment of 35 airmen and appointment of 4 officers in March was just a good beginning!

Reorganization day came on 15 April and the new commanders were named. Lt Col Robert W. Flagg, commander of the 110th Fighter Group; Captain Chester W. Douglass, commander of the 172 Fighter Interceptor Squadron; Captain George E. Streeter, commander of the 110th Air Base Squadron; Major Richard L. Ford, commander of the 110th Materiel Squadron; and Lt Col James R. Pearce, acting commander of the 110th USAF Infirmary. A 10th Air Force Inspection team arrived bright and early on Sunday morning to pass approval on the new group. The team members were Col R. T. Cronau, Lt Col C. A. Lakin, Maj F. F. Dean, and TSgt Gene Day. In his critique Col Cronau stressed the need of the unit to acquire some doctors to meet the Air Force standards. There were a great many openings throughout the group but the Infirmary, with only one dentist and no doctors, was the most pressing requirement.

Lt Col R. W. Flagg, 110th Group Commander, returned to active duty with the Air Force as an Air National Guard Liaison officer and Major Percy Lewis assumed command of the Group. Captain Howard C. Strand, who had been operations officer for the squadron, was appointed Base Detachment Commander.

Field training in 1956 will be remembered by most of the Guardsmen in the Group at that time as the year of "Alpena Pneumonia." Cold, wet weather during more than half of the two-week period hampered training programs particularly air-to-air gunnery and caused the discomfort of colds and fever to a large number of the Battle Creek Guardsmen. Six or seven days of better weather and that extra effort that is typical of Battle Creek Guardsmen brought the encampment to a successful conclusion, with nearly all planned training completed. Highlight of the two-week period was "Press Day" attended by several newsmen from cities throughout the State. Failure of one engine in the Group's C-47 during an orientation flight for the fourteen newsmen forced an emergency landing at Tri-City Airport near Saginaw where the reporters were picked up in another Michigan Guard support aircraft and returned to Alpena. The unplanned demonstration of Guardsmen to meet and overcome an emergency could not have come at a better time and the resulting publicity was gratifying to Capt Howard C. Strand, who was piloting the C-47, and all of the men in the Group.

In October the Battle Creek Air National Guard was named one of the top ten industries in the Battle Creek area with a net worth of \$54,000,000. At the same time a planned \$4,500,000 expansion of the Air Guard facilities was revealed. The plans called for a new administration building, hangar, motor pool, fire station and warehouse. (Sixteen-and-one-half years later we have all but the new warehouse).

1957 Base expansion plans were still pending. A request for an additional \$400,000 was submitted too late to be included in the Fiscal 1958 budget and hopes for an ILS system at Kellogg Field were fading but the possibility of a GCA system was emerging. Capt Howard C. Strand announced in March that some money would be available in the fall for the planned construction to begin.

Sonic booms over the State were causing some public reaction that had Guard officials busy attempting to educate the general public as to the causes of "booms" and at the same time convince them of the necessity of jet aircraft in the defense of our country. Armed Forces Day activities that included an open house where several thousand people had an opportunity to get a close look at jet aircraft and learn something of the missions they perform along with the Battle Creek Guardsmen continuing to participate in community events apparently had some good effect. By late summer boom complaints were few and far between.

In April Lt. Tom Parshley encountered a low fuel situation and was forced to land his F-89 Scorpion on Kalamazoo's 3,800 foot runway. He burned up two tires bringing the F-89 to a halt 100 feet from the end of the runway. New tires, a starting unit, and fuel were trucked to the Kalamazoo Airport from Battle Creek and Captain Bertrand J. Buckhout flew the F-89 back to Battle Creek by using the afterburners in taking off on the short runway. A year or so earlier an Air Force jet that had been forced to land at the Kalamazoo Airport was dismantled and taken out by truck.

Field Training in 1957 for the Group's 550 members proved their ability to operate independent of the Wing when they attained the highest "in commission" record of any Air Guard unit in the United States. A total of 678 hours flying time was logged on the F-89 Scorpions and the Robert Welsh Memorial Trophy for excellence in air-to-air gunnery was won by Lt. John Myers, Pilot, and Capt Richard Colburn, Radar Observer.

The first phase of the multi-million dollar expansion program of the Battle Creek Air Guard Base began with the letting of bids on September first for seven projects with an estimated cost of \$77,900.00. The initial work included rehabilitation of five buildings, installation of a new heating plant in another building, enlargement of the dining hall, installing tiedown rings for more aircraft, seal-coating the hangar apron and blacktopping the motor pool area. Completion date was the end of November.

In this year the Battle Creek Air Guardsmen traded their F-89 Scorpions and the fighter-interceptor mission for the RB-57s and a Tactical Air Command mission of photo

reconnaissance that was to last for thirteen years. Trading the nineteen F-89s, with their requirement for Radar Observers and an authorized Group strength of over 1,000 men for thirteen RB-57s that required Navigators, and reverting from a Group to a Squadron status relieved the man-power situation considerably. Inactivation of the 110th Fighter Group (AD) came about on 11 April 1958, and redesignation of the unit to the 172 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron was effective 12 April 1958. Activation of the 127th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron with assignment at Battle Creek and an assigned strength of 17 officers and 97 airmen helped the unit to maintain a large portion of those qualified personnel who would have been forced out as a result of the loss of our Group status. The Squadron's first RB-57 was flown in by Major James Hopkins, Air Force Advisor to the Battle Creek Base, and conversion training began immediately.

1959 Cold weather and a heavy layer of ice on the runways at the Battle Creek Base that had stalled flying of the Squadron's RB-57s for about three weeks was overcome by "Operation Ice." The brainchild of Capt Frank W. Steiner, "Operation Ice" was a procedure to clear the 7000 foot runway of an accumulation of ice that ranged from one-half to two-inches thick. An RB-57 C and a tow truck were used. The plane's crew, starting at the end of the runway, reversed the trainer and attached it with a shaft to a tow truck. The engines were started and the blast, which reached back some 500 feet, cleared bone-dry an area about 200 feet wide. The jet was pushed by the tow truck back 200 feet and the procedure was repeated. In this way two thousand feet of runway was cleared in about two-and-one-half hours. We believe this was the first time that jet power was used to clear ice off a runway.

In February the Adjutant General of Michigan, Maj Gen George C. Moran, announced that the last remaining obstacles blocking construction of a new \$1,392,000 Air National Guard Hangar had been removed, and construction was to get under way in the spring. The Battle Creek Air Guard's new facility would include a new hangar, a three-story administration building, and two, two-story lean-tos. Bids for the new building were advertised on 15 March and opened on 15 April. The prime contractor was Miller-Davis of Kalamazoo with a low bid of \$1,212,702.60. Ground breaking ceremonies on 12 May with Maj Gen Ronald D. McDonald, the Adjutant General of Michigan, and Capt Howard C. Strand, Battle Creek's Base Detachment Commander, digging the first shovels of dirt were the forerunners of the actual construction that began on the 15th of May. It would be about seventeen months before the unit could actually move into the 'new buildings.

In mid-June the 172 began night aerial photography training. Each Friday night between 2000 and 2230 hours for several weeks the Squadron flew practice missions in the vicinity of the field and Fort Custer using photo-flash cartridges.

Field Training got off to a slow start this year when weather at the training site in Alpena delayed departure of most aircraft for one day. The entire Wing, composed of two F-84 Squadrons from Detroit, and two RB-57 Squadrons, the Battle Creek unit and one from Hutchinson, Kansas, were performing field training together for the first time. Aside from the nerve-racking screech on the flight line of that many units working against the clock to perform

assigned missions, and the usual housekeeping problems of housing and feeding four squadrons and their support elements, field training was considered a success a "howling" success you might say!

A temporary set-back in construction of the new hangar occurred on August 26th when 60-mile an hour winds caught some of the girder framework at just the right angle to twist it loose from its temporary moorings and lay it on the ground.

The Squadron's first accident with the RB-57s at their home base happened when Capt Carl A. Johnson, Pilot, and Lt Charles Dinsmoor, Navigator, landed their plane with the wheels up. Neither crewman was injured and damage to the aircraft was minor.

In October steel fabricators set in place the first connecting truss girder on the new hangar and somehow the fact that all of that steel work was beginning to LOOK like a hangar was heartening to the Battle Creek Guardsmen. One more Michigan winter in those 'temporary' WW II buildings wouldn't be so bad.

Even though completion of the new hangar did not occur until 1 October it was the high point of the year. The Squadron had demonstrated its proficiency many times by successful participation in several ADC missions — including one over Newfoundland during summer encampment. Strength was over 600 men and training programs were progressing at a satisfactory rate.

We began the process of moving into our new quarters about the middle of October and dedication was set for 19 November. Open house was held from 1000 to 1500 hours and a dedication dinner was served in the new mess hall to about 200 Guardsmen and their invited guests. Later in the evening a dance in the hangar drew a much larger crowd and climaxed the dedication festivities.

Maj F. W. Steiner and Capt R. D. Bartholomew were airborne within 15 minutes after receiving a call from the Red Cross with a request for help in getting nine pints of blood from Lansing to Houghton County Airport in Michigan's upper peninsula. The blood was needed for John W. Rice, editor and publisher of the Houghton Mining Gazette.

Operations facilities having been provided in the new hangar, the movement of the old ops building across Dickman Road to be renovated and used to house the "Gil Hanke School for Retarded Children" became an accomplished fact. The somewhat strange sight of a building being "taxied" down the apron past the jet aircraft was also a gratifying one for the Battle Creek Guardsmen who had spent a lot of their free time earning the money to pay for that "taxi" trip.

In March eleven planes and 36 officers and airmen from the 172 made the 1,000 mile overwater flight to Puerto Rico from Homestead AFB, Fla. in the largest overwater mission attempted by the Michigan Air Guard.

Capt Richard A. Rann, flight instructor with the 172, completed a 400-mile round trip mercy flight in 75 minutes to pick up a serum in Madison, Wisconsin and bring it back to Kellogg Field where State Police took over and carried the serum to a Kalamazoo hospital to save the life of a 13-month boy from South Haven, Michigan.

Eighteen officers and airmen of the 172 volunteered for a 60-day active duty assignment at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. Maj Howard C. Strand, squadron commander, told the group they would be joined by four other Guard bases "to help the Air Force out on a particular problem." Details of the assignment could not be revealed at that time. The three officers and fifteen enlisted men were scheduled to leave on 30 Oct.

MARCH - 1962 -Four members of the 172 were praised by the famous "Red" Adair and "Boots" Hansen for their volunteer aid in helping to cap the burning Farley Oil Well near Albion, Michigan. The crew, headed by MSgt F. A. Kincaid, Fire/ Crash Rescue Specialist, was on the scene for about four hours while the two specialists slipped the friction collar over the well casing preparatory to "snuffing" the six-day fire. The four-man Air Guard crew, MSgt Kincaid, SSgt James E. Sherman, A1C Philip R. Patterer, and A2C David L. Kemper, and the two specialists, "Red" and "Boots," wore the 88-pound aluminum and asbestos suits that are absolutely essential for this type of fire fighting for the four-hour operation.

APRIL - 1962 Eleven members of the 172 joined Task Force 8 for "Operation Blue Straw" — code name for nuclear tests conducted in the mid-Pacific Ocean. The two pilots, Major F. W. Steiner and Lt Robert Carlson, and two navigators, Lt Robert Husband and Lt Robert Miller, flew specially equipped NB-57 aircraft into radioactive dust clouds created by nuclear blasts to bring back air samples of the "hot dust" for study. Ground crews from the 172 were SSgt Francis P. Brown, TSgt Wayne S. Davis, TSgt Clair Hagadorn, TSgt Gerald M. Hanley, TSgt Richard N. Lindauer, SMSgt Paul McArthur and CMSgt Joseph Huston, Jr. The 172 was one of five Air Guard units to lend air and ground crews to the Air Force for Operation Blue Straw and Major Richard L. Ford, of the 172, was selected as liaison officer between Task Force 8 and the Air Guard Units, and Capt Robert D. Yost of the 172 was administrative officer of the ANG contingent. The reason the AF wanted these men was their familiarity with the aircraft used in the sampling. Except for a special "bottle" on the wing tips, and some classified equipment the NB-57 (nuclear-bomber 57) is the same as the RB-57 the 172 flew in their photo reconnaissance mission.

While the New Mexico desert was the scene of many hours of training, the 172 saw four pilots from other units put through a concentrated transition period at Battle Creek ANG Base, Michigan, to learn to fly the RB-57. Heading up this program was Maj Richard A. Rann, aided by Major Howard C. Strand, 172 Commander, and Major George C. Cap, Air Force Advisor for the local unit.

Using but two RB-57s, the four pilots two from Detroit, Michigan and two from Philadelphia, Pa, put in 120 hours of flying to qualify. This transition usually takes about three months under normal ANG procedures but was accomplished in approximately one month (including ground

school). Major Rann had high commendation for the ground crews which worked day and night to service and maintain the two aircraft. Included in the servicing was a jet engine change.

JULY - 1962 - AIRLIFT TO FIELD TRAINING Two C-124s from the 77th Troop Carrier Squadron, Donaldson AFB, SC, airlifted some 150 members of the Battle Creek Air Guard units to Alpena, Michigan for their annual field training. The giant air transports were the largest aircraft ever to land at Kellogg Field at that time.

SEPTEMBER – 1962 Reorganization of the 172 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron to the 110th Tactical Reconnaissance Group with an increased strength authorization (from 525 to 750) will bring the unit's annual payroll to over one million dollars. The new group is commanded by Major Howard C. Strand.

OCTOBER - 1962 The unit's most ambitious mobility test to date began on 5 Oct when C-97 from New Hampshire and Oklahoma ANG units picked up about 100 support personnel from the Battle Creek units to airlift them to Biggs AFB, Texas. Following the support crews were eleven RB-57s from Battle Creek and 20 RF-84s with a support contingent of 300 men from the Detroit Wing. The mission was to test the Wing's mobility capability and provide "new" territory for the photo missions of the RB-57s while the RF-84s took part in a mid-air refueling mission with the Illinois ANG. The 3-day exercise came to a successful completion when the large group of men and aircraft returned to their home stations on 7 October.

Lt Cowles was killed in May 1948 in a crash of a liaison aircraft near the Marshall airport.

Lt Smith was killed when his P-51 crashed into a West Virginia mountain top during bad weather in April 1954.

Capt George died in 1954 when the F-86 he was piloting crashed near Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was enroute to California as back-up pilot for Michigan's entry in the Inter-national Aviation Exposition's first Ricks Memorial Trophy race.

The two-man crew of an RB-57 based at Battle Creek ANGB escaped injury when their aircraft skidded off the runway into a snowbank while landing. The pilot was Lt David A. Hoyt and the navigator was Capt Jere B. Fewlass. After a normal visual approach and landing the left wing-tip hit a snowbank causing the plane to do a 180 degree turn and come to rest off the runway and on the other side of the snowbank. Snow was piled up about four feet high. Damage to the aircraft was minor and the incident did not affect the unit's eligibility for the Flying Safety Award that was presented to the 110th Tac Recon Gp in February 1963.

A year of triumph and tragedy. Early in 1963 the Battle Creek Air National Guard began an all-out effort to recruit prior service men in the Guard's new "Try One" program. With the positive attitude that the "Try One" program designed to give prior service men a chance to look the Air Guard Over would bring the Battle Creek Air Guard's recently formed (Federal Recognition Oct

1962) 110th Tactical Reconnaissance Group up to full strength as soon as possible. The goal was for 150 additional prior and non-prior service Guardsmen by 1 July.

Discovery of the theft of explosives from the Guard Base storage shed caused great apprehension for the safety of the individuals involved. Concentrated efforts by Guardsmen and local area police brought about quick recovery of the extremely dangerous "squibs," "flares" and other ammunition taken by a group of junior high school students.

On 9 May, the Unit underwent an Operational Readiness Test and General Inspection which they passed with colors flying. Colonel M. F. Carruthers, 12th Air Force Team Chief, rated the Group as "one of the best Air Guard groups in the nation." The 110th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, commanded by Major Howard C. Strand, was given an overall rating of satisfactory with several areas described as "outstanding" and "near outstanding."

The Unit's first field training at Home Base, since return from active duty in November 52, was marred by the tragic death of two of their members when their RB-57 crashed on take-off of what was to be a routine training mission. Captain Richard Sanders, pilot, and Captain Glenn D. Hoag, Flight Surgeon, were killed instantly.

JANUARY - 1964 -A dozen members of the Battle Creek Air Guard winged their way from the frozen fields of Michigan to the sunny clime of Puerto Rico in an overwater navigational training flight to Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico, only to discover that they had arrived during one of the few "chilly" periods the island base suffers through each year. Complete success of the training flight was more than adequate compensation for Guardsmen who participated: Majors R. D. Bartholomew, Melvin W. Hollinger, Michael L. Moore, and Tom W. Smith; Capt Kenneth R. Stick; and 1st Lt Dale A. Webster. Navigators were Capts Robert B. Bailey, David L. Boerigter, John F. Stoner, and Carl E. Zienert, and 1st Lt Richard L. Rupp. TSgt Gerald M. Hanley accompanied the flight as crew chief.

Battle Creek Air Guardsmen provided instruction in survival techniques for a group of experienced Battle Creek Boy Scouts in an experimental winter campout. The Air Guardsmen demonstrated survival techniques and arctic first aid by fabricating shelter, traps and first aid from normal items carried on the crew member's person or survival kit at time of bailout. About 160 boys of first class rank or higher braved zero weather to camp out in their tents and sleeping bags. Major Rudolph D. Bartholomew, 110th Tac Recon Gp, survived the night using only the materials available at bailout.

RECRUITING EFFORTS BRING REWARD OF TRIP TO HAWAII Eleven Battle Creek Air Guardsmen flew to Hawaii in March as a reward for their efforts in the mid-1963 Air Guard recruiting drive. In mid-1963 they were announced as the recipients of an "expense paid" trip as winners in a recruiting drive held locally by the Air Guard on a monthly basis. "Expense paid" trip included only the travel expense. Living and other incidental expenses came from the pockets of the men making the trip. The eleven Guardsmen who made the trip to Hawaii, during the period 13-22 March, were Major Elmer J. Boss, CMSgt Joseph Huston, Jr., MSgt Fred D. Doherty, SSgt

Frederick Tichenor, AICs William H. Decker and Henry H.F. McCandless, A2C Thaddeus A. Pendleton, A2C Sherman J. Vandermolen and A3cs Bernard R. Basham, Frank C. Henly and Gerald J. Lake. Delay in making arrangements was due to the lack of any military flights going to Hawaii from the mainland which could facilitate the movement of all the 11 men. At last a New Hampshire ANG mission involving a large C97 cargo plane was made available. The C97 was on a Boston-to-Japan training mission. It dropped the 11 Guardsmen off at Honolulu for their 10 days stay, and picked them up on the return.

JULY - 1964 - Major James E. Tutt was appointed Senior Air Advisor to the 110 Tac Recon Gp, replacing Lt Col George W. Cap who was assigned to duties at Shaw AFB, SC. A veteran of 17 years military service, Major Tutt holds the aeronautical rating of senior pilot. He came to Battle Creek directly from Toul-Rosieres AB, France, where he was the aircraft commander of an RB-66 engaged in aerial photographic reconnaissance. Major Tutt and his wife, Sandra, have three children.

A BUSY FIELD TRAINING! During the first week of field training at Alpena, Michigan the busy Battle Creek based units hosted a group of Cub Scouts - Pack 97 from Ossineke, Mich - at the field training site. A conducted tour of the base and facilities was topped off by the cub scouts being served refreshments at an outdoor snack bar at the base.

JULY/AUGUST - 1964 A feat by aerial teams of the Battle Creek Air Guard, aided by a radar squadron of the Utah ANG, over the Utah desert was the equivalent of "dropping a pea into a teacup from 24,000 feet in the dead of night" while flying at 400 miles per hour.

Members of Battle Creek's 172 Tac Recon Sq, Commanded by Major Frank W. Steiner, were teamed with Utah's 130th Radar Squadron for the first night photo reconnaissance mission in ANG history. The mission was described as a real success.

Twelve of the 172's RB-57s flew from Phelps-Collins ANG Base, Mich to Hill AFB on July 13. Before the actual night mission, a "dry run" was flown over the desert area to give the pilots and navigators a look at what they would be photographing — a triangle with concentric circles laid out on the desert floor. For the mission, the 130th was perched on a mountain top about 80 miles from the target. Their job was to provide direct radar guidance for the 172 air crews. Capt Norman J. Weeks, Photo Intelligence Officer of the 172 described the mission thusly: "It's midnight — Imagine yourself sitting in a darkened stadium seat far behind home plate — On a bleacher seat near the center field Scoreboard is a teacup. It is your job to guide a flight crew, flying at 400 miles an hour a couple of miles up, so they can drop a pea into that teacup without ever seeing the cup."

And considering this is the first time the ANG tried such a mission, Major Steiner considers the results "excellent."

On the "Bomb run" toward the target, the crews of the 172 opened the bomb bay doors and a calculated count-down followed. At the command of "Drop!" from the radar crews, a 168-pound bomb — loaded with 100 pounds of magnesium — was hurled toward the target.

After a drop of 8,000 feet - about 25.5 seconds, the bomb explodes 16,000 feet above the ground with a brilliance of 2.65 billion candlepower dazzling the sky. The flash, equal to about 3,540,000 car headlights, was seen at Hill AFB some 115 miles away.

With the aircraft flying at 400 mph four miles above the desert salt flat, it took a photo computer to move the film ever so slightly while the picture of the ground target was snapped during the flash duration of about one-twenty-fifth of a second. The combination of high intensity light and camera action — plus the precision guidance — produced maximum sharpness and contrast in the aerial photographs.

The project was planned jointly by the NGB, the USAF, the Tactical Air Command, and the Michigan Air National Guard. Success of the mission pointed up the role the ANG plays in conjunction with regular Armed Forces units.

The mission was carried out while the 172 was in summer encampment. Air transport support was provided between the Michigan Base and Utah by a C97 of the Utah ANG. Weather data was supplied the mission by the Wisconsin ANG based at Milwaukee and mobile flight communications by elements of the Alabama ANG.

Flying activities were conducted from the Field Training Site, Alpena, Michigan during a 45-day period in which the main jet runway at Kellogg Field was resurfaced. Major R. D. Bartholomew, a pilot with the Group and Air Technician Base Civil Engineer had averaged 16 hours duty daily while supervising the runway job so he was given the privilege of being the first to land on the newly surfaced strip.

Air Guardsmen from Battle Creek joined regular Air Force crews in helping dedicate an extended runway at Cadillac Airport, Cadillac, Michigan. The 172 sent four of its RB-57 reconnaissance bombers to make several passes over the field as part of the program.

Four Battle Creek Air Guardsmen, Majors R. D. Bartholomew and F. W. Steiner, Capt Rodney Cox, Air Force Advisor, and TSgt W. E. McDonald, flew the Group's C-47 to Marquette, Michigan on 5 March to pick up Mr. Karl Randels, assistant superintendent of the Lakeview schools, and take him to University Hospital at Ann Arbor. Special permission from State Headquarters was needed to perform this mission but once it was obtained the Battle Creek Guardsmen carried it through with their usual dispatch.

The two-week encampment this year progressed at the usual pace with the Group completing all assigned missions and training. The Group was supplemented with the 196th Weather Flight from California, the 157th Tac Control Gp from Nebraska, and the Mobile Control Tower Squadron from South Carolina.

1966 - ALASKA AND OTHER PLACES "An outstanding job of photography done in a professional manner" was the evaluation by regular Air Force officers on the job done by the 110th Tac Recon Group during Exercise Diamond Lil XIX. Commander of the 110th, Maj Richard A. Rann, in reviewing the success of the project said: "I am extremely proud of all the Air Guardsmen who took part in 'Exercise Diamond Lil XIX.' It was because of the hard work of every person in our group that our record of accomplishment was so high." Officers of the Alaskan Air Command, familiar with the difficulties in planning a photographic mission in the most-northern state, indicated that the 110th could expect to best complete 50 per cent of their assigned mission. But the "well-done" plaudits of these officers was forth-coming as the result of the performance given by the air and ground crews of the 110th. At the end of the first week of the mission, the local ANG unit completed over 50 per cent of their assignment and by the end of the two-week project, it turned in a completion rating of 90 per cent of the mission. Maj Rann noted that the key to the success of the operation was a well-coordinated plan which involved not only the local Air Guard unit, but the Tactical Air Command, the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Alaskan Air Command and the support functions at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Anchorage, where the local unit was based. During the two weeks of active duty, the crews of the six RB57s flew over 200 hours on 72 separate sorties. In spite of the extreme high altitude cold, only one camera malfunction was recorded . . . The high quality of the 110th aircraft maintenance resulted in an "in-service" rate of 98 per cent. Only two aborts of aircraft — one on the ground and one in the air — helped maintain the high record of achievement, Maj Rann said. Excluding the 3,000-mile trip to Alaska, the 110th flew 70,000 air miles while engaged in the "photo-recon" mission.

Maj Rann said that "a big share of the hard work in preparation for the exercise was done by many who had to remain at our home base during the flight northward. "Someone had to stay at home to process all the people, see to it that the aircraft were loaded, make sure everyone was aboard the proper aircraft, and more important -someone 'had to mind the store' while we were away. A lot of credit must go to these people who got the show off on the right foot from the beginning," Maj Rann observed. The Alaskan contingent was made up of 51 "part-timers" and 43 "full-timers" from the unit based at Kellogg Regional Airfield. Maj Rann was assisted in the Alaskan operation by Lt Col Tom W. Smith, deputy group commander for operations; Lt Col Richard L. Ford, deputy commander for materiel; Lt Col Frank W. Steiner, commander of the 172 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron; and Lt Col Melvin W. Hollinger, 172 operations officer. "Diamond Lil XIX" - like its predecessors - is a classified mission performed for the Alaskan Command. Air crews of the Tactical Air Command which ferried the ground crews and other support units to Alaska were impressed with the detail of the mobility plan which the 110th employed to insure a tight schedule of aircraft departures. The three AF C-130's from Texas and Tennessee airlifted 35 tons of men and materiel over a 3,000-mile route which took the four-engine aircraft over some of the continent's most rugged terrain. All Guardsmen, prior to departure, had undergone a complete processing of records and were issued arctic weather clothing for the sub-zero Alaskan winter. For most of the men who had expected the worst in frigid weather, it turned out to be more a journey away from the cold weather than to it. While the men were in Alaska, temperatures in Battle Creek hit a low of minus 15 while the Anchorage area was having a "heat wave." The lowest the thermometer registered was -11

degrees and one day it soared to 32 degrees. Most of the time the temperature hovered near or slightly above the zero mark!

While air crews flew the RB57 jets to Alaska via Edmonton, Alberta, an enroute-support team was waiting at the RCAF Namao Station outside the Canadian city to service the jets. The flight crews stayed overnight at the RCAF base. Meanwhile, the remainder of the 110th was airlifted non-stop to Elmendorf where they were greeted by the advance 10-man party. Maj Rann noted that when the C130 and jets landed the temperature was a minus 25 degrees at Edmonton. "Putting those birds to bed in that temperature was no easy task and our ground crews were further hampered by the bulky clothing which is a must at this time of the year." The group CO had high praise for the RCAF men who went all out to provide the Guardsmen with fine billets and food. Air crews flying their missions over Alaska were treated to a bird's-eye view of our largest state and most were awed by the vastness of the country which they described as "utterly lonely," "wild and untamed" and "unspoiled and absolutely beautiful." One realization which faced the pilots and navigators was that in the vastness of the Alaskan area, military jet facilities are limited. Unlike the flying over the more densely populated areas of the U.S., emergency airfields are not always near-by in Alaska.

Fuel consumption, a matter of importance in high performance jet aircraft, became a factor of paramount concern for the flight crews. As one crew member put it: "Either you've got fuel to get home, or you 'punch out' (eject) when you're over those rugged mountains. You might be able to land on some frozen lake a million miles from nowhere . . . I'd just as soon get home." One pilot on a flight to Point Barrow — the most northerly point of U.S. territory - reported that he had to climb to 46,000 feet to conserve fuel. After a long slow letdown, he landed with just 400 pounds of fuel over the minimum requirement. One navigator remarked about the "confusing difference between land and sea." "The land, covered with four to five feet of snow, is so smooth it appears to be a water area. But the pack ice in the Arctic Ocean is so broken up and chunky you have the feeling of approaching a land mass," he added. One ground chief, in discussing the cold weather, said that "servicing aircraft on the flight line is a treat up here. You overlook the cold for the scenery here." Elmendorf AFB is only three miles east of Anchorage. At one end of the runway are the snow-covered Chugach Mountains and at the other end is the Cook Inlet which leads to the north Pacific Ocean.

Despite the size of Elmendorf and its own mission, the men of the far-north base had time to afford all the cooperation to make the local unit's mission a success. We didn't lack for a thing up there. In addition to providing us with emergency parts and cutting 'red tape' to get them, they even provided men to help us mount tires and the like," he said. All was not work for the men. In their off-duty hours, many saw the sights of the area and were impressed with the vast and forbidding remoteness, the short days and long nights and the friendliness of the people. Three of the officers tried their luck at caribou hunting in the nearby wilds. Maj Rann, Lt Col Bertrand J. Buckhout and Maj Dean A. Polzin traveled 150 miles northeast to the Lake Louise area in search of the northern native animal. While Maj Rann felled a buck with a single shot, he noted: "I don't know if I'd want to do it again. Dragging that animal out of the woods through hip-deep snow was no picnic."

Ground personnel also received a "once-in-a-lifetime" air trip through the courtesy of the 5017th Operations Squadron at Elmendorf AFB. Aerial rides over the area were made so they could see such scenic landmarks as Mt. McKinley, Redoubt Volcano which resumed activity during the two-week period, and the Harding Ice Fields.

The Group's RB-57s were to become a familiar sight to most of western and central Michigan when the unit was granted a new low-level (500 foot) training route. Although heavily populated areas were avoided along the route about twelve major communities were affected. State-wide news coverage of the new route surely saved the Battle Creek Guard officials from having to field complaints from a few irate citizens.

1967 Short bursts of minor rioting throughout Southern Michigan had kept the Battle Creek Guardsmen alert for a call to State duty for several months and in July while the Group was at Field Training in Alpena all units of the Michigan Air National Guard were Federalized for riot duty. Only a small number of the Battle Creek Guardsmen were actually ordered into riot areas and after six days the units were released from Federal duty. The Federalization created a kind of "riot" of its own, coming as it did during a period of Annual Active Duty For Training. For the administrative offices in every unit in the State, the tangle of revising, revoking, rescinding, etc., of orders was unbelievable. One Detroit Guardsman was heard to say "When we found ourselves revising the revisions we decided to chuck the whole mess and start over!"

In April sixty-five National Guard units, including 600 members of the 110th Tac Recon Gp at Battle Creek were mobilized for possible use in racially tense areas, especially in Detroit. Governor George Romney ordered 3,000 of the men into Detroit and the rest on "stand-by alert" or enroute toward Detroit. The Guardsmen were back-up forces for the regular Army.

Lt Col F. W. Steiner Commander of the 172 Tac Recon Sq, received a strained back injury when the landing gear of his RB-57 was damaged in a landing at Scott AFB, Illinois. Col Steiner, with Lt Col H. C. Strand, Deputy Commander of the Michigan Wing as his passenger, was enroute to St. Louis, Missouri to attend a joint Army-Air National Guard conference when bad weather forced him to seek refuge at Scott AFB. Col Strand was not injured in the mishap.

APRIL-MAY- 1969 Six aircraft flew a total of 24 sorties for the Eastern Norad Region Exercise Apache Brave 69-4. Our aircraft flew a total of 48.8 flying hours.

AUGUST- 1969 Lt Dennis M. Edgett was killed in a RB-57A crash while performing a routine low-level photo mission in northern lower Michigan.

SEPTEMBER- 1969 Eleven members of the Battle Creek fire department received training at our Base under the supervision of MSgt Richard C. Teinert.

SEP-OCT- 1970 Field Training at Alpena once again. BCE roughs it. Approximately 40 men of the 110th Civil Engineering Flight took to the woods for 3 action-packed days and nights of field

exercises. (Some of the old-timers remember the same back in the early days at Camp Grayling.) They laid aircraft runway mesh, constructed lighting and worked on water purification. The exercise was complete with tents, field latrines, c-rations, shovels and "shaving in the rough." It was all part of "Prime Beef" training organized in conjunction with the Civil Engineering Section at Wright Patterson AFB and the National Guard Bureau. An exercise like this one sure makes one appreciate the many conveniences we have that we take so much for granted.

NOVEMBER- 1970 Major Edward J. Olmeda and Lt John F. Brower, his navigator, had a harrowing experience of a mid-air collision with a Royal Canadian Air Force plane at 45,000 feet and very capably landed the damaged aircraft. The RB-57 lost approximate 3 1/2 feet of one of its wings. They were participating in a North American Air Defense exercise.

June 11th marked the end of thirteen years of our photo reconnaissance mission and we assumed the new designation of 110th Tactical Air Support Group. First reaction to the news that after seventeen years of flying jets we were to be given a mission requiring the dual-prop O-2A was somewhat less than favorable - especially among the aircrews. But once the Battle Creek Guardsmen began meeting and overcoming the challenges of the FAC Mission, pride in doing their assigned duties to the best of their abilities was once again the primary concern of the unit

Field training again at home base - this time to learn a brand new mission. Jeeps, tents, and the O-2 aircraft were proving an interesting combination and the FAC mission didn't seem so bad after all!

SEPTEMBER – 1971 Once again a sigh of relief — we satisfactorily passed our annual Federal Inspection. This time it was an extra big sigh - the reason - it was a "No Notice" inspection. This was our first experience of this kind of an inspection — some-what different than previous inspections when we have been able to, prepare in advance. This type inspection tells how good or bad you really are — and we passed.

8 APRIL- 1972 A great day in our history and the culmination of much hard work and extra efforts and time on the part of every Guardsman and Technicians was realized when we received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. This award was given for the period 6 Feb 69 to 11 June 1971 when we were known as the 110th Tactical Reconnaissance Group. The Award was presented to the Group by Colonel Barrentine, a representative from the National Guard Bureau.

We were also presented resolutions from the Senate of the State of Michigan and from the Calhoun County Board

The 110th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, Tactical Air Command, distinguished itself by exceptionally meritorious service from 6 February 1969 to 11 June 1971. During this period, personnel of the Group displayed a high degree of professionalism in the outstanding

accomplishment of many command-directed and voluntary missions and exercises while assigned a tactical reconnaissance role. The distinctive accomplishments of the members of the 110th Tactical Reconnaissance Group reflect great credit upon themselves, the Air National Guard, and the United States Air Force. The 110th Tactical Reconnaissance Group Michigan ANG, is awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for exceptionally meritorious service in support of military operations from 6 Feb 69 to 11 Jun 71. The following units share in the award for the same period unless otherwise indicated:

110th Combat Support Sq

110th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Sq

110th Supply Sq

110th Tactical Dispensary

127th Reconnaissance Technical Sq , 24 May 69 - 11 Jun 71

172 Tactical Reconnaissance Sq

After 13 years of the tactical and photographic reconnaissance mission in the RB-57, the 110th Tac Recon Group at Battle Creek was redesignated the 110th Tactical Air Support Group on July 1, 1971. A brand new mission required a forward air controller type aircraft and the O-2A was assigned. The mission of the 110th Tactical Air Support Group is to provide close air support through forward air control in air action against hostile targets in close proximity to friendly forces. It requires detailed integration of each mission with the fire power of tactical aircraft and movement of ground forces requiring air support.

February 1976 — Members of the 110th TASGp participated in the JCS exercise "Bold Eagle '76" in the Mojave Desert in California. The unit utilized the new "Hi Threat Tactics", thus becoming the first Tactical Air Support unit to do so!

March 1976 Volunteers from the 110th TASGp were called to State Active Duty to support victims of the worst ice storm in the history of Michigan.

August 1976 The 110th TASGp initiated another "first" during annual training at Alpena.. Both ANG radar and tactical fighter units were invited to train with the 110th, forming a mini Tactical Air Control System (TAGS). The exercise was very successful with NGB recommending that all TAS Groups utilize our "mini TAGS" system for maximum mission training.

September 1976 Members of the 172 TASS were at Alpena for weekend weapons training when the Michigan State Police called the Alpena Control Tower reporting a possible downed aircraft. A U.S. Air Force KC-135, stationed at K.I. Sawyer AFB, Marquette, Michigan, was believed down approximately 13 miles Southwest of Alpena. Major William T. Uhls and Lt. Col. Robert C. Ruby responded in their O-2A, spotted the wreckage, gave directions for a rescue helicopter and further coordination with the State Police.

June 1978 A combined tactical training operation involving units of the Michigan Air National Guard and Canadian Forces was held at Cold Lake Canadian Forces Base, Alberta, Canada.

August 1978 Members of the 110th DASC participated in "Braveshield 18", a United States Readiness Command Joint Exercise held at Fort Carson, Colorado October 1978 — The 110th Tactical Air Support Group received the Robert E. Welch Trophy, which is awarded to the outstanding Michigan Air National Guard Group.

January 1980 Col. Howard C. Strand, Group Commander, announced the 110th TASGp's conversion from the O-2A to the OA-37. The first OA-37 arrived in late June of '80.

January 1981 110th Tactical Air Support Group eumed to Eielson AFB, Alaska. The C-141 was packed with over 100 passengers, two pallets of engage, four jeeps and three trailers.

June 1981 —Colonel Howard C. Strand delivers the last O-2A to Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.

July 1981 ROMADS from the 172 Tactical Air Support Squadron set a precedence by becoming the first Air National Guard unit to qualify as Enlisted Forward Air Controllers (EFAC).

May 1982 — Major John Bradley of 172 TASS completed air-to-air refueling training at Peoria, Illinois. Bradley reported that the first air-to-air refueling of a Battle Creek OA-37 took place at about 21,000 feet. A KC-135 Tanker from the Peoria, Illinois Air National Guard transformed approximately 85 gallons of fuel into the OA-37.

August 1982 — In support of the Army's National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California, Major John Nesbitt, Captain Sidney Everest Jr., and 2nd Lt. Raymond Maziarz flew their OA-37's on the longest flight known to have occurred for this aircraft. The pilots flew 1,700 nautical miles in five and a-half hours when they deployed to George AFB, California.

September 1982 Four OA-37's and eight pilots deployed nonstop from Battle Creek to Gander, New Foundland.

September 1982 Lt. Col. John Dettl of 110th TASGp and Capt. Robert Aardema of the 172 TASS went to Altus AFB, Oklahoma to support the Army Artillery Officer Training. The missions were flown out of Shep-perd AFB. Texas because Altus flight line was closed.

January 1983 Eight pilots from 172 TASS and seven maintenance personnel were deployed to Bermuda

May 1983 Lt. Col. John Bradley, Commander of the 172 TASS, Lt. Col. Ronald Seely, Commander of the 110th ASOC, CMSgt Wilfred M. DeBroux from the 110th CEM and Col. LeRoy R. Crane, Commander of the 110th TASGp, visited West Germany for a Checkered Flag Orientation and operational visit.

September 1983 Nine OA-37's and approximately 48 personnel deployed to Phelps Collins PFTS for introduction training in the dropping of inert heavy weight bombs. The unit was under the command of Colonel LeRoy R. Crane, who stated that the weather was somewhat restrictive.

October 1983 The 110th TASGp sent 19 members of the unit to Fort Irwin, California for participation in "Air Warrior", a National Training Center Exercise.

February 1984 110th TASGp deployed personnel, equipment and five OA-37's at the invitation of the Southern Command through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to Howard AFB, Panama, for a "Sentry Dragon" exercise. According to Colonel LeRoy R. Crane, 110th TASGp base commander, this deployment had many "firsts" for the Group; (1) first overseas deployment of the 110th TASGp, (2) First overseas deployment of the ANG OA-37, (3) first deployment of the ANG OA-37 in the fighter role, (4) First in a series of ANG OA-37 deployments to the Southern Command.

March 1984 Forty-one personnel and five OA-37s deployed to exercise "Green Flag", Nellis AFB, Nevada. The training exercise allowed the 172 pilots first time hands on experience with new electronic equipment aboard the OA-37's.

February 1985 Approximately 140 personnel from the 110th TASGp and the 172 TASS traveled to "Snowbird '85" at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.

The 172 Tactical Air Support Squadron, 110th Tactical Air Support Group, based at W. K. Kellogg Airport in Battle Creek, Michigan, received its A-10s on October 1, 1991, converting from OA-37s. The units were redesignated the 110th Fighter Group and 172 Fighter Squadron in March, 1992, with the 110th FG being redesignated as the 110th Fighter Wing in 1996.

January 1998—172 FS A-IOs deployed to Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ. for winter training. The deployment was dubbed 'Snowbird '98.' The optimum weather conditions and A-10 facilities made Davis-Monthan AFB the ideal location to conduct combat training. During the deployment, A-IOs fired thousands of rounds of 30mm ammunition and dropped live ordnance.

November 1998—The 172 Fighter Squadron's achieved its bombing accuracy goal during the ORI, the unit's A-10 close air support aircraft flying 113 missions. Among the types of missions flown by the squadron were close air support (CAS), air interdiction (AI) and escort for C-130 transports. The C-130 escort mission was unique in that the slow A-10 ground attack aircraft successfully protected a C-130 transport from attacking F-16 fighters! After defeating the F-16s, the A-IOs neutralized ground threats so the C-130 could safely make its air drop. For its efforts, the 172 received an outstanding 96% mission effectiveness rating.

January 1999—A-IOs of the 110th FW deployed to MacDill AFB, FL. for its 'Snowbird' winter training for the first time. In all years prior to this, the 110th deployed to Davis Monthan AFB, in Arizona for winter training.

May 1999—A-IOs of the 172 FS, along with over 150 110th FW personnel deployed to Italy in support of NATO combat operations against Serbian forces in Kosovo.²⁰ Known as Operation Allied Force, the NATO bombing offensive was in response to the ethnic cleansing committed by Serbian troops against Kosovar Albanians. Among the over 1,000 NATO aircraft involved in

the operation were six A-10s from the 110th FW, which deployed with aircraft from the 124th FW, Idaho ANG and the 104th FW, Massachusetts ANG to create the 104th Expeditionary Operations Group (EOG). This was the first-ever Air Expeditionary Force rainbow unit and it consisted of the only three ANG fighter units deployed during Operation Allied Force. 24 sorties were flown each day during the 78-day bombing campaign.

March 2000—Eight 110th FW A-IOs, along with 150 personnel deployed to Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ. to conduct Combat Search and Rescue training.

May 2000—Large numbers of 110th FW personnel began deploying for two-week rotations to various regions in Southern Europe and Southwest Asia as a part of Aerospace Expeditionary Force 7 (AEF 7). This was the unit's first-ever AEF deployment, which combined units from all over the country. The AEF was in support of Operation Southern Watch, which enforced the no fly zone over Southern Iraq. A-10 pilots of the 172 Fighter Squadron, flying out of Al Jaber AB, in Kuwait flew 170 sorties during their one-month deployment. From 1 May through 8 September 2000 the 110th FW deployed 314 personnel to various regions in support of AEF 7.

February 2001—A-IOs deployed the Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ. For their annual winter training.

January 2002—Ten 172 Fighter Squadron A-10s and 140 personnel departed Battle Creek for Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ. To conduct the unit's annual Snowbird training. During a gunnery training flight a catastrophic failure of a GAU-8A 30mm gun on A-10A s/n 80-0222 (nicknamed The Duck') caused significant damage to the aircraft. Despite this, the pilot, Maj. Dave Kennedy safely brought the ship back to base.

April 2003—On 3 April, 172 EPS pilots Lt. Col. Ron Wilson and Maj. Kevin Krasko flew a CSAR mission for an F/A-18 pilot who was shot down south of Baghdad. After an extensive search, no survivor was found.

December 2003—Eight members of the 110th FW received the Bronze Star and for meritorious service while deployed to SWA. In addition, Lt. Col. Clifford Latta, an A-10 pilot from the 172 FS received the Distinguished Flying Cross with an Oak Leaf Cluster for his valor while flying combat in Iraq. This was the first time a member of the 110th received either medal.

January 2006—The 110th FW deployed A-10s and crews to Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ. for its annual Snowbird winter training for three weeks. In addition to the usual gunnery and bombing sorties, 110th pilots practiced combat search and rescue (CSAR) training. Meanwhile, back at Battle Creek the rest of the wing began preparations for the Precision Engagement Modification, which would upgrade the unit's A-IOAs to A-10C standards. This made the 110th FW one of the first ANG units to be equipped with the new type.⁸⁸

January 2006—The A-10C: The "C" model upgrades to the aircraft included: Hands-on-throttle and stick (HOTAS), which enables the pilot to access cockpit systems without removing his/her

hands from the flight controls. A-IOs also received the situational awareness data link (SADL), which is a network that allows the pilot to see the exact position of friendly land, sea and air assets, thus reducing the risk of fratricide. Each force asset can upload information to the network, which are digitally displayed on a map in the A-10's cockpit. The new "C" upgrade also included the 1760 data bus, which allows the A-10 to deliver Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM), which is essentially a "dumb bomb" equipped with an inertial guidance system and a GPS receiver. It can also carry the wind correction munitions dispenser (WCMD), as well as the Sniper and Lightning targeting pods.⁸⁹

April 2006—110th FW deployed six A-IOs and 29 personnel to McDill AFB, FL to participate in the Jaded Thunder air-to-ground exercise.

February 2007—The last A-10A departed Battle Creek ANGB, bound for the depot at Hill AFB, Utah for upgrade to "C" standards.

April 2008—The "gap" mission for the 110th FW, following the changes initiated by the BRAC decision, was announced. The unit will be equipped with the C-21, which is a military version of the Lear Jet 35. The 110th will assume its new light transport mission with the C-21 until the C-27 Spartan tactical transport arrives at the base in 2012. The 110th was also bedding down for the Component Numbered Air Force (cNAF) mission.

October 2008—the first C-21 arrived to Battle Creek ANGB. The C-21 will provide a bridge flying mission until the unit converts to the C-27 tactical transport.¹¹⁶ The C-21 is a twin turbofan light transport based on the civilian Lear 35 business jet. It can accommodate eight passengers and is primarily used by the Air Force as a VIP transport, an air ambulance and light cargo aircraft.

The first C-21A, still carrying the markings of its former unit, "The Happy Hooligans" of the North Dakota Air National Guard, arrives at Battle Creek ANGB on 9-30-2008.

October 2008—Seven A-IOs and 114 personnel deployed to MacDill AFB, FL for combat search and rescue training. This marked the final deployment for 110th FW A-IOs.

Four 172 FS A-IOCs (80-0258 is in the foreground) are lined up on the tarmac at Battle Creek ANGB, ready to depart for their final deployment as an A-10 unit.

November 2008—November marked the end of an era as the test local A-10 sorties were flown before the unit's conversion to the C-21. The 110th FW flew the venerable A-10 Thunderbolt II for 17 years and it had been a common sight in the skies over Southwestern Michigan. Twelve 172 FS pilots conducted their final flights (known as fini flights) in the A-10 during the November UTA. Wing Commander Col. Rodger Siedel, who flew the A-10 for 30 years, was among them. At the end of their flights, the pilots taxied their A-IOs under arches of water provided by crash trucks. Once they disembarked their jets, the pilots were sprayed down with

champagne, as per tradition. The pilots were not immune to practical jokes, as one hapless Major would soon learn, as he found his frozen flight suit hidden in the squadron freezer. Alas, it was a bittersweet end to a remarkable era for many pilots and maintenance crews.

November 2008—A-10 began departing Battle Creek for their new home at Selfridge ANGB. cracks were found in the wings of two 110th FW A-IOs, which precluded their delivery to their new unit, the 127th WG. Half of the air guard's A-IOs were grounded at the time due to the same problem.

December 2008—The 110th FW officially unveiled its new C-21 light transport aircraft in a ceremony on 6 December. The aircraft bore a fresh paint job, with the Battle Creek insignia emblazoned on its wingtip fuel tanks and the 172 Airlift Squadron badge on its forward fuselage. The wing was ultimately slated to receive eight aircraft. Michigan National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Thomas Cutler and State Senator Mark Schauer were among the distinguished guests at the ceremony.

December 2008—Four A-IOCs were delivered from Battle Creek to their new home at Selfridge ANGB.

February 2009—The last remaining A-10C, s/n 80-0258, departed Battle Creek on 19 February, thus ending the base's 18-year association with the type. Pilot Major Shawn Holtz flew the aircraft to its new unit, the 107th Fighter Squadron, 127th Wing at Selfridge ANGB, MI. Tail number '258 had an eventful career with the 110th FW, having lost the rear half of its starboard engine to an enemy surface-to-air missile over Baghdad during the unit's 2003 combat deployment to Iraq.

April 2009—Four pilots returned to Battle Creek ANGB after six weeks of conversion training at CAE Simuflite in Dallas, Texas and Keesler AFB, Biloxi, Miss.

October 2009—The 110th FW pilots Col. Keir Knapp and Capt. Ryan Schipper conducted the C-21's inaugural executive flight. Maj. Gen. Thomas Cutler, Brig Gen. Robert Johnston and Brig. Gen. James Wilson were the passengers for the flight, which departed Battle Creek ANGB for Traverse City and Saginaw on 3 October.

March 2010—The 110th AW received its fourth C-21. The 110th also sent one of its pilots to the 179th AW in Mansfield, Ohio for conversion training in the C-27J. The 110th AW plans to ultimately replace the interim C-21 with the C-27J tactical airlifter once they are available.

July 2010—110th AW C-21s began flying two missions per week in support of the Joint Operations Support Airlift Center (JOSAC). Headquartered at Scott AFB, IL. JOSAC is the airlift branch of Transportation Command.

July 2010—The 172 Airlift Squadron sent its first pilot for conversion training in the new C-27 Spartan. The C-27 is a light tactical airlifter that will ultimately replace the interim C-21 at Battle Creek.

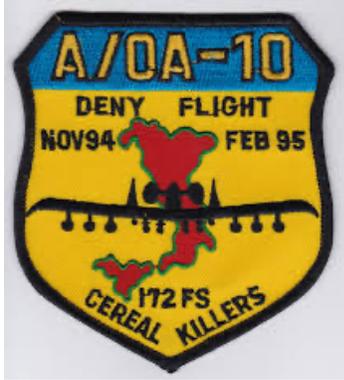
October 2010—A C-27J Spartan was flown to Battle Creek Air National Guard Base to perform a demonstration for the members of the 110th AW, the future recipients of the new tactical airlifter. The first C-27J to enter service was delivered to the 179th AW, Ohio Air National Guard. Battle Creek is slated to receive the light transports in the summer of 2012 and preparations are already underway to accommodate the aircraft at the base.

110th Fighter Wing members line up in the snow to watch the last A-10C serial number 80-0258, take its final flight from the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base on Thursday, February 19, 2009. The jet will arrive to its new home, Selfridge Air National Guard Base joining the rest of the fleet which started leaving back in November.

On the morning of Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009, the 110th Fighter Wing's last A-10C took off for Selfridge Air National Guard Base to serve with the 127th Wing. The departure of the aircraft, tail number 258, marked the end of an era at Battle Creek Air National Guard Base and the beginning of a new one for Selfridge. This particular A-10 had a lot of history with the 110th Fighter Wing as it lost part of an engine to an enemy missile during the 110th's 2003 deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Unlike the November fini-flights, and the upcoming farewell ceremony in July, the event was not attended by family and friends, local politicians or the media. It was just attended by those around the base who wanted to watch 18 years of history taxi out to the runway and make a final take off. Col. Ronald Wilson, the 110th Operations Commander, was present with his new C-21 patch on the uniform, and while he is prepared for the new missions ahead it is hard to shake off around 3000 flying hours in the A-10 including close to four years of active duty, and three major conflicts abroad with Kosovo, Iraq and most recently Afghanistan. "Guys who fly the A-10 have a unique mission," said Colonel Wilson, "we provide close air support and no other aircraft can do as great a job." His fini-flight took place last November and he said that climbing out of the cockpit for the very last time was tough. "That flight was a quiet one with many of the pilots reflecting on their experience with the A-10" said Colonel Wilson. The building that holds the 110th Operations Group is filled with A-10 memorabilia that includes models, pictures, the warthog mascot and more. As the C-21 gains more time on this base the A-10 related items will likely live on in a hallway somewhere in the building. There was talk of giving some of it to Selfridge, but it was determined they have their own memories to make. The dining facility happens to hold a piece of 258. When the 110th Fighter Wing took the A-10 over to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, Maj. Gary Wolfe was piloting the aircraft when an enemy surface-to-air missile struck the engine. He managed to get the aircraft back to Talil Air Base and a small part of that moment is on display and will remain there now with the actual aircraft across the state. When Battle Creek first received the A-10 Warthog in 1990, times were different. "The aircraft was camouflaged, nothing was digital, pilots were still looking at paper maps, and eventually things got upgraded from the A-10A to the A-10C," said Colonel Wilson. "Battle Creek was the only unit to go to one theater of operation and move to another. We did this most recently when we

were in Iraq for 10 days and found out we had a new mission in Afghanistan. We have done these three times and are the only unit to ever have done so," said Colonel Wilson. As the last A-10 took off one might think it quietly closed the final chapter of a story and mission like no other, but the farewell ceremony coming up in July will give the A-10 the necessary dedication it deserves.





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