

157 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

350 Fighter Squadron constituted, 29 Sep 1942
Activated, 1 Oct 1942
Inactivated, 18 Oct 1945
Redesignated 157 Fighter Squadron, and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946
157 Fighter Squadron (SE) extended federal recognition, 9 Dec 1946
Redesignated 157 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron
Redesignated 157 Fighter Interceptor Squadron
Redesignated 157 Fighter Bomber Squadron, 1 Dec 1952
Redesignated 157 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 5 Sep 1957
Redesignated 157 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Apr 1975
Redesignated 157 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Mitchel Field, NY, 1 Oct 1942
Richmond AAB, VA, 7 Oct 1942
Baltimore, MD, 26 Oct 1942-27 May 1943
Goxhill, England, 8 Jun 1943
Metfield, England, 3 Aug 1943
Raydon, England, 14 Apr 1944-11 Oct 1945
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 16-18 Oct 1945
McEntire ANGS, Eastover, SC

ASSIGNMENTS

353 Fighter Group, 1 Oct 1942-18 Oct 1945

169 Tactical Fighter Group
169 Operations Group

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-40, 1942
P-47, 1943
P-51, 1944
P-51, 1946
RF-51, 1950
RF-80, 1951
F-51, 1952
F-86, 1953
F-80, 1954
F-104, 1960
F-102, 1963
TF-102A
A-7, 1974
F-16, 1983

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

Corbett
Major Patterson
Robert A Johnson
LTC Phillip L. Latham, #1986
LTC Stanley V. Hood

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

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

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Holland, 17-23 Sep 1944

EMBLEM



157 Fighter Interceptor Squadron



MOTTO

Semper Primus—Always First

NICKNAME

Swamp Fox

OPERATIONS

Air defense prior to overseas duty. Combat in ETO, 9 Aug 1943-25 Apr 1945.

This was the setting when 50 airmen answered the first muster of the South Carolina Air National Guard. The date: December 9, 1946.

Congaree Air Base, in the flat, fertile lands of lower Richland County was and is the home of the South Carolina National Guard, fore World War Two; it was a hodge-podge of farms. Cotton, corn and watermelons grew on its acres. In fact, even as South Carolina Guardsmen surveyed the field for the first time in 1946, it still looked more suitable for plowing than flying. The criss-crossed ribbons of concrete were barely visible because of the weeds. The stodgy, formidable hangar, padlocked for over a year, had taken a weathered, ghostlike appearance that any building rapidly acquires from dis-use.

Except for the old hangar and a few other buildings erected in war-time haste, there were few visible signs that anyone besides farmers had ever been here much less the United States Army and Marine Corps.

But it was the Soldiers and Marines who converted these farm lands into a flying field. The property was acquired from 21 owners during the years of 1941-1944.

The property is about 12 miles from the South Carolina capital, Columbia. The air base built on the site was used first by the U.S. Army Air Corps before being taken over by the Marine Corps for training pilots. The Navy Department retained accountability for the property after World War II.

At this time, it was called Congaree Marine Corps Air Station, but the name was shortened to Congaree Air Base when the Navy Department leased the facilities to the state of South Carolina in 1946 for use by the newly-formed South Carolina Air National Guard. There are 2,201.74 acres in the original land purchase, which is federal government property. In addition, the base includes 100 acres acquired and owned by the state of South Carolina in 1959 when runways were lengthened.

In spite of the fact that the guns of World War II had hardly stopped echoing, and few people wanted to think of new conflicts, there were some who had not forgotten the lessons of history. South Carolina Adjutant General James C. Dozier was one, and with good reason. "I believe in preparedness," he said later. "I had my eye on Congaree Air Base for a long time. I recognized the need for a strong Air Guard and I was sure that Congaree would be a good home for it." He was joined shortly by Lt. Col. Barnie B. McEntire Jr., another serious, dedicated flyer who was to become the S.C. Air Guard's first commander, its first general officer and, in fact, first in just about everything connected with the first 15 years of the Palmetto State Air Guard.

It wasn't exactly easy to encourage experienced, qualified airmen to retain their skills, and interest, by enlisting in a brand new unit. Enticements were limited. The pay was low and few men, who so very recently had returned home from a war, were anxious to sign up for something else military something that would take them at least once a week away from the

task of rebuilding their lives. In fact, the only thing salable for promoters of the South Carolina Air National Guard was aviation.

Fortunately for Lt. Col. Barnie B. McEntire Jr., and Maj. Robert H. Morrell aviation proved salable to enough qualified people to allow the first doors to be open.

So it was that on Dec. 9, 1946, the first muster was held. There were 14 officers and 36 enlisted men present. In addition, the initial roster includes two enlisted men who were absent on that first Monday night assembly (Staff Sergeant Robert H. Moore and Sergeant John B. Wessinger, both of the 157 FS).

Three units were commanded by Lt. Col. McEntire. They were the 157 Ftr. Sq. (SE), the Utility Flight of the 157 Ftr. Sq. and the 157 Weather Station (Type A). A fourth unit was commanded by Maj. Morrell: Del. "B" 216th Air Service Group (Fighter).

Officers of the 157 Ftr. Sq. were Lt. Col. McEntire, Capt. William G. Morehouse, First Lieutenants Cecil Claymon Grimes Jr., Preston B. Hardy, Robert E. Harrison, and Joe A. Camp and Second Lieutenants Marion L. Powell and Benjamin H. Todd. The First Sergeant was Sherwood L. Jones. Other enlisted men were Staff Sergeants (Grade III) James W. Barber, Andrew J. Daniel, Richard L. Davison, Hugh V. Harbort, Rob Roy Honeycutt, Charles V. Huffstetler, Robert H. Moore, Jacob B. Price Jr., and Clement D. Price. Also, Sergeants (Grade IV) Lewis P. Thompson, John B. Wessinger, Samuel J. Wessinger and Lycurgus Jackson Jr.

The Utility Flight consisted of Capt. Manley S. Hines, Second Lieutenant James C. Weston, Staff Sergeant George A. Stanley Jr., Sergeants Wade S. Cloaninger Jr. and William C. Huckaby, and Corporal (Grade V) Robert E. Lee Jr.

The 157 Weather Station consisted of two people: 1Lt. Frank L. Culbertson and SSgt. William D. Gleaves Jr.

In addition to Maj. Morrell, there were two other officers in the 216th Air Service Group: Captains Paul Gordon and Herbert R. Rogers Jr. Enlisted men answering the first roll call were SSgts. Clarence L. Coward Jr., Stanley M. Klimaszewski, James F. Little, Gerald G. Manning, Thelmos A. Sease, George W. Reeves and Graham B. Dimmick. Also, Sgts. Harvey L. Anderson Jr., Charles S. Evans Jr., Marion D. Spivey, Artis E. Welch and Charles T. Kelly Jr. Also, Corporals Alton G. Cox, Robert D. Moore and Harry L. Swy-gert; also, PFC Harvey G. Able and Privates James E. Mikell, Carl R. Peebles and William C. Tracey

By the middle of 1947, the air unit of the South Carolina National Guard was well on its way. This was shortly before the U.S. military reorganization peeled off the Army Air Corps into a separate service, so at the time members were simply designated as National Guardsmen. The training base was called Congaree Army Air Base, and it was manned by a full-time technician staff of 44 mechanics and administrative personnel.

The unit was flying 25 F-51s, four AT-26s, two AT-6s, two L-5s and one C-47 (which was still flying 20 years later until November of 1967, in fact, when it was permanently put out of action by a rare South Carolina tornado).

The first field training for the Air Guard was at Congaree on August 31-September 14 in 1947. The Adjutant General's report for fiscal year 1948 said of this first summer camp: "Attendance was approximately 175 officers and enlisted men. Field exercises were conducted under the supervision of Regular Army instructors, who rated all units Superior. No personnel or aircraft were involved in any accidents, although many hours were devoted to flying during the 15-day period. Total expenditures of federal funds was \$3,000, which represented pay and allowances, subsistence, gasoline and oil and miscellaneous expenses."

Two summer field training periods were held during the Air Guard's first 18 months. The second was at Chatham Field, Savannah, Ga. According to the AG's report: "Fighter gunnery was stressed by the rated officers. An operational readiness test was given the second week. The units performed quite well. The percentage of aircraft in commission was the best of seven squadrons attending field training."

At the time of the second field training at Chatham Field in June of 1948, the Air Guard had grown to 311 officers and men 42 less than their federal authorization. Most of the personnel had seen extensive service in World War II.

Split drills were held each week. Rated (flying) officers met on Sunday afternoon for Air Defense Command training-Enlisted men met on Monday night, with unit commanders and non-rated officers supervising training. The runways and buildings at the base were still in rather patchwork condition, but they had lost some of their post-WWII abandoned look. It was not until the following fiscal year that Maj. William M. Shelton, USAF's senior air instructor assigned to the Air Guard, was able to report proudly to Adjutant General Dozier: "Necessary tractor and mowers were purchased and this has greatly improved the appearance of the base and has removed a great fire hazard to the buildings and, in addition, has contributed to safer aircraft operations on the field."

Leadership of the Air Guard in those Early Bird years was in the hands of three officers: Lt. Col. McEntire, Maj. Morrell and Capt. William M. Riddle. Riddle, a native of Walterboro, S.C., had been a classmate of Morrell's all through flying school. They graduated together and got married on the same day in San Antonio, Texas. When Riddle came off active duty in 1947, Morrell enticed him to join SCANG as a full-time technician and supply officer. For the next decade, until he went on extended duty in 1957, Riddle held a number of key roles. He moved back into the operations field at the time of the Korean call up and during the next seven years held such positions as base operations officer and commander of the 15 7th Fighter Squadron. (A month before the 25th anniversary, in November of 1971, Riddle retired as a colonel and Air Guard Liaison officer of the Tactical Air Command.) Riddle's place at the head table was taken in 1957 by Samuel L. Finklea Jr.

Another early member was 2nd Lt. Grady L. Patterson, Jr. who joined the unit in July, 1947. Patterson had flown P-51s in the Pacific during World War II. He set many early gunnery records in formal and informal competition at McEntire.

By mid-1948, the roster of Air Guard officers included a number of men who would have a major impact on the program. These included Eddie R. Elkin, a combat transport bomber pilot in World War II. He held a variety of command positions in the Guard before his retirement in 1968.

Other officers on that 1948 roster included: Captain Jack L. Moak, who retired from the S.C. Air Guard in 1964 as a lieutenant colonel, the first S.C. Guard officer to retire. He became the chief pilot of the governors of South Carolina; 2Lt. Robert H. Shorb Jr., who was killed when the engine of his F-84 jet blew up in 1951, a few weeks after he was transferred from the S.C. Air Guard to the regular Air Force in preparation for combat duty in Korea;

Extensive improvements in facilities at Congaree which had been re-named Congaree Air Base were made in 1948 and early 1949. These included extending the southeast-northwest runway, installation of a runway lighting system, erection of a crash equipment fire house and improvements to other buildings. The position of base commander was authorized for the first time and it was filled by Lt. Col. McEntire.

Field training in 1949 was with the 54th Fighter Wing at Eglin AFB. Fla. The 157 Ftr. Sq. and attached units were rated first among the 10 squadrons of the 54th Ftr. Wing on the four-day operational readiness test.

Maj. Shelton reported to the Adjutant General: "This was the third field training for these units and they made a splendid show of their ability to function under combat conditions. Considerable gunnery training was accomplished and the aircraft availability and flying times proved that administration and maintenance was of the highest caliber."

As to Air Force property held by the Air Guard at the end of Fiscal Year 1949, the Adjutant General's report listed these items. "The value of all federal property located at Congaree Air Base, including the items listed above, is approximately \$2,500,000."

An interesting footnote to the early history is provided in the special orders common actually until the late 1950s dispatching the governor, as commander in chief, and his circle of staff, friends and relatives to various points ostensibly on official business. This practice is now forbidden by the National Guard Bureau. The earliest special order of this type, issued by the Adjutant General, is one dated July 11, 1947, authorizing a week-long flight to Salt Lake City, Utah, and return for the following persons: "Gov. J. Strom Thurmond, Miss Gertrude Thurmond (his sister), Col. William Lowndes Daniel Jr., Miss Wilma Smith, Miss Jean Crouch (Thurmond's secretary, later to become his wife), Sen. T.B. Bryant Jr., Hon. Lionel K. Legge) an associate Supreme Court Justice of S.C.), Mr. Walter Brown, Mr. Grady Hazel, Mr. Wayne Freeman (a newsman) and Mr. Robert B. Kay." Today, of this retinue only Gov. Thurmond and presumably Col. Daniel

assuming he was on official business would be permitted to fly on Air Guard aircraft. So-called "morale flights" were also common in those days, such flights ending up in New Orleans, for example, during the Mardi Gras. An account of one such trip is in the October, 1949, issue of "Flaps Down", a now defunct publication of the Air Guard edited by Cpl. Joe Barnett. Here are excerpts: "Beer at 20 cents a bottle and free food and lodging were some of the features of the trip Saturday, September 24, to Waco, Texas, where approximately 35 Carolina supporters and members of the S.C. Air National Guard saw the Carolina Gamecocks bow before a more powerful Baylor team 20 to 6. "The squadron's two 'Gooney Birds' had been fully loaded that morning at Congaree and had made the six-hour flight without incident. "The first flight, which left S.C. soil at 9:30 and touched Texas at Houston five hours later, left 15 Clemson boosters at Houston and then continued to Waco. They were met at Connelly AFB, seven miles outside of Waco, by members of the Air Training Command, who escorted the out-of-towners first to chow and then to clean, comfortable barracks. After a quick shave, shower, etc., the group broke up and traveled into Waco by thumb. "Any member of the Air National Guard may participate in these trips, which are a part of the squadron's training plans. 'The planes must be flown, so why not fly them where they will do the most good' is a common answer given to persons questioning the authority of them."

On October 10, 1950, after the outbreak of war in Korea, the entire South Carolina Air National Guard was called to active duty for 21 months. The four units called were the 157 Fighter Squadron, the primary unit of the Air Guard, and the three support units: the 157 Utility Flight (whose primary mission was flying B-26 tow target aircraft), the 157 Weather Station (flight) and Det. B, 216th Air Service Group.

All SCANG members were assigned to the Fourteenth Air Force At the last minute, Capt. Orville D. Fetterly was designated to remain behind as caretaker of Congaree Air Base during the callup period.

The Guardsmen were ordered to Lawson AFB, Ga., where they received a change of mission, change of aircraft and change of name. All SCANG units were consolidated into a 157 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron. They switched from the F-51 to a version modified for the new reconnaissance mission. Since their RF-51 planes carried no bombs or guns, the armament personnel were assigned to other duties. Pilots' shop talk switched from gunnery training and simulated dogflights to sessions on cameras, vertical and oblique aerial photos and stereoscopic strip pictures.

At Lawson, the South Carolinians were joined by newly-activated Air Guardsmen from Alabama and Ohio to form the 117th Tactical Recon Wing briefly under the command of Col. John B. Thomas of Birmingham, Ala., a Guardsman, and then under Col. D.M. Allison, a regular Air Force officer. Lt. Col. McEntire became commander of the 117th Tactical Recon Group, under the wing staff. The 157 Fighter Squadron was re-identified as a tactical reconnaissance squadron, as were the 112th Fighter Bomber Squadron of Ohio and the 160th Fighter Squadron of Alabama. The Ohio Guardsmen began training in night reconnaissance missions and the Alabama and South Carolina Air Guardsmen (for several months still loosely organized into squadrons

roughly along state lines) began training in day reconnaissance.

Three months before the S.C. Air Guard was called to active duty, it lost its first pilot in an aircraft accident. 1Lt. Bayard M. Peach was flying in a formation with three other S.C. Air Guardsmen on gunnery practice about three miles south of Springfield, Ga., on July 20. Lt. Peach was flying No. 2 in the formation when the No. 3 aircraft, flown by Lt. Robert Hooks, accidentally sliced through the tail of Peach's aircraft, sending him to his death. Lt. Hooks bailed out safely. In one of those inexplicable instances of fate, Brig. Gen. Robert S. Corbett Sr. recalled years later that he was supposed to fly the No. 2 aircraft that day. As Corbett, then a captain, remembered it: "Riding out to the aircraft, Peach asked me to switch places in the formation. He said he would like to fly No. 2 if I would fly No. 4. I said sure ... It didn't make any difference to me. Nobody back at the field knew we had switched and they all thought it was me who had crashed."

Gen. Corbett, who joined the Air Guard in 1949, became commander of the 169th Fighter Group in 1961. He commanded the unit of 400 Guardsmen sent to Moron AB in Spain during the callup in late 1961 that was precipitated by the Berlin Crisis.

At Lawson AFB in the summer of 1951, the activated Guardsmen received the RF-80 Shooting Star jets they had long expected and anticipated the first jets assigned to the Air Guard. They began a round of intensive training in anticipation of assignment to NATO forces at Toul-Rosiere Air Field in France.

Haggling over unit assignments and organizational structure delayed deployment of the new 117th Tac Recon Wing to a point where its Guard members had less than 12 months to serve of their 21-month call-up; with less than a year to serve, the Guardsmen could not be sent overseas under Air Force regulations.

Under pressure to supply the trained troops to augment NATO forces in Europe uncomfortably thin because of the commitment offered in Korea the wing commander beseeched the Guardsmen to sign Indefinite Career Reserve statements and become eligible to deploy overseas. This is a statement that must be signed by all Reserve officers on extended active duty and, in effect, signing it meant giving up National Guard status for Reserve status.

Accordingly, there resulted much dissension and confusion among the troops as to what course to take. Among those who wouldn't sign was Maj. Robert H. Morrell. "I told the commander that I was called for 21 months as a Guardsman, and if the Air Force wanted me to serve longer they could extend the call-up. I was quite willing to go overseas, or anywhere they wanted to send me, but not as a career Reservist." Morrell was sent to Pope AFB, N.C., where he served out his 21 months as deputy for supply for Hq. 9th Air Force. Captain Samuel Finklea Jr. was also assigned to Pope AFB, as a personnel officer. Other S.C. Air Guardsmen who didn't sign the statement, including Capt. Grady L. Patterson Jr., who was assigned to Shaw AFB as a Tac Recon pilot, were also assigned to various statewide bases to complete their active duty requirement.

Most of the pilots signed the agreement and in January of 1952 a group of 20 pilots was finally sent to Europe with support crews. The air base at Toul, France, had not been completed so most pilots were sent instead to Furstenfelbruk Air Base in Germany. They crossed the Atlantic in their RF-80 jets without incident. Among those who went were Lt. Col. Bernie B. McEntire, Maj. William M. Riddle. Capt. Robert S. Corbett Sr., 1 Lt. Robert A. Johnson Sr., ILt. B.A. Daetwyler and ILt. Jimmie C. Wright. Some other SCANG pilots, including ILt. Donald E. White and ILt. Homer L. Keisler, went elsewhere overseas. Other pilots who went to Germany included Fletcher Riddle, George Denton, Jim Forrest, Lamar "Red" Christian, Jack Moak. John "Turkey" Bellinger, William "Mulley" Huggins. "Tiger Jack" Edmunds, Harold "Moose" Leonard, Jack Murphy, James McElveen and Caldwell Weston.

Four SCANG pilots volunteered for combat and were sent immediately to Korea, among them Capt. Eddie R. Elkin who flew as a night medium bombardment pilot and thus became the only South Carolina Air Guard pilot to see combat in both World War II and Korea. First Lieutenants Charles L. McDade and Raymond McKelvey each flew 100 missions in F-84 jets chiefly in support of bombardment missions and in cutting enemy supply lines.

Of the four who saw combat duty, only Capt. Elkin remained with the Guard after Korea. The others remained on active duty.

Guardsmen who didn't go overseas were released from active duty on schedule on July 9, 1952. Members reverted to state control the following day and on July 11 the 157 Fighter Interceptor Squadron was reorganized in ceremonies at Congaree Air Base, with Maj. Morrell commanding. Over 200 officers and airmen answered the call that Sunday morning to reorganize the unit which had been reorganized as a consolidated Fighter Squadron and contained all of SCANG. The Guardsmen were welcomed home by Adjutant General Dozier in a brief address. Construction work was begun on extension of the runways to accommodate the F-86 the Guard expected as its primary mission aircraft.

In Europe, still, were Lt. Col. McEntire and the other officers and men who had signed the Indefinite Career Reserve agreement. At the end of 1952, when these men began to inquire when they would be returned to Guard status, they found that the Air Force had no intention of releasing them after one year. The Air Force took the position, as some had feared, that the agreement meant just that and therefore the Guardsmen would be retained as Reservists on active duty for as long as the Air Force saw fit.

A year went by and the men were forced to secure the services of a Washington, D.C., attorney. He was able to persuade the Air Force that the men should be released and they were able to rejoin the Guard in March of 1953, about 14 months after they went to Europe.

At Congaree Air Base early in 1953, the 157 was functioning under the command of Maj. Morrell. Capt. Grady Patterson was operations officer and Capt. Finklea was personnel officer. Finklea had also moved into the newly created civilian job of air administrative assistant to the adjutant general, a job he was to hold for 17 years until his death in 1970 when he was

succeeded by Maj. James A. "Bunk" Weston Jr.

It was decided that a Headquarters unit, SCANG, would be formed with Lt. Col. McEntire as chief of staff. Maj. Morrell became deputy for operations, SCANG, and Maj. Riddle was named commander of the 157 Fighter Squadron. Shortly, McEntire was promoted to full colonel and Morrell and Riddle won promotions to lieutenant colonel. Corbett was promoted to major and named Operations Officer of the 157 Fighter Squadron. This completed the command realignment and set the stage for the line of command succession a few years later when Riddle went on extended active duty in 1957 and McEntire was killed in 1961. It also began a nine-year period of relative quiescence in the history of SCANG until 1961 and the Berlin crisis.

In August of 1954 the Guard dropped its Sunday afternoon-Monday night monthly training schedule in favor of one weekend a month. Saturday drill was from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.; Sunday's schedule was 8 to 4. It remained this way until 1970, when the time of Saturday drill was advanced to 9 a.m.-5 p.m. It was more convenient for most Guardsmen to be off Saturday night. The old Saturday schedule had been set up largely to accommodate those who worked a half-day Saturday in their civilian job a more common practice in 1954 or who had Saturday morning classes at colleges and universities which likewise have all but been abandoned.

On Wednesday night, Dec. 8 of 1954, the Air Guard held its first surprise alert. The alert began at 7 p.m. and Col. McEntire reported the unit was operational by 7:45. The first plane, an F-86 piloted by Jack Moak, was airborne at 8 p.m. A few years later, Air Guardsmen would be manning alert 24 hours daily and meeting a requirement to send aloft at least two jet fighters within five minutes of an alert scramble notice.

On January 20, 1956, a fire of unknown origin destroyed the base supply office and main warehouse at Congaree. The fire destroyed aircraft parts, office supplies, tools and miscellaneous equipment valued at approximately \$250,000.

From the time the 157 FIS was reactivated after the Korean War, Adjutant General Dozier conducted studies and made recommendations to the National Guard Bureau that another Air Guard squadron be established in South Carolina. After one study by Hq., SCANG in 1953, Gen. Dozier formally requested two additional tactical squadrons for South Carolina on August 4. One unit was requested for the Greenville-Spartanburg area and another for Charleston. At one point two years later the Guard Bureau announced that it was seriously considering a unit for Greenville-Spartanburg, but nothing ever came of it. Ten years later, the S.C. Air Guard thought it was going to get one of the C-141 reserve squadrons being formed to boost the nation's Military Airlift Command (MAC). Plans, never publicly released, were made along these lines, but in the last stages of planning control of the squadron formed at Charleston AFB was given to the Air Force Reserve.

In 1958, F-86L replaced the F-80 as the principal plane being flown by the S.C. Air Guard. The first of the new model F-86L equipped with improved radar and 2.75 inch rockets was delivered to SCANG in February, 1958.

In July of 1956, McLaurin had scrambled safely out of his F-80 jet after it collided with a tow target over the Atlantic Ocean. He was picked up from the ocean unharmed..

In other incidents involving the F-104, ILt. Clifton M. McClure ejected safely after running out of fuel when a sudden fog closed in Moron Air Base. Capt. Vincent Billingsley ejected safely after an engine flameout. The final aircraft loss occurred just before leaving Spain when ILt. Stanley U. Hoke ejected successfully after his engine quit. These problems caused periodic groundings of the F-104 during the eight months the S.C. Air Guard served in Europe.

On August 14,1961, Gen. McEntire was awarded a certificate of valor posthumously by the governor of Pennsylvania. He was recognized for riding his powerless aircraft to his death, rather than ejecting over a heavily populated area possibly saving his own life, but endangering scores of others. The citation read in part:"Gen. McEntire was at sufficient altitude and flying at such air speed that would have permitted him to eject safely from his aircraft. the use of this particular runway at Olmstead leads directly into the heavily populated areas of Harrisburg and the West Shore communities. An aircraft abandoned after takeoff on this runway would almost surely land in these built up areas and cause casualties among the inhabitants in the area where it struck the ground. He never attempted to utilize his escape system, but from eyewitness reports, brought his aircraft in for a water landing in the river, which is the only possible place he could land his aircraft without causing injury or death to others. Gen. McEntire, in performing this act of self-sacrifice, saved the nearby community and its inhabitants from possible death and destruction. His thoughts were concerned with the welfare of others and not of himself."

Shortly after his death, a movement began to change the name of Congaree Air Base to McEntire Air National Guard Base. It was supported by Gov. Hollings, Sens. Strom Thurmond and Olin D. Johnston and Congressman John J. Riley. The formal dedication of the successful movement came on Nov. 10,1961, a few days before the newly activated S.C. Air Guard went to Europe as a result of the Berlin Crisis callup. Gov. Hollings said in the dedicatory address: "His memory shall live as long as appreciation for leadership and dedication to duty remain in the minds of men. What we do here this afternoon is pay respect in the most tangible way we know. As long as this base stands, all will know and remember him and his sacrifice."

September 1, 1961. Warm rain was falling at McEntire ANG Base, but there was business as usual, despite the rain and despite the late afternoon announcement that 64 Air National Guard units and seven Air Force Reserve units had been designated "priority outfits" for federal service in the event a call to active duty was necessary. One of the units was the South Carolina Air National Guard. The concrete wall was going up in Berlin, more tangible evidence of a divided city and more evidence of increasing international tensions.

"There's no question about my outfit being ready to serve," was the standard response of every Guard and Reserve commander in the country. Doubtless, they felt this way. But in any similar situation, reality and raw patriotic fervor produce sharply conflicting emotions. Berlin seemed

far away to most South Carolinians, including Air Guardsmen, and the actual Berlin callup nine weeks later produced pangs of anxiety and family stress.

Reality struck home on Monday, October 9, when 747 men of the South Carolina Air Guard were called to active duty with a reporting date to McEntire ANG Base on Nov. 1. Also called up at this time were F-104 units from Arizona and Tennessee. It was particularly vexing for many S.C. Air Guardsmen. Two weeks earlier, announcement of a callup of 76,500 Air Guardsmen and Reservists was coupled by a Pentagon announcement that the S.C. Air Guard had been deleted from that list of "priority outfits" alerted on Aug. 1 for possible callup.

Just as in the 1950 Korean Callup, there were hundreds of unanswered questions in each family affected. Reduced income and tangled finances. Physical separation. Abrupt departure of husbands. Decisions by mail. Financial management. How to cope with balky furnaces and leaking car radiators. These were but a few of the grey areas faced by Guardsmen and, just as important, their equally affected families. For a few weeks, the Guardsmen didn't know where they were going. First they were to be assigned to Bitberg, Germany. Then it was finally determined that the fighter squadron and some support elements were going to Moron Air Base in Spain. Another large contingent went to France and still other Air Guardsmen were assigned to scattered Air Force bases in the U.S. and Germany. Separation of the 169th Fighter Group caused some local distress, but there was nothing to be done about it. The newly activated airmen were under the command of Col. Corbett. Col. Morrell.

The pace was hectic in October as Guardsmen worked around the clock getting ready to go overseas. Men who just days before had worked in banks, fixed automobiles, sold insurance or clerked in stores, were now packing delicate equipment, or dismantling the F-104 for shipment overseas in the bosom of the bulky C-124. They made out wills and received shots. And said goodbye to loved ones. An advance detachment, headed by Maj. Bernard A. Daetwyler (a month earlier, the comptroller at USC) left McEntire for Spain on Nov. 6. A week later, the first C-124 rolled down the runway headed for Spain. At Moron AB, near Seville, Spain, the Starfighters were unloaded and reassembled. By Nov. 24, all of the 20-odd F-104s assigned to the former S.C. Air Guard were combat ready and flying tactical defense missions for United States Air Forces Europe.

There was also a serious morale problem at many bases, with airmen sitting around twiddling their thumbs, doubting the callup was vital and wondering why they weren't back home. Some S.C. Guardsmen felt the same way, but, by and large, they accepted their callup as an obligation and responsibility. They looked with disfavor on fellow Guardsmen doing the most griping. In a sarcastic letter to a group of New Hampshire Guardsmen assigned to Ft. Bragg, N.C., who had gone on a hunger strike to protest their callup, members of the SCANG'S 157 Fighter Squadron wrote from Spain: "We are deeply moved by the action you have taken concerning your release from active duty . . . We understand the hardships that have been placed upon you by being stationed so far from your homes and families. It must be hard to go home every other weekend. It probably was very hard to tear yourselves away from camp over the Christmas holidays. The best we could look forward to was a phone call from home."

In May of 1962 Air Force Secretary Eugene M. Zuckert announced that all Guardsmen and Reservists recalled the previous year would be released by Aug. 31. On July 3 the first plane home from Europe carrying 76 S.C. Air Guardsmen landed at McEntire. They returned in fits and starts for the next few days, from Moron, Spain: from Chaumont, Drux, Etain, Chaumbley and Phalsbourg. France; from Mannheim, Hahn and scattered other points in Germany; and from bases across the U.S. By the end of July, they were all home.

On Aug. 15, the 747 officers and airmen were released from active duty, more than two months earlier than the year's tour for which they were called. But their response was undoubtedly a factor in reducing tension along the Berlin Wall. A committee on Armed Services of the U.S. House of Representatives, in its report on the Berlin callup. declared: "Perhaps the outstanding accomplishment was that of the Air National Guard in its deployment of aircraft to Europe." The F-104s were brought back the same way dismantled and in the belly of a C-124. The late South Carolina congressman, L. Mendel Rivers, in a speech to the House, pointed out that Chancellor Konrad Adenauer believed the prime factor influencing Khrushchev in the showdown over Berlin was the swift, decisive buildup of American forces. "I'm proud." Rivers said, "that the members of the 169th Fighter Group and the 157 Tactical Fighter Squadron are from my home state. I am proud that all members of the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve are competent and highly motivated citizens."

The returning Guardsmen had hardly had time to pocket their Exceptional Service Medal from the state when there came another distant rumbling of troubles. The missiles were rattling in Cuba and there were persistent reports of mystery flights over the U.S. purportedly Soviet spy flights in a U-2. Already back on 24-hour runway alert, was scrambled several times to identify aircraft but never encountered any but our own. If there were any high flyers, our F-104 couldn't have gotten up there anyway; the U-2 flew at 100,000 feet. The overflights were denied, and the U.S. air defense chief later said reports of Soviet reconnaissance planes over the Southeast were traced to American planes which were temporarily unidentified.

But the Cuban Crisis was real and, in a move to strengthen active air defense forces, was to result in loss of the coveted F-104 by the Air Guard. Reaction was summed up in a note by Col. Morrell scribbled across a NORAD announcement: "The Bastards."

The F-104s were replaced in the spring of 1963 by the F-102

The return from Europe and the easing of the Cuban missile crisis began another long period of stability in the history of the Air Guard. Even during the height of the Vietnam War buildup, there was never any indication from Washington that the South Carolina unit might be activated. In fact, for the first time in American history, the President chose to fight the war with draftees augmenting the regular professional force, rather than also relying extensively on the reserves as in other American wars. The political consequences of this decision and its ramifications on the military were still being heatedly debated into the 1980s.

In 1964, the Air Guard adopted the "Texas Plan" for annual field training. Members in upper skill levels were permitted to take their 15 days training piecemeal, depending on the needs of their unit. Throughout the Sixties and into the Seventies, about half the members of the Fighter Group opted for this training. Annual field training for the remaining half was held annually at McEntire, until 1969, when the Group trained at Phelps-Collins Air Base in Alpena, Michigan. Field training for the Group was again at McEntire in 1970 but in 1971 training was conducted at Otis AFB on Cape Cod.

In 1968, six pilots in the Air Guard volunteered for temporary duty overseas under "Operation Palace Alert." Under the program, combat qualified jet fighter pilots from Air Guard units throughout the United States volunteered to take up the slack in overseas units whose ranks had been stretched thin by the demand for pilots in the Vietnam War zone. SCANG volunteers were: Lt. Col. Robert W. Merck, Maj. Robert B. Dorn Jr., Maj. Charles L. Mielke, Capt. John M. Johnson, Capt. Truman W. King, and 2nd Lt. Frank C. Khare.

A number of base construction projects were completed in the Sixties, including a new operations and training headquarters building, a new headquarters and training building for the 240th, maintenance hangar, alert hangar and dispensary. There were also a number of advancements for Guard personnel, including higher military pay benefits, but most important was the 1968 enactment by Congress of a law granting federal civil service benefits to National Guard technicians. For the first time, full-time Guard personnel became eligible for retirement and other benefits of civil service status. As mentioned earlier in the history, a major architect of the act was Col. Samuel L. Finklea Jr.

As the Air Guard entered its 26th year, it was a combat ready air defense force of 850 airmen and officers always ready to answer the President's call to active duty in the event of a national emergency, or to respond to the governor's plea for help in the event of a domestic flare-up. It could be in response to a full-fledged military operation, such as Korea; or to something as potentially dangerous as the Berlin Crisis; or a heart rendering call to rush rare blood to the bedside of a stricken patient somewhere in the United States.

Cpts. Joseph E. Gable and Henry D. George were on a low altitude training mission when their T-33 crashed in the Lane Community, near the Santee-Cooper lakes, on March 11, 1972. Another SCANG pilot, Capt. John M. Johnson, Jr. was flying the mission in an F-102 and witnessed the accident. The T-33 was seen to roll into a vertical position at an altitude of about 2,500 feet and crash seconds later. There was no hint of aircraft malfunction and the pilots had been carrying on ordinary conversation at the time of the roll. The board investigating the accident never found the answer to what caused the accident and deaths of two experienced pilots on a routine training mission.

5 December 1972 During an Aerospace Defense Command night training mission, Convair F-102A-80-CO Delta Dagger, 56-1517, of the 157 Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, South Carolina Air National Guard, McEntire Air National Guard Base, South Carolina, collided with Lockheed C-130E Hercules, 64-0558, of the 318th Special Operations Squadron, out of Pope AFB, North

Carolina, during a simulated interception, over the Bayboro area of Horry County, east of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. EC-130 The mission called for the fighter to "intercept" the EC-130, whose coordinates and heading had been fed to the SCANG pilot. The electronic gear aboard the 130 would determine the speed and the facility with which the intercept pilot earned out his duties. It was a routine air defense practice maneuver, a cat and mouse game necessary for realistic training of pilots assigned to scramble and identify unknown aircraft intruding on U.S. air space. The night-time maneuver called for the intercept pilot to close rapidly on an unidentified aircraft the EC-130 in this case and break away after scoping out his quarry. Capt. Haygood broke too late, clipped the transport and 13 people died in a sparsely populated area of Horry County about 10 miles north of Conway. One killed in the Delta Dagger, Capt. Thomas C. Haygood, Jr. of Lexington, South Carolina, and all twelve aboard the Hercules perish. They were Lt. Col. Donald E. Martin, of White Oak, Texas; Maj. Keith L. Van Note, of Mason City, Iowa; Capt. John R. Cole, of Tulsa, Oklahoma; Capt. Louis R. Sert, of St. Louis, Missouri; Capt. Marshall K. Dickerson, of Chicago; Lt. Douglas L. Theirer, address unavailable; T.Sgt. Robert E. Doyle, of South Hill, Virginia; T.Sgt. Claude L. Abbot, of Adel, Georgia; S.Sgt. Gilmore A. Minkley, Jr., of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania; Sgt. Billy M. Warr, Sr., of Sylmar, California; Sgt. Gerald K. Faust, of Oregon, Wisconsin; and Capt. Douglas S. Peterson, of Harvard, Illinois. Some press reports list Conway, South Carolina, west of the crash site, as the location.

Another accident took the life of veteran pilot John M. Johnson, Jr. Maj. Johnson (who, coincidentally, was on the same mission when Cpts. Gable and George were killed) was flying off the coast of Myrtle Beach on January 15, 1983, when his engine failed. He bailed out about 20 miles offshore. An Air Guard pilot on the mission, Maj. Phil Leventis, circled the downed airman until rescue helicopters from Myrtle Beach AFB arrived about 40 minutes later. Paramedics said Johnson had a pulse when he was pulled from the frigid Atlantic waters, but he was pronounced dead at the Myrtle Beach AFB Hospital. Drowning was listed as the official cause.

In 1973, the Air Force was making plans to phase out the F-102. In its place would be the new A-7 which had come into the defense stream during the latter part of the Vietnam war. South Carolina didn't figure into plans being made in the Pentagon. Instead, South Carolina was in line for a reorganization that would, most likely, place it in helicopters with an air rescue mission. This change of mission and aircraft would have meant a drastic reduction in force military and full-time technicians.

These plans were actively fermenting in the "official secrets" file of the Washington bureaucracy. The adjutant general knew, but he was angry that he had not been consulted or officially advised. The base commander at McEntire knew of the plans, but he and the AG rarely spoke. Strom Thurmond, the Republican senator in Washington, could do something about it, but he was waiting for Gen. McCrady, an elected official of the Democrat party, to make a move. What you had was sort of a Mexican standoff of officials, each with a brim-ful of pride and each waiting for someone else to break the communications log-jam.

Meanwhile, plans in Washington were continuing and several key offices at McEntire knew that these plans, once announced, would be well nigh impossible to un-do. The Department of Defense reorganization plan was due to be released about the first of February, 1974.

Col. Bunk Weston, caught in the middle of two generals who had little personal use for each other, figured a way out. He planted the story with a journalist who telephoned Sen. Thurmond to discuss local fears that the staff and mission at McEntire were about to be reduced. This story appeared in The Columbia Record on January 23, 1974:

Unofficial but persistent indications of Pentagon plans for a drastic personnel cut and mission change for the (SCANG) have prompted Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., to send a telegram to U.S. Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger requesting a meeting between defense and congressional leaders. Thurmond said his telegram was aimed at reports of tentative Defense Department plans for a national reorganization of Air Guard and Reserve forces, and he said he had received no official indication that the South Carolina unit would be effected. "ESPECIALLY disturbing," Thurmond said, "are reports to reduce or eliminate air defense elements in the South where our defensive line is already shallow.

The air defense mission is especially suited to Guard and Reserve units. They could easily accept a larger share of the air defense mission at significant savings." The South Carolina Air Guard now has the responsibility for a segment of air defense on the East Coast and flies the F-102 jet fighter. The F-102, is obsolete as a sophisticated military weapon, and the Air Force already has begun phasing it out of its inventory in favor of more modern jet aircraft such as the A-7 and F-106. For several months now there have been rumors that the South Carolina flying unit is not included in those units which the Pentagon plans to favor with the more modern aircraft.

INSTEAD, according to unofficial reports, the South Carolina Air Guard is in line for a reorganization that would place it in helicopters with an air rescue mission or in the slow, tiny O-2 which is a propeller driven aircraft used by forward air controllers "flying low and slow" in Vietnam in search of enemy ground forces.

There are now approximately 850 members of the state's Air Guard, all of whom train at McEntire Air Guard base at Eastover near Columbia. The Guard has a full-time technician work force of more than 200. Both figures would be cut by more than half under any reorganization involving helicopters or the O-2.

Shortly after lunch one week and one day later, on February 1, 1974, Gen. Morrell used the public address system to tell technicians: "You can read about your future in The Columbia Record when you get home this afternoon." It was the first word they would get. The headline in The Record that afternoon said, "Air Guard to Get New A-7." The announcement, they indicated, should end fears that the state's Air Guard personnel would be chopped in half and the unit relegated to a lesser military role.

Sen. Thurmond, who is a senior member of the U.S. Armed Services Committee, met earlier this

week with Defense Department and pleaded the case for maintaining the current strength of state's Air Guard.

The 169th Fighter Group made the transition to the Tactical Air Command in 1975 with the assignment of the A-7. The group showed its mettle and in the following year became the first Air Guard unit in the nation to undergo an Air Force Operational Readiness Inspection away from its home base. That performance earned it the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

In 1977, the 169th became the first Air Guard unit in 25 years to participate in joint military exercises in Hawaii, known as Cope Elite. Then it was off to Red Flag at Nellis AFB, Nevada, where pilots and maintenance crews fought in what is called the next thing to a real war. In 1978, it was off to England where the 169th participated in Coronet Teal in its role to become familiar with the European theater.

Meanwhile, the 169th took on additional tasking with its missions to the Panama Canal Zone, which included the first night flying missions by an Air Guard unit.

In 1980, it was back across the pond, this time to Orland Main Station, Norway, off the Norwegian Sea, just down the coast a bit from the USSR. The 169th played a key role in a massive NATO exercise called Teamwork 80.

U.S. Senator Strom Thurmond made the announcement at a press conference in Columbia on February 9, 1982. The South Carolina Air Guard, Thurmond said, had impressed Air Force officials as "the best in the country. That's the reason we were chosen for the F-16's."

Thurmond had taken office as governor the month after an Air Guard unit was organized at what was then called Congaree Air Base, a few miles east of Columbia. He was a strong supporter of Lt. Col. Bernie B. McEntire, Jr. and his band of pioneers. As United States senator, Thurmond had continued his strong support. In 1974, Thurmond single-handedly intervened to block plans by unfriendly officials in the Pentagon to convert McEntire's flying mission from jets to a rescue unit flying aging helicopters. Not only would this have reduced the prestige of the Palmetto State Air Guard, it would have brought about a significant reduction in the number of part-time military positions as well as full-time technicians "It didn't hurt us to have Senator Thurmond in Washington." said Eston Marchant, the adjutant general of South Carolina. But General Marchant and others were quick to point out that much more than "politics" was involved in the Air Force decision.

To Brig. General Ralph E. Bradford, Jr., SCANG's chief of staff, it was simply a "reaffirmation that the Total Force is alive and well." To Col. Stanley V. Hood, the Fighter Group commander, it was another vote of confidence for a military unit which had successfully converted its primary mission aircraft a dozen times since 1946. Hood and Bradford had been through several successful conversions, including the one in 1960 to the F-104. The F-104 was THE hot airplane of its time, and the activity and excitement it generated were no less than what was being ginned up by the F-16.

Gen. Bradford and Col. Hood had a score of experienced avionics, maintenance and supply technicians who had been there two decades earlier when the SCANG was one of three chosen for the coveted Starfighter. We have already established that there wasn't a blase member in the crowd of Guardsmen who welcomed and who would manage the F-16. The excitement was there. But there was no anxiety among these veteran South Carolinians about having to do something totally new, with fewer people, than an equivalent Air Force unit on active duty.

Lt. Col. Charles Blount was appointed conversion manager, and he was almost clinical about the starting point: "Soon after an initial briefing by the Guard Bureau, we had a site survey made. The survey people identified several modifications we needed to make to our existing facilities to accommodate the F-16." Behind that dry, surgical assessment was a team of real people experts in their field.

Lt. Col. Del Dorn, the fighter squadron commander worked with officers of 9th Air Force at Shaw and officers at MacDill AFB in Florida to develop a short course syllabus for training reserve pilots in the airplane. It had to be done right. It had to be thorough. But the transition training at MacDill had to be accomplished in 6 weeks about half the time that could be allotted to full-time pilots on active duty.

Within weeks, the 140 technicians of the Air Guard who would maintain the F-16's were assigned, in staggered increments, to technical training schools in Colorado, Illinois, and Mississippi. A close association was formed with counterparts from the 363rd Tactical Fighter Wing at Shaw AFB, which was SCANG's advisory wing in the gaining Tactical Air Command. In fact, the proximity of Shaw AFB and the opportunity to share expertise was another key factor in the decision by the Air Force to select the South Carolina Air National Guard to be first reserve unit in the nation to fly and maintain the F-16.

There are a number of "firsts" to be recorded: Second Lieutenant Jody Weston was the first SCANG pilot to fly the F-16. This was in flight school in early March, 1983.

A week later, Lt. Col. George B. Inabinet, Maj. Douglas deVlaming and Maj. John Marshall were in the first class of SCANG instructor pilots to begin flying the aircraft.

On July 16, 1983, Lt. Col. Inabinet flew in with papers officially transferring his aircraft to the command of the South Carolina Air Guard. Gov. Richard B. Riley greeted Inabinet and said: "This certainly is a proud moment as we welcome the arrival of the F-16 Fighting Falcon here in South Carolina. The F-16 is a proud machine and one the world recognizes as the best tactical and most agile aircraft in the world."

The F-16s assigned to McEntire came from the General Dynamics factory line in Ft. Worth, Texas.

But there have been dark moments. The worst was the fatal crash on April 10, 1984, that killed

veteran pilot and former squadron commander Lt. Col. Yeadon Dorn. He was killed when his F-16 crashed near Lower Richland High School, a few minutes after takeoff from McEntire. Another pilot on the mission, 2Lt. Frank Mooneyhan, narrowly escaped when his plane flew through the tops of pine trees. Mooneyhan returned safely to base in his badly-scarred aircraft.

Capt. Scott Cain received the Air Medal for saving an F-16 during flight training at Luke AFB, Ariz., in September of 1983. With the plane's engine running open, Cain remained with the F-16 until it was powerless. He then guided the craft to a "dead stick" safe landing. He had 20 hours in the plane at the time. Cain also escaped injury in another serious incident when he was forced to eject near Savannah, Ga.. on February 7, 1985, when the engine of his F-16 quit.

In January 2002, aircraft and personnel of the 169th Fighter Wing were deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, directly participating in combat operations.

In February 2003, nearly 400 members of the 169th FW and all of its F-16s were mobilized and deployed to Southwest Asia as part of what became Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 169th was attached to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing, stationed in Qatar. The unit flew more than 400 combat missions, performing the Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) mission and flying numerous precision bombing missions over Iraq.

The 169th FW was also a regular participant in the Air Expeditionary Force, which patrolled the Iraqi no-fly zones. The unit has deployed for Operation Southern Watch (Qatar, 1996), to Operation Northern Watch (Turkey, 2000), and again to Southern Watch (Saudi Arabia, 2001). The 169th FW was the first Air National Guard unit to deploy alongside active-duty Air Force units to comprise an AEF.

In 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission announced an expansion at McEntire Joint National Guard Base. In November 2006, five more F-16s arrived at the base to begin the execution of the BRAC recommendations.

The South Carolina Air National Guard's 169th Fighter Wing at McEntire JNGB, S.C., has become the first Air Guard unit to use Lockheed Martin's Sniper targeting pod in combat, according to the company. During a four-month deployment to Iraq earlier this year, the wing's F-16 Block 50 aircraft employed the Sniper in non-traditional intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance roles, relaying high-resolution streaming video to ground troops, stated Lockheed in a release. "The Sniper pod did exactly what we needed it to do," said Brig. Gen. Scott Williams, 169th FW commander. With it, the F-16 pilots were able to help determine the source of mortar attacks and track enemy combatants in cluttered environments. Using Sniper, they also protected troops at forward refueling points, according to the company. 2010

More than 100 members of the 169 FW deployed to Jordan for the Falcon Air Meet, 2009. Where the represented the Air Forces Central Command in the international F16 competition. The first Air Guard unit ever to compete in the meet, the 169th was declared its overall winner receiving five of the six awards presented. Nov 2009

The 20th Fighter Wing at Shaw AFB, S.C., turned over responsibility for protecting the airspace in the southeast United States to the South Carolina Air National Guard's 169th FW at McEntire Joint National Guard Base, announced Shaw officials Monday. Shaw's F-16s performed the air sovereignty alert mission from Aug. 1, 2006, to May 9, 2011, after an earlier two-year stint right after 9/11, they said. "Shaw's role in the alert mission was to defend the Southeast Air Defense Sector and the 79 million American citizens within that sector from airborne threats," said Col. James Sears, commander of Shaw's 20th Operations Group. The South Carolina Air Guardsmen also fly F-16s. The ASA mission requires three dedicated, armed alert aircraft two primaries and one spare at an alert location, with two pilots and associated maintenance and support personnel on duty at all times. 2011

USAF Unit Histories

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