

110 BOMB SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

110 Aero Squadron organized, 14 Aug 1917
Redesignated 804 Aero Squadron, 1 Feb 1918
Redesignated Squadron K, Kelly Field, TX, 23 Jul 1918
Demobilized, 18 Nov 1918

110 Observation Squadron activated and allotted to NG, 23 Jun 1923

Squadron K, Kelly Field reconstituted and consolidated with 110 Observation Squadron, 1936.
Consolidated organization designated 110 Observation Squadron.

Ordered to active service, 23 Dec 1940
Redesignated 110 Observation Squadron (Light), 13 Jan 1942
Redesignated 110 Observation Squadron, 4 Jul 1942
Redesignated 110 Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter), 2 Apr 1943
Redesignated 110 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 10 May 1944
Inactivated 20 Feb 1946
Redesignated 110 Fighter Squadron (Single-Engine), and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946
Extended federal recognition, 23 Sep 1946
Redesignated 110 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1951
Redesignated 110 Bombardment Squadron (Light), 1952
Redesignated 110 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jan 1960
Redesignated 110 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992
Redesignated 110 Bomb Squadron

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX, 14 Aug 1917-18 Nov 1918
St Louis, MO, 23 Jun 1923
Lambert-St Louis Mun Aprt, MO, Jul 1931
Little Rock, AR, 3 Jan 1941
Salinas AAB, CA, 22 Dec 1941
Esler Field, LA, 28 Jan 1943
Laurel AAFld, MS, 1 Apr-20 Oct 1943
Brisbane, Australia, 5 Dec 1943
Port Moresby, New Guinea, 21 Dec 1943 (flight operated from Gusap, New Guinea, after 20 Jan 1944)
Gusap, New Guinea, 7 Feb 1944 (operated from Tadj, New Guinea, after 25 May 1944)
Tadj, New Guinea, 5 Jun 1944
Biak, 11 Sep 1944
Dulag, Leyte, 3 Nov 1944-4 Jan 1945 (operated primarily from Tacloban, Leyte, to 24 Dec 1944, and from San Jose, Mindoro, 25 Dec 1944-22 Jan 1945)
Lingayen, Luzon, 20 Jan 1945
Ie Shima, 28 Jul 1945
Chofu, Japan, 6 Oct 1945
Ft William McKinley, Luzon, Dec 1945-20 Feb 1946
St Louis, MO

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 1917-1918
Missouri NG (divisional aviation, 35th Division), 23 Jun 1923
VII Army Corps, c. Dec 1940
II Air Support Command, 1 Sep 1941
71st Observation (later Reconnaissance; Tactical Reconnaissance; Reconnaissance) Group, 1 Oct 1941
Seventh Air Force, 20 Oct 1945
Far East Air Forces (later Pacific Air Command, US Army), 3 Dec 1945-20 Feb 1946

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

JN-4, 1923
TW-3, 1925
O-2C, 1926
JNS-1
PT-1, 1927
BT-1,
O-11, 1928
O-2H, 1928
O-17, 1929
O-38B, 1933
O-38E, 1938
O-47A, 1938
O-49

O-46,

O-52,

P-39, 1942

B-25, 1943

A-20

P-40

P-51/F-6, 1945

B-26, 1952

B-26

T-33, 1957

F-80, 1957

F-84, 1957

F-100, 1962

F-4, 1978

F-15, 1991

B-2

Support Aircraft

VC-47A

COMMANDERS

Maj William M. Robertson, 23 Jun 1923

Cpt Charles R. Wassell, 16 Sep 1924

Cpt William H. Leininger, 21 May 1925

Maj Charles R. Wassell, 14 Oct 1925

Cpt Russell A. Young, 16 Sep 1929

Cpt John P. Sparks, 8 Feb 1930

Maj Philip R. Love, 23 Oct 1930

Maj Eben R. Alexander, Sep 1936

Cpt Carl E. Gill

Maj Edwin H. Lauth, 2 Feb 1939-Feb 1941

Unknown, Feb 1941-7 Dec 1941

Lt Wilson

Lt Higgins

Lt McCahill

Lt Landes

Lt Silberberg

Lt Burton

Maj Charles H. DuBois, 1946

Maj Glennon T. Moran, 1952

LTC James McDonough, 1953

Maj George Carpenter

Maj Raymond Mayers, 1954

Maj Robert L. Smith

Maj John Connaghan

Maj Elmer Parrish, 1962

Maj George Carpenter, 1962
Maj Charles Garrison, 1963
Maj John Leahy, 1965
Maj Robert McDonald
LTC Harold Buckley, 1 Jul 1972
LTC Reed C. Drake, Jan 2001-Jun 2009

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Antisubmarine, American Theater
Air Offensive, Japan
China Defensive
New Guinea
Western Pacific
Leyte
Luzon
China Offensive
Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Philippine Islands, 7 Dec 1944
Philippine Islands, 26 Dec 1944

Presidential Unit Citation

1944 for the attack on Japanese Naval Task Force. In all, the unit destroyed 122 aircraft and 11 ships.

EMBLEM





In late 1944, the 110 TRS became known as the "Musketeers"



On a yellow disc, border blue, the head of caricatured black and white mule, with red eyes, wearing brown goggles, snorting white vapor from the nostrils and holding a brown rocket in the teeth, all in front of two, gray aerial machine guns saltirewise. (Approved, 7 Jul 1949)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

1977 Charles Lindbergh's widow gives permission to designate 110 Tactical Fighter Squadron as "Lindbergh's Own"

OPERATIONS

This squadron formed in 16 Aug 1917 Kelly No. 1 as the 110 Aero Repair Squadron with Lieut. Wilson as Squadron Commander and Lieut. Bagnell as Engineer Officer in command. It was composed of men from various branches of the service and newly enlisted men anxious to see active service in France. Known as the Base Machine Shop Squadron, embracing the entire personnel of the Engineering Department at that time, it had control over the Machine Shop, Foundry, Heat Treatment, Woodworking Shop, Welding Shop, Magneto Department, Tin Shop, Motor Shop, Erecting and Repair Division and the Testing Department. Due to lack of material and equipment, the work of repairing ships and motors taxed the ingenuity of all concerned to the utmost, and it was only thru the exceptional ability of the men and officers of the squadron that the repair work was accomplished.

On Sunday, 18 Oct 1917, the entire squadron and equipment was transferred to the Flying Department, Kelly Field No. 2, forming the nucleus from, which the present extensive system has grown. This system has been widely copied throughout the other Aviation Fields in the country.

On 1 Feb 1918, the name of the squadron was changed to the 804th Aero Repair Squadron, and Lieut. Higgins was assigned as Commanding Officer and many of our men were transferred to other fields to introduce the system which has been perfected here.

About the 1st of April Lieut. Higgins was relieved and Lieut. McCahill was assigned as Commanding Officer, only to be succeeded by Lieut. Landes with Lieut. Silberberg as Adjutant and Lieut. McCoy as Supply Officer. During the dual assignment of Lieut. Landes, who, besides being the Squadron Commander, was assistant Detail Officer of the Flying Department, Lieut. Silberberg assumed the duties of the Commanding Officer, and it was thru his efforts that Squadron "K" was the first squadron on the field to have their Recreation Room decorated and equipped in an elaborate way.

The furniture of the room is designed and made by the men of the Squadron who are on duty in the Woodworking Department and the lighting scheme installed by another member of the Squadron. The furnishings include a piano, pool table, card tables, writing tables, library and various other equipment for the benefit and comfort of the men. The room is attractively decorated, and the soft light from the Japanese lanterns gives a warm and homelike atmosphere. Many happy hours were spent here during spare time.

In the latter part of Sep 1918, the Squadron was greatly depleted in strength by the sending out of a great number of men to Gerstner Field, La., to organize the Engineering Department there, and to bring the Squadron back to its authorized strength, a detachment of men was transferred here from the Mechanics School at Austin, Texas, to obtain practical experience from the older men in the organization. Shortly after this Lieut. McCoy was assigned as Supply Officer of the Cadet Wing.

After the Armistice had been signed, Lieuts. Landes and Silberberg both secured an honorable discharge from the service, and Lieut. Burton, one of the most widely known Flying Instructors on the field, was put in command; Lieut. Murray being assigned as Adjutant, and Lieut. Lloyd, Supply Officer.

The men of the Squadron look forward with regret and pride to the day the demobilization machinery disbands this highly efficient organization; regret for the parting of friends and comrades, and pride in knowing the self-sacrifice they made in training fliers to go overseas, forming as they did the back-bone of the men who helped complete the job "over there."

1923 The Missouri Air National Guard traces its roots back to the 110 Observation Squadron, organized by Maj Bill Robertson and his brothers, LT Frank and Dan Robertson. Unit officers purchased the first aircraft, a JN-4. Their first pilot on the "St Louis to Chicago" airmail run was a lanky young man named Charles Lindbergh.

The 35th Division Aviation, Missouri National Guard, was organized formally on June 23, 1923, when the 110 Observation Squadron, 110 Photo Section, and 170th Intelligence Section were Federally recognized and designated as components of the 35th Division Air Service.

First headquarters of the 35th Division Air Service was in a filling station on Manchester Avenue. From there they were moved to a small room over a grocery store on Olive Street Roid in St. Louis County. Drills were held at the flying field, then little more than a pasture. There were no airplanes, no uniforms for enlisted men. The first flying equipment was an JN-4 Curtiss "Jenny," which was purchased by the officers of the squadron and used for flying training until early 1924 when three wartime JN-4H's were received. The officers also purchased a 150 H. P. engine and installed it in the original airplane during the time that it was flown by them.

The planes were housed and the field headquarters were located in two corrugated sheet-iron hangars erected on the flying field during the air races of 1923 and later turned over to the squadron. Beginning early in 1924, other equipment and airplanes began to arrive, including cameras, tools, flying clothing, and rolling stock and parachutes, the first three of which were received on August 29, 1924. By the close of the year, the organization had assumed a stabilized form as to personnel and was functioning in the program of a planned training schedule.

Headquarters facilities of the organization improved along with the quality and quantity of its equipment. From the room over the grocery store, they were moved in 1925 to a large room at 1115 Hodiament Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, in the second floor of a store building. Drills were held during the ensuing two years at the 138th Infantry Armory, with Sunday morning flying periods held in addition at Lambert-St. Louis Field. Late in 1926 the headquarters office was moved to 200 South Theresa Avenue on the first and second floors of a warehouse building, which otherwise was given over to a public garage and a pecan factory.

During this period of the existence of the 35th Division Air Service, the organization was officially informed that its Federal recognition would be withdrawn if it did not find adequate headquarters facilities. At this juncture, the command of Battery "A," 128th Field Artillery, Missouri National Guard, intervened with an offer of the free use of its facilities on South Grand Boulevard, which was gratefully accepted. In the spring of 1927, the flying unit moved its offices into the artillery organization's quarters, thereby meeting the conditions imposed for continuance of its operations.

Meanwhile, St. Louis had passed an \$87,000,000 bond issue, which included among its items

\$2,000,000 for purchase and improvement of the flying field, and incidentally, an item of \$100,000 for a National Guard hangar. While waiting for erection of its building, the organization moved its headquarters in 1929, to the old Central District police station at 208 South Twelfth Street. The unit's new hangar, including offices and shops, was ready in July, 1931, and finally, after seven years, headquarters, flying equipment, and all other squadron facilities were in one place.

Among the officers of the 35th Division Air Service from 1924 to 1927 was Charles A. Lindbergh, who was promoted from Cpt to Col by act of the State Legislature following his memorable New York to Paris flight. Col Lindbergh, headquartered at St. Louis as an instructor and later as an air mail pilot in the three years prior to the trans-Atlantic flight, was active as an officer, and had various administrative assignments in the squadron during that time. He and Col Love were classmates at the army flying school, and in 1926 both were employed by the Robertson Aircraft Corporation to fly the mail between St. Louis and Chicago.

In its first year the organization had no annual field training period, but it began its summer program in 1924 when the annual encampment was held at Camp Clark, Nevada, Missouri. The 1925 camp was held there, and in 1926, 1927, and 1928, the organization took its training at Lambert-St. Louis Field.

From 1929 to 1934 the organization's field training was held at Marshall Field, Fort Riley, Kansas, where the training program was correlated with that of the 60th Field Artillery Brigade, Kansas National Guard, also a component of the 35th Division. In 1935, the unit held its field training camp with Missouri National Guard troops at Camp Clark, Nevada, Missouri. The organization went to Fort Riley, Kansas, for its 1936 and 1937 encampments. During 1937, the organization served as the air force for the "Blue" army in the Fort Riley phase of the Fourth Army Maneuvers. In 1938, the squadron camped at Eglin Field, Valparaiso, Florida, where the entire encampment was devoted to aerial gunnery.

In July 1931, the men, equipment and headquarters of the 110 had finally been consolidated at the new National Guard hangar at Lambert Field. Squadron commander at this time was Major Philip Love.

From May 1 to 15, 1931, five airplanes participated in the Air Corps Maneuvers, when at Mitchell Field, NY, Col Lindbergh joined the squadron and led the entire flight as leader of the 35th Division Aviation formation. Three airplanes with officers and enlisted crews towed anti-aircraft targets for the 203rd Coast Artillery (AA), Missouri National Guard, at its annual encampment at Fort Barrancas, FL, in 1931 and 1938; at Ft. Sheridan, IL, in 1935, and at Palacios, TX, in 1936.

From May 1 to 15, 1931, five airplanes participated in the Air Corps Maneuvers, when at Mitchell Field, L. I., N. Y., Colonel Lindbergh joined the squadron and led the entire flight as leader of the 35th Division Aviation formation. Three airplanes with officers and enlisted crews towed anti-aircraft targets for the 203rd Coast Artillery (AA), Missouri National Guard, at its annual encampment at Fort Barrancas, Florida, in 1931 and 1938; at Ft. Sheridan, Illinois, in 1935, and at Palacios, Texas, in 1936.

Individual pilots and airplanes of the squadron were assigned frequently during 1933 and subsequent years to special details including cooperation with the State Highway Patrol and on one occasion in a hunt for fugitive criminals, and also the ferrying of United States Public Health Service officials during the encephalitis epidemic in St. Louis in the summer of 1933.

Three airplanes and a detachment of three officers and several enlisted men were stationed at Sikeston, Missouri, in January, 1936, to assist in the evacuation of persons from flooded area in the Mississippi River flood basin extending from Birds Point and New Madrid, Missouri, by dropping messages and directing rescue boats. One airplane with two officers and ground crew was assigned to adjust artillery fire for the 128th Field Artillery, Missouri National Guard at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in July, 1938.

The unit's headquarters now consist of a brick hangar 110 by 160 feet, with a balcony housing the photo, armament, and supply sections, and a classroom. The commandant's office, Air Corps Instructor's office, headquarters office, officers' club, and garage are located on one side of the hangar, and the radio, engineering, operations, and medical sections, and non-commissioned officers' club are located in an adjoining building on the other side. The enlisted men's locker room and club are located in a frame building near the hangar.

In 1934, Captain Arthur Thomas took over as the Squadron's Air Corps instructor and was to serve until Captain Yantis H. Taylor succeeded him in 1938.

Summer field training in 1935 was held at Camp Clark, Nevada, Mo., and the 110 provided support for the men of the Missouri National Guard, who were also training at Camp Clark.

The men of the 110 received many special assignments during the early 1930's. In May 1931. five airplanes participated in Air Corp maneuvers at Mitchell Field, Long Island, New York.

Col. Lindbergh rejoined his old Squadron for these exercises and served as flight leader for the 35th Division Aviation formation.

Three airplanes piloted by men of the unit towed anti-aircraft targets for the 203rd Coast Artillery, Missouri National Guard, at Fort Barrancas, Florida in 1931; Fort Sheridan, Illinois in 1935 and at Palacios, Texas in 1936.

Individual pilots and airplanes were frequently assigned special duty in cooperation with various state agencies, including the Highway Patrol during this time.

In September 1936, a new 110 Commander, Major Eban Roy Alexander, appeared on the scene. Major Love was promoted to Division Air Officer with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

The commander's office, the Air Corps instructor's office and the garage were located on one side of the hangar and the radio, engineering and operations sections were in an adjoining building on the other side.

The unit went to Fort Riley, Kansas, for summer field training again in 1936 and 1937. In 1937, they served as part of the "Blue" army in the regular Fourth Army maneuvers.

In January 1936, a detachment of three aircraft, three officers and several enlisted men were stationed at Sikeston, Mo., to assist in evacuating persons from the flooded area in the Mississippi River basin extending from Bird Point to New Madrid.

Summer field training was held at Eglin Field in Valparaiso, Fla., in 1938 and was entirely devoted to aerial gunnery.

In late 1938, Major Alexander left Missouri for business reasons and Major Edwin H. Lauth became the new commander.

The 110 Observation Squadron, Missouri National Guard, was one of the units federalized on Dec. 23, 1940. At the time of its activation, the 110 was flying O-47 and had 27 officers and 94 enlisted men assigned. After activation, the 110 moved to Adams Field, Little Rock, Ark., where it trained until December 1941. From this point, the next move was to Salinas, Calif., for overseas duty preparations.

The nucleus of the unit was used to form the 110 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron stationed at Alexandria, La. and Laurel, Miss. before completing stateside training.

Here is the text of a Presidential Unit Citation awarded the 110 during World War II: The 110 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 71st Tactical Reconnaissance Group, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action in the Philippine Islands on 26 December 1944. On the evening of that day, a Japanese naval task force, consisting of a heavy cruiser, a light cruiser, and at least six destroyers, was discovered approaching the newly established American base on Mindoro Island.

Although the P-40 with which the squadron was equipped were not suited for night attacks and although they were not trained for night fighting, 20 pilots of the 110 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron volunteered to join other air units on the island in striking at the threatening Japanese force. Taking off during an enemy bombing and strafing attack from a runway lit by the flames of burning aircraft, the P-40 of the 110 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron were over the target from early in the evening until well after midnight. Often selecting those vessels which were sending up the most flak, the P-40 pilots, hampered by poor conditions of visibility and subjected to murderous antiaircraft fire, strafed the enemy ships and made dive bombing attacks which resulted in numerous direct hits and near misses.

Although darkness prevented accurate assessment of the damage caused by members of the squadron, several of the Japanese vessels were sunk and others were seriously damaged by the combined attacks of the American units based on Mindoro. Having completed their daring mission, the pilots of the squadron had to battle their way through extremely adverse weather to reach the island of Leyte, to which they had been directed. Of the airmen of the squadron who took part in this mission, four were reported missing in action and two were injured, while five aircraft were destroyed, three damaged by antiaircraft fire, and one irreparably damaged in an emergency landing. By their intrepid attacks on the enemy vessels, the pilots of the 110 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron helped to ward off a powerful threat to the American stronghold on Mindoro, a base from which pre-invasion strikes were being made against enemy targets on Luzon.

Credit for the squadron's share in this significant victory must be given also to the men of the ground crews to prepare and service the P-40s for this hazardous mission, although the entire area was being subjected to a constant enemy aerial attack. The courage, determination, and esprit de corps of the personnel of the 110 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron reflect great honor on the United States Armed Forces.

On 24 Apr 1949, during a mock dogfight as part of the day's regular gunnery practice, 1LT Alan E. Blest was killed when his F-51 crashed near Creve Coeur Lake after colliding in mid-air with another Missouri Air National Guard plane. 1LT Philip Houghton, the pilot of the second plane, escaped injury, although his Mustang was badly damaged in a belly-landing in a field nearby. Both of the men, who were training in planes from the 71st Fighter Wing, were using cameras mounted on their planes in the place of guns. They were about to return to Lambert Field when 1LT Blest's plane veered upward, striking the underside of Houghton's plane. Blest's plane fell away, exploding as it turned wing over wing. The plane then streaked toward the ground, trailing black smoke and flames. The crippled craft exploded a second time as it struck the ground, scattering wreckage for almost a mile. Blest's body was found still strapped to the pilot's seat, in an alfalfa field near the lake. 1LT Houghton brought his plane down in a field near the St. Louis County waterworks, about a mile north of the point where Blest's plane crashed. 1LT Houghton, his Mustang badly battered, was shaken up, but not injured.

In Jun 1949, the City of St. Louis faced the loss of the 71st Fighter Wing. The Wing needed more room to expand at Lambert-St. Louis Airport, and wanted a long term lease to enable the federal government to allocate some \$5,000,000 for new buildings and improvements. On June 17, BG John Harris, Adjutant General of Missouri, officially informed St. Louis Mayor Joseph Darst of the Missouri Air National Guard's needs and intentions. The Mayor appointed a five member committee to study the requests. The request was for a 25-year lease on some forty acres at Lambert at the cost of \$1 per year. Construction plans included a new hangar. When the new hangar was completed, the old one was to revert to City use free of charge. At that time Wing Headquarters was scattered between Lambert, Jefferson Barracks and the old Robertson School area near the field. The lack of the central Headquarters was described as inefficient and unsatisfactory. City officials were told that some 24 other cities in Missouri and neighboring states were offering the Wing a permanent headquarters if St. Louis did not provide the necessary facilities, The City was to continue receiving a \$6,000 yearly compensation for Guard use of the Airport facilities.

The Wing was one of 12 such fighter headquarters in the country and had the responsibility for the air defense of a large section of the upper Mississippi Valley area in the event of an attack. On June 30, 1949, the announcement was made that the 71st Fighter Wing Headquarters would not move to another city, but would remain in St. Louis. City officials, a subcommittee of the Airport Commission and officials of the Air National Guard came to an agreement regarding the leasing of about forty acres of land at Lambert Field. The exact location of the site and length of the lease was to be worked out between the Guard and officials in consultation with the entire Airport Commission. Conway Briscoe, director of public utilities, said that unless the Guard found a site more to its liking, land at the northeast corner of the field would be used. The Guard area then was at the southwest corner of the field. Once a new hangar was built on the agreed upon location, the old hangar would be returned to the city of St. Louis at no cost. The Guard would continue to compensate St. Louis at the rate of \$6,000 per year for use of the general airport facilities. The new lease allowed the headquarters of the 71st to be consolidated in one place, and keep its ten St. Louis based organizations here. 71st Wing Headquarters had tactical control over fighter units in Missouri, Minnesota, and North and South Dakota. The agreement was reached on the last day before the deadline set by Guard officials in Jefferson City. Subsequently, the city gave the guard an 18 year lease which was not sufficiently long to bring all the contemplated federal construction funds to St. Louis. This was to be a negative factor in the Guard's growth until 1972, when a 50-year lease was finally agreed upon.

Tragedy struck the Missouri Air National Guard on 9 Nov 1949, when an F-51, flown by 1LT Jack C. McConnell, crashed in the Meramec River in St. Louis County. 1LT McConnell 25, was killed, after taking off from Lambert-St. Louis airport for aerial maneuvers. Witnesses said 1LT McConnell's plane failed to come out of a spin and fell in to the water about 75 yards from shore. The plane's fuel supply burst into flames, covering the submerged wreckage, and making immediate recovery attempts impossible. 1LT McConnell's body was recovered the next day by crews from Scott Air Force Base and the 71st Fighter Wing. A veteran of World War II, McConnell, had been assigned to the training section of the 110 Fighter Squadron.

By 1949 the Air National Guard facility at Lambert Field, began to take on a new look. The hangar, with its complex of shops and offices, was modernized and the adjacent aircraft parking area was covered with pierced steel planking, the same material used in all theatres of operation during World War I to provide an operational surface for aircraft in undeveloped terrain. It was also the year in which the 110 Fighter Squadron won top honors in a Midwest Invitational Flying Contest for Reserve pilots at Kansas City, Missouri. The St. Louis team led by Captain Walter E. Stueck of Overland, flew F-51's. Other team members included Lieutenants John Hill, St. Louis; Philip Houghton, Clayton; and Robert Little of Florissant, won the Purdome Trophy for Formation Acrobatic Flying. Lt. Little was later to become Chief Project Engineer for McDonnell Aircraft Corporation for the F-101.

Training and preparation for activation into military service in the event of a national emergency is the Air National Guard's primary mission. There are many public service activities in which Guard personnel frequently become involved. In 1949 the unit provided aircraft and crews to transport "Iron Lungs" from other cities to St. Louis where they were critically needed for polio treatment.

As part of the nation's readiness posture during the Korean Conflict, the 131st Tactical Fighter Wing, Missouri Air National Guard, became part of the U. S. Air Force on 1 March 1951. The induction order was read to a troop formation in front of the National Guard hangar at Lambert Field by Maj. James P. McDonough. Members of the wing were to be transferred to Bergstrom Air Force Base at Austin, TX shortly for training. While the 131st Tactical Fighter Wing elements in the St. Louis area were to remain based in the Continental United States during the Korean emergency, the 180th Light Bombardment Squadron and support units from St. Joseph went to France. The units were alerted in Jan, 1951 and on 1 Mar 1951 an advance detachment commanded by Maj Charles F. Wurtzler reported at Rosecrans Field for duty. The remaining nearly 400 officers and men reported 1 April 1951 his activation was the first extended duty for many of the men and the first 60 days was devoted to polishing military skills. During Jul 1951, the unit was assigned to Langley Air Force Base, VA, but was in residence there only briefly.

Training for men of the 131st Light Bombardment Wing during the mid-1950s was devoted to proficiency in flight of the B-26.

Both the 110 Bombardment Squadron, based at Lambert Field in St. Louis, and the 180th Bombardment Squadron, based at Rosecrans Field in St. Joseph, traveled to Gulfport, Miss. for the 1955 field training.

"Operation Minuteman," a surprise alert, tested reaction time of members. At Rosecrans Field, the elaborate pyramidal system of notifying unit personnel was underway within minutes of the initial alert, with 83 per cent of non-flying personnel on duty within two and a half hours.

At Lambert, within two hours after the 6:25 p.m. alert, 93 officers and 500 men were on duty. A B-26 bomber was in the air, piloted by Capt. John P. Dolan, at 6:30 p.m., five minutes after the alert was sounded.

In the Gulfport field training period, the Missouri squadrons met an intensive schedule of air-to-ground and air-to-air gunnery, rocketry, medium altitude bombing, glide bombing and skip bombing. Support personnel on the ground would work long hours in preparing practice bombs and rockets, sighting in 50-caliber machine guns and attending to countless other details necessary for a successful operation.

Arrangements were made to have patrol boats on duty in the Gulf of Mexico in the air-to-air gunnery range area, to rescue men from a crash or bailout at sea.

The Gulfport exercises represented the first effort to bring six light bombardment squadrons into coordinated action.

The invasion of South Korea by North Korean Communist forces resulted in the 71st Tactical Fighter Wings recall into active Federal service on March 1, 1951 for a period of 21 months. The unit was to write another chapter in its distinguished history for services during the Korean Conflict.

In September of 1950 Brig. General Winston W. Kratz was succeeded by Colonel Ben W. Lichty as Wing Commander who, like his predecessor, had been a member of the unit for many years prior to World War II. On March 1, 1951, as a result of the Korean emergency, the Wing was recalled to active Federal service for a period of 21 months. The Wing, under direction of Colonel Lichty moved to Bergstrom Air Force Base, Austin, Texas and redesignated the 131st Fighter-Escort Wing of the Strategic Air Command.

In July of that year the Wing moved to George Air Force Base, Calif., where it was reassigned to control of the Tactical Air Command and redesignated the 131st Fighter Bomber Wing. Colonel Virgil L. Zoller, a West Point graduate and native of Marion, Ill., became commander of the unit. During February, March and April 1952 a major portion of the Wing participated in "Operation Longhorn" conducted throughout Central Texas. The 131st effectively displayed its capability to operate under field combat conditions.

The Wing sent a large number of personnel to overseas assignments. Tactical units were rotated in support of NATO operations in Iceland and many individuals saw action in the Korean area.

In the fall of 1950, the 110 participated in a gunnery meet at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida competing with all other Air Force Fighter Bomber Units. A trophy for excellent marksmanship and gunnery was won by the team.

In November 1952 demobilization was completed and the Wing once again re-established its headquarters at Lambert Field.

Shortly after the unit's return, it was re-equipped with the B-26 and redesignated the 131st Light Bombardment Wing with Colonel John B. Logan the Commanding officer. A unit from St. Joseph, Mo., and another from New Orleans, La., comprised the Wing's Tactical element. Summer Training Encampments were held at Casper, Wyo., in 1953 and 1954.

More than 300 of the original group of officers and airmen who had served with the unit on active duty had returned to the Wing at Lambert Field to form a strong nucleus for the new organization. Colonel Charles H. Dubois assumed command of the Wing in October 1956 and shortly thereafter was promoted to the grade of brigadier general.

Lambert Field was keeping pace with the "jet age" extending the runways and making other major improvements. Among them were the addition of navigation and air traffic control systems to insure safe control of aircraft both in the air and on the ground. The latest in lighting equipment, as well as the most sophisticated radar and radio systems were installed. These advancements were all in keeping with the rapidly expanding technology of modern flying.

After years of training with F-51 and B-26 the 131st would soon make the transition to jet fighter aircraft. The first jets received in the early spring of 1957 were T-33 and F-80. In June of that year the first flight of Republic F-84 arrived at Lambert Field. It was a proud moment when Capt. John D. Connaghan led the flight to parking spaces on the Air National Guard ramp.

Arrival of the new jets heralded the beginning of an extensive training program for air crews and ground crews alike. Pilots received their initial training at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. Maintenance and armament personnel were trained by a regular Air Force Mobile Training Unit. The Thunderstreak presented some unique training and operational requirements since it had the capability for nuclear weapon delivery. Armament section load crews had to achieve certified proficiency in weapon loading procedures and air crews were trained in special weapon delivery technique.

As with each earlier transition to a new weapons system, the highly skilled personnel of the Guard accepted the challenge and accomplished it with little difficulty.

In early spring the unit received its first jet aircraft, a T-33 trainer and several F-80's. The F-84 came in June 1957.

Transition to the jet aircraft was expedited by flight training at Luke Air Force Base and 12 F-84's were flown during 1957 summer camp at Gulfport, Miss.

On December 15, 1957, the last B-26 left Lambert Field and the conversion to the new mission and aircraft was complete.

While the 131st Fighter-Bomber Wing served in France during the call to active duty for the Berlin Crises, Banjo A. Burro, a Missouri mule with a flair for the military, was given an indefinite furlough. The unit's mascot went into temporary retirement on a farm near Wentzville. Although he was unable to physically accompany the unit's members to France he was present in spirit.

The commander of the 110 at this time was Maj. Robert L. Smith, now a Colonel and commander of the 299th Tactical Forces Planning Group at the base. Initially the mission of the new jet unit was identified as "Fighter Interceptor". Immediately after receiving the F-84's the unit went to summer encampment at Gulfport, Miss. One thing I remember well about this summer encampment was the fact that it took more than one day to make the trip by train and the distance was covered in little over an hour by the F-84's. I remember also that the "ground crews" along with a Republic Aviation Technical Representative

, acquired an old bathtub from the local dump. As each pilot returned from his first solo flight in the F-84, he received a "dunking" in the water filled tub. The transition period required 50 hours of dual flight in a T-33. This was followed by an F-84F solo flight with a qualified chase pilot close behind to advise the solo pilot, by radio, of procedural error or to warn against unsafe conditions in early stages of the training period.

Late in 1957 the U.S. Navy announced its plans to deactivate the Naval Air Station at Lambert Field which had been constructed during World War II. The Missouri Air National Guard received approval to occupy the facility and on February 1, 1958 the unit moved from the old facilities at the Southwest corner of the field along with support elements that had been housed in old buildings on Federal property on Brown Road north of the field. The new facility would enable the unit to function for the first time with all elements "under one roof". In formal ceremonies on May 17, 1959 the facility was most appropriately dedicated Robertson Air National Guard Base in memory of Maj. William Bryan Robertson. Maj. William B. Robertson, who was killed in a glider crash at Lambert Field was the first commander of the 110 Observation Squadron. He was head of the former Curtiss-Robertson Corporation and had been an airmail pilot for the Robertson Aircraft Corporation.

The unit had undergone several operational readiness tests with the F-84F and had performed exceptionally well. Air crews participated in air defense exercises, had become proficient in weapons delivery tactics and in low level bombing and gunnery training. Armament crews received high praise of their weapons loading capacity and personnel displayed the competency of top-notch professionals in their respective fields. They would soon have the opportunity to prove their ability. The Berlin wall had been built and tensions were mounting throughout the world. Once again the 131st and its supportive units would be called to fill the ranks of the Regular Active Forces. Over 1,000 men of the Missouri Air National Guard from St. Louis entered active duty on October 1, 1971 to face the "Berlin Crisis".

The 131st Tactical Fighter Wing was participating in Summer Field Training Exercise at Volk Field, Wisc. in the summer of 1961, when word was received that recall of the unit was imminent.

Upon return to St. Louis the unit was officially notified that the effective date of recall would be October 1, 1961 for a period not to exceed one year. Immediate steps were taken to prepare aircraft, air crews, support personnel and equipment for overseas movement.

October 1, 1961 was a cold, dreary, and windy day as the unit stood in mass formation and was formally recalled to active Federal service with designation as the 713st Tactical Fighter Wing (Provisional). For some members of the unit, who had seen World War II and Korean Conflict service, this would be a third recall.

In late October, maintenance personnel comprising the initial support teams departed Robertson Air National Guard Base aboard C-124 aircraft for the long flight overseas. Their destination, Toul-Rosieres Air Force Base, France.

The 110 aircraft departed McGuire on Oct 30th for Harmon AFB, Newfoundland.

Flights were spaced throughout the day along with other fighter units from Alabama, New Jersey, Indiana, Ohio, New York, and Massachusetts.

Pilots were given crew rest, fed special diets and then most critical leg of the flight from Harmon to Lajes Field, Azores, a distance of 1460 nautical miles. Aircraft departed Lajes for Moron, Spain on November 2 and to the destination at Toul-Rosieres, France on the following day.

The Wing immediately became a part of the United States Air Force Europe (USAFE) and assumed regular commitments on a training basis with the U.S. 7th Army as well as maintaining a 24-hour alert status. Col Walter J. Weihe commanded the deployed Wing elements.

During ceremonies at Toul-Rosieres Air Base, France on December 20, 1962, command of the 110 was assumed by Maj. John D. Connaghan from Lt. Col. Robert L. Smith who had held the position since 1956.

The 110 participated in the NATO Squadron Exchange program and exchanged both Air and Ground Crews with the 730th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Skydstrup Air Station, Denmark during May 1962.

Wives and families of a number of personnel came to France and found living quarters at Nancy and other nearby communities. Numerous others came to the area for short visits. For all personnel it presented an excellent opportunity to see the European continent. Off duty weekends were utilized for trips to Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, and Italy. Several individuals had the opportunity to participate in a Vatican audience with the Pope.

As the Berlin situation subsided, all recalled units were ordered to be returned to the United States and released from active duty arriving at Lambert Field on July 19, 1962.

August 20, 1962 formal demobilization ceremonies were conducted at Lambert Field.

After return of the unit from France, formal demobilization ceremonies were conducted at Lambert Field on August 20, 1962. A considerable number of personnel were discharged from the Air National Guard, having completed their enlistments. An extensive recruiting drive was undertaken to fill the unit's ranks once again.

The F-84F were transferred to the regular Air Force in support of the Cuban Crisis and command of the 110 Tactical Fighter Squadron was assumed by Major George C. Carpenter.

During the period following receipt and transition into the F-100, tactical aircrews participated in firepower demonstrations and gunnery exercises at Luke AFB, Arizona, Bergstrom AFB, Texas, and Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Summer encampments were held at Volk Field, Wisconsin where extensive training in air-to-ground and air-to-air gunnery and bombing was conducted on ranges near the bases.

"A lawyer, Major John D. Connaghan, 3823 Flora Pl., is commanding officer of the 110 Tactical Fighter Squadron, which is one of the components of the Wing.

After being reassigned from Hq USAF in Europe to the Tactical Air Command in July, 1962, wing units were officially released from active Federal service and reassigned to the Missouri Air National Guard in August.

Formal demobilization ceremonies were held August 20, 1962.

On October 15, 1962, the 131st Tactical Fighter Group was organized at Lambert Field to administer the 110 Tactical Fighter Squadron, the 131st A and E Squadron and the 131st Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

Command of the 110 Fighter Squadron was assumed in September by Major Elmer Parrish and in October by Major George Carpenter. Maj. Parrish took command of the newly organized group.

52-6604 - Crash landed, hit trees during close air support in France, 20 APR 62, no fatalities.

Other port-of-call during this period included Athens, Greece; Naples, Italy; Madrid, Spain; Frankfurt, Germany; Goose Bay, Labrador; Rio de Janeiro and Recife, Brazil; San Juan, Puerto Rico and Christchurch, New Zealand.

Tragedy struck the 131st Tactical Fighter Group on May 7, 1966, as Group Commander Col Elmer R. Parrish was killed when his F-100C crashed and burned at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. Col. Parrish crashed while he and the air advisor, LTC Nevin Christensen were flying a close air support mission for a Marine Reserve unit on maneuvers at Ft. Leonard Wood. Christensen said he had lost radio contact with Col Parrish and when he circled back he discovered the crash. The accident occurred about three miles from Ft. Leonard Wood's Forney Air Field. The two aircraft had taken off from their home station at Lambert-St. Louis Airport at about 3 p.m. and the accident occurred at about 4 p.m. Col Parrish had been Group Commander since October 1962.

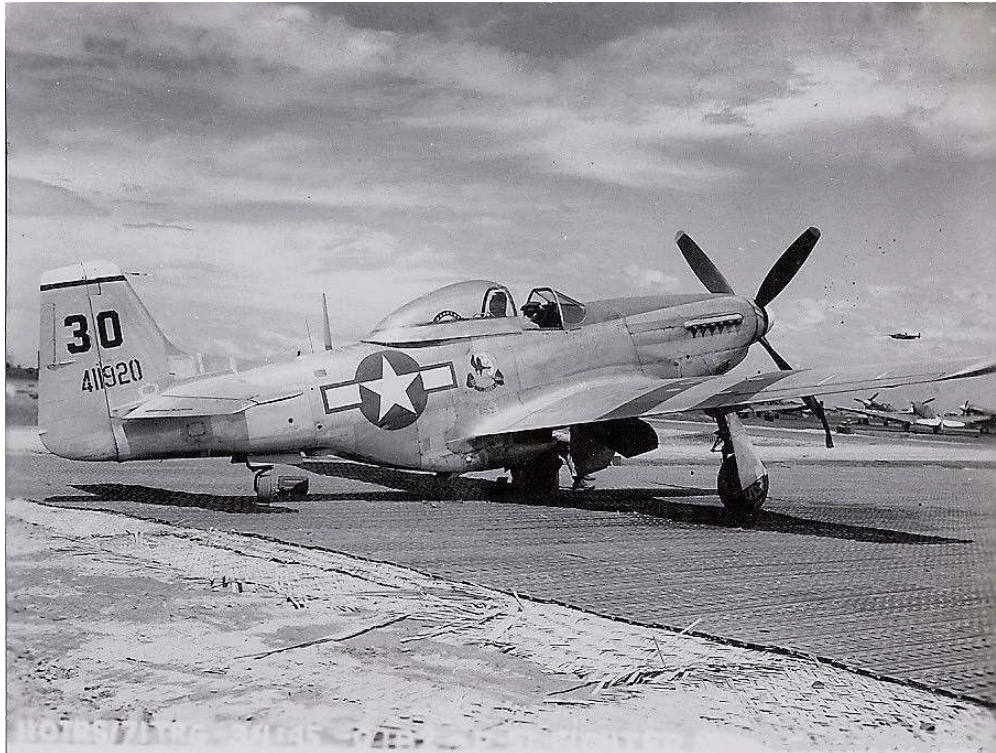
June 1969. Under Operation Prime Hawk, seven combat ready Air Guard F-100 pilots from Missouri's 131st Tactical Fighter Group arrived in Vietnam to beef up Air Force fighter units there. During the operation's 139 day duration, the ANG volunteers flew combat missions and accumulated hundreds of combat flying hours. Some of them returned home after 90 days while others remained for 139 days.

An F-15D crashed in May because a jammed cable wouldn't allow the pilot to recover his tumbling fighter, according to an Air Combat Command accident report released in October. The pilot of the F-15, assigned to the Missouri ANG's 131st Fighter Wing at Lambert-St. Louis Arpt., Mo., reported that the aircraft's controls became unresponsive about 20 minutes into the mission. Given the altitude and attitude of the aircraft, it was unrecoverable, ACC said. The pilot ejected, receiving minor injuries. The aircraft crashed in an unpopulated area of Indiana near the Illinois border. The aileron rudder crossover cable was the culprit, investigators said, but they noted it was properly installed, inspected, and maintained. Neither USAF nor F-15 contractor Boeing could determine why the cable malfunctioned.

On 2 November 2007, at 0950 Central Standard Time (CST), four F-15C Eagle aircraft departed Lambert Field International Airport (Lambert Field IAP), St. Louis, Missouri (MO) to conduct an air-to-air training mission. At approximately 1011 CST, one of the F-15 aircraft, tail number 80-0034, broke apart in flight and impacted the ground in a wooded area approximately 4 miles south-southeast of Boss, MO; approximately 90 miles south-southwest of Lambert Field IAP. Despite injury to his left shoulder and arm caused by the in-flight breakup, the mishap pilot (MP) ejected successfully and parachuted to the ground. The MP was recovered by local rescue personnel and transported via Life Flight to a St. Louis-

area hospital for medical treatment. The mishap aircraft (MA) was based at Lambert Field IAP and assigned to the 110 Fighter Squadron, of the 131st Fighter Wing. The mishap mission was flown in the Lindbergh and Salem Military Operating Areas (MOAs). Lindbergh and Salem MOAs are above predominately agricultural land and forest located approximately 70-150 miles to the southwest of St. Louis, MO. The MA was destroyed upon impact, and the resultant wreckage caused minimal damage to private property. The mishap flight's mission was to conduct Basic Fighter Maneuvers involving one-on-one offensive attack and defensive maneuvering. During the MP's second engagement, he maneuvered in a nearly level right-hand turn at approximately 450 knots. With less than 7.8 times the force of gravity (G) loaded upon the aircraft, the MA began shaking violently side to side. The MP then transmitted, "Mick 2, knock it off!," while simultaneously rolling wings level and reducing to 1.5 Gs. Within seconds the forward fuselage broke apart from the aft portion of the MA. The MP successfully ejected after the in-flight break-up. The accident investigation board president found, by clear and convincing evidence, the cause of this accident was a failure of the upper right longeron, a critical support structure in the F-15C aircraft. The MA upper longeron failed to meet blueprint specifications increasing localized stress in the thin web and leading to crack initiation. Engineering and metallurgy analysis of the recovered MA wreckage identified a fatigue crack in the thin web of the longeron near canted fuselage station (CFS) 377 which grew under cyclical flight loads and ultimately led to longeron failure. The longeron failure subsequently triggered a catastrophic failure of the remaining support structures and caused the aircraft to break apart in-flight.

On 30 May 2007, F-15D, S/N 78-0571, assigned to the 131st Fighter Wing at Lambert St. Louis International Airport, Missouri, crashed approximately eight nautical miles south of Vincennes, Indiana. At 09:36 Central Standard Time, shortly after a nine-thousand-foot offensive basic fighter maneuvers engagement, the mishap pilot (MP) ejected from the mishap aircraft (MA). The MA impacted the ground shortly thereafter and was destroyed upon impact. There was no other damage to government property and the MP, an instructor pilot, suffered only minor injuries. Two local property owners suffered minor property damage caused by the impact. The Board President found that, by clear and convincing evidence, the MA ARI crossover cable jammed in the stick forward position rendering the MA virtually unrecoverable following a nose-low turning maneuver. The lack of altitude available denied the MP sufficient time to apply corrective actions, substantially contributing to the mishap. This prompted the MP to eject and led directly to the MA crash.





USAF Unit Histories
 Created: 8 Oct 2010
 Updated: 24 May 2020

Sources

- Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
- The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.
- Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.
- Kelly Field in the Great World War*. Ed Lt. H. D. Kroll. San Antonio Printing Co. San Antonio, TX. 1919.
- Unit yearbook. *Missouri National Guard*. 1939
- Unit yearbook. *131 Fighter Wing, 75th Anniversary Yearbook, 1923-1998*.