124th CONSOLIDATED AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

LINEAGE

STATIONS
Boise, ID

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS
LTC Clarence E. Hall, #1958
LTC John M. Flaherty, #1964
LTC C. E. Hall

HONORS
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS
As 1960 drew to a close, Col Johnson and his staff gave their end-of-year recap. Johnson said that for the first time in the unit's history full manning had been achieved, and the NGB's figures put the unit in the number one position nationally. LTC Nordling said the Squadron scored second highest among F-86L units getting CONAC inspections, and the Group had continued 19 months without a major mishap. Maj Coburn reported that pilots were 100%

combat ready; and intercept scores increased due to improved GCI sites. The Squadron had flown the Wendover rocketry missions at camp and in two other firing sessions there. Ltc Hall said CAMRON was saving time in man-hours and flying operations by adopting AFM 66-1 which directed the flow of maintenance from central control. This method promoted operational efficiency, reduced replacement costs, and provided an increase of productive man-hours without additional full-time staff. Air Base support and protection had improved by establishing a CBR (chemical, biological, and radiological) defense program, and they were also working on plans for air base security, including the use of auxiliary police and firemen.

When the 124th got the F-86L, the 'new' hangar was already in use but the 'old' hangar was still available, The new hangar's north side had near-full length doors which opened wide enough for entry of large aircraft. These doors opened directly onto the ramp from which the parallel main runway was in full view 300 yards away. This hangar was the prime maintenance center, and was arranged with the specialist and crew chief shops around three sides of the lower level, each with a door opening onto the hangar floor. Directly above these shops along all three sides was an upper tier of rooms, mostly offices, with their doors opening onto a common balcony walkway overlooking the hangar floor. The 190th Operations and Maintenance Control were both located on this upper tier, on the east and west sides, respectively, on the north end of each corner, each with a protruding glass cab overlooking the ramp and runway

In the early 1960s our aircraft maintenance squadron, the 124th CAMRON, converted to the USAF's maintenance management system. The new system was mandated by Air Force Manual 66-1 and required all Air Force maintenance—whether at the 'field' level, 'organizational' level, such as our Group, or 'depot' level to follow prescribed documentation procedures. All work must identify the type of weapon system being worked on, whether aircraft, missile, or major components. Numeric and alphabetical codes were used to describe the type of malfunction, when it was discovered, the repair action taken, time spent on the repair, and so on. We would also identify the aircraft serial number, the shop or 'work center', and assign a code for what was actually repaired or replaced. The description and coding of the foregoing information was entered onto standard forms which were used for data entry into what must have been in its time, a massive data 'system' somewhere (on 1960-era computers!), from which periodic reports were created to aid maintenance managers. All our duty hours had to be accounted for and documented, whether spent doing direct labor on aircraft, repairing items in the shop, engaged in technical training, supervising, or even if awaiting work.

We were all pretty 'hands-on' as aircraft workers, and this new system was a big annoyance, and seen as extra work, especially by the more 'seasoned' among us! Mostly, we didn't see any direct benefit to us personally or to our particular shop, so we just had to trust the system and keep up the paperwork. Anyway, most of us eventually decided it was just another part of the job we were paid to do.

A 'mobile control' unit was built by the CAMRON Sheet Metal Shop for use by Operations to monitor takeoffs and landings of squadron combat aircraft. All 'Mobile' Monitors an F-86LTakeoff squadrons eventually had one of these units, later called 'runway supervisory units', and they were staffed by a mission-qualified pilot. If you had 'Mobile duty', you would position the unit near the landing and takeoff zone of the active runway before the first takeoffs

and remain (awake) until all aircraft had returned. Your duties were to watch for anything unusual or unsafe. Equipped with a tactical radio, a flare gun, and aircraft flight manual, you could provide visual, 'book', or coordination assistance to aircraft,and watch closely to see if your buddy forgot to put his gear down!

The Idaho Air Guard was not activated for Vietnam, but maintained the homeland defense at Gowen Field. Some individual Squadron members were involved indirectly, In June, Idaho The 124th CAMRON and 190th Operations used a debriefing station, in a mobile home trailer, just outside the maintenance hangar next to the door to Operations. After flight the pilots would enter the trailer and debrief their mission first with Maintenance, then with Operations. In Maintenance pilots reported aircraft status: 'code 1, 2, or 3'. Code 1 meant flyable, 2 meant flyable but with limitations, and 3 meant incapable of mission accomplishment or unsafe.

Aircraft discrepancies, whether flight controls, engine, radios, or PCS often involved face-to-face discussions with the appropriate specialist. Each discrepancy was written in the '781', an aircraft logbook. After Maintenance debrief the pilot would debrief with the Operations supervisor, reviewing the NADAR tape of the mission, and the results assessed. Pilots were given either an 'MA' (mission accomplished) or an 'MI' (missed intercept) for each intercept pass on their mission. The reasons for MIs were recorded, for such things as PCS, countermeasures, or pilot error, and were used for overall pilot and team scoring.

An F-102 engine starting and emergency procedure checkout in the flight simulator has recently become a requirement for all F-102 crew chiefs, according to MSgt Calvin Goode, flight chief, in charge of the program. This program was initiated in July and designed to orient the crew chief on uniform aircraft starting procedures, the same ones the pilots used. All crew chiefs were required to complete the initial checkout training and get a refresher every 6 months. This program was once unique to the 124th, but was later adopted by ADC and became a requirement within all F-102 squadrons.

John Schey joined the Air Guard while in high school, initially working as a crew chief on the P-51. Later in his maintenance career, he was a MSgt in the jet engine shop. Schey remembers the J-57s that powered our Deuces. "The J-57's a good engine, but you had a lot of work them. This was a dual-spool setup, and there were compressor stall problems with them. I probably did 90% of the "trimming" on these engines, and it was a constant problem to try to get the power out, it either ran too hot, or it compressor stalled. But it was a rock-solid engine; a tough engine. Pratt & Whitney built a lot tougher engine than General Electric did, but the GEs outperform them."

The 124th CAMRON was awarded a certificate of recognition for conducting a noteworthy OJT program during 1967 and 1968. Their pass rate for SKTs—specialty knowledge tests—was above average for the two years and the OJT program earned points on comparative ratings.

The boys on overnight alert would often finish their studies, complete their simulators or daily flying, and, occasionally have a little time on their hands. In the days before the alert barns were built, our alert quarters were in the Maintenance-Operations hangar, and some alert pilots in the evenings would prowl around inside the hangar to see what was up. If they spied an

unfinished paint job on an F-102's tail, you can bet their killer minds would spring into instant creativity, with entertaining but not always fully appreciated results! It may have been those same creative 'artists' that also emblazoned a beautiful 190th squadron insignia on the Governor's limousine door when parked overnight while the governor was on a trip in our C-54.

Can soap save an aircraft? Yes, according to Maj J. M. Flaherty, Chief of Maintenance, a positive save was made by the 124 on-base SOAP program; Spectrometric Oil Analysis Program. "Thanks to the 'on base' oil analysis lab and the expertise of MSgt Bruce Carpenter, an emergency landing was averted recently and possibly an F-102 saved. This case was aircraft number 426 that had flown 18 hours since last oil change, and the analysis showed a marked increase from a baseline value of' wearmetal' readings. Based on this abrupt increase, Carpender notified Maintenance Control the aircraft should be grounded for further investigation. During a test run of the engine, a bad oil leak occurred from the engine-mounted gearbox, and the component became overheated. Upon further investigation, engine specialists discovered the gearbox had failed internally." Two F-102s had earlier been lost because of gearbox failures, and with this procedure the crew chief takes a J-57 engine oil sample after each flight, which is analyzed by the SOAP Lab to compare measures of metallic particles to established baselines for each engine.

Dynalectron contract workers inspect F-102s for corrosion, cracks and bad electrical wiring. The civilian corporation Dynalectron had the contract for this in-house IRAN work on the 124th's F-102s. Aircraft '385' was the first one to be inspected. The 21-person Dynalectron service contract began with the arrival of the F-102s and ended in 1974. Their contract team performed many jobs on 124th aircraft, such as J-57 engine teardown and inspection, TCTOs (time-compliance technical orders), and IRAN work, such as these wing inspections.

The 124th Missile Section maintained, inspected, and stored all missiles—the radar-guided AIM-4A, the IR-tracking AIM-4C/D, and the larger AIM-26B. They were also responsible for loading and transporting the missiles to the load crews who loaded them on the aircraft. They checked each missile every 3 months if it was loaded in aircraft, and every 6 months when the missile was in storage. The Section checked all missile components, including the electrical, optical, hydraulic, and steering systems. They also maintained and repaired the WSEMs (weapon system evaluator missile). WSEMs did everything a missile did except to actually fire. WSEMs could tell if the fire control system and launcher rails worked properly for a good missile firing, and if the missile would have guided properly and hit its target. The Missile Section also provided storage of the F-102's secondary armament, the 2.75" rockets.

The radar shop was one of the largest shops on base, with 21 full time technicians and 21 part-timers, including a night shift of seven. The shop chief was CWO4 Wesley Lyons, who remarked that the shop was to get a WAF soon upon completion of her training. The F-102 radar system was their responsibility, plus the electrical portion of the PCS, and the entire electronic and launcher rail systems. The shop had three subsections: flight line maintenance, in-shop maintenance, and scheduled preventive maintenance every 90 days. The personnel performed build-ups and maintained a supply of spare parts.

The CAMS Utility Flight serviced and repaired the 124th's three T-33s and the C-131 aircraft. When transient aircraft visited Gowen Field, the Utility Flight's crew chiefs parked, serviced, and, if necessary, repaired a wide variety of visiting aircraft.84 Gary Donnelly was part-time aircraft mechanic and later Flight Engineer, and remembers using most of his vacation time from Idaho Power to keep up with his Air Guardsman duties. As a flight engineer on the C-54 and C-131. Donnelly got to take plenty of good trips, but along with that could come some unexpected duty at times. If the aircraft had a problem while on a trip, the flight engineer was the one had to either do most of the mechanic work, or coordinate other help to fix the aircraft. Still, he enjoyed the work and trips, but it put big demands on his time.

1969—The 124th Armament Section personnel performed all the missile and rocket loading on the F-102s. The section had 7 technicians and 37 part-timers, and they twice won the USAF Missile Safety Award, and notably were the first ANG unit to win it. The Armament loaders twice won best loading honors at William Tell 1970. Team members were MSgt Dale Zollman, TSgt Ron Bloom, Team Chief MSgt Jack Wilder, and TSgt Curt Smith. The Armament Section also won the USAF Missile Safety Plaque twice, first in 1963 and again in 1970. And again in 1974, the 124th load team again competed in the September event at Tyndall AFB, this time with team members TSgt Curtis L. Smith, TSgt Melvin L. Adamson, SSgt Donald L. Carlock, and SSgt David J. Cunningham.

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Sources