

HEADQUARTERS NEBRASKA AIR NATIONAL GUARD



LINEAGE

HQ Nebraska Air National Guard, 31 Dec 1952

STATIONS

Lincoln, NE

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

BG Lloyd L. Johnson, #1981

Brig Gen Jon F. Fago

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

It was in 1913 that the Nebraska NG began development of an aviation section, when the officers and men of the signal corps branch "built" a biplane at Fremont, Nebraska. This machine so closely resembled the Curtiss Aeroplane Company's Model D that there is little doubt it was actually a purchased Curtiss D and was only assembled by the Militia. It had no fuselage, had an engine mounted between the wings driving a pusher propeller, and was fitted with three wheels. The pilot sat on an exposed seat ahead of the wings.

The Nebraska adjutant general's annual report contains a photograph of this airplane but makes no further mention of it. The biplane must have been flown at Fremont, since it certainly was a practical design and not one of the many weird civilian designs of that period which met with failure. Its identification with the signal corps signified a communications and reconnaissance function, though it is doubtful that operations ever became this refined. It probably participated there in the annual encampment, but there was as yet no official recognition of an aviation branch.

Interest continued and the first acknowledgement took place in 1915 when Captain Castle W. Schaffer was made chief of aviation. Shortly after, Ralph E. McMillen, a qualified pilot, enlisted and was commissioned a captain in the small aviation group. Both men furnished their own airplanes, an indication of the shortage of finances that was to plague the Nebraska National Guard aviation section throughout its early history.

The question of how to raise funds for the flying branch was placed before the governor, who decided that the aviators should give exhibitions at county fairs and other public gatherings to supplement the very small funds that could be made available from the state. During the summer and fall of 1915, the two pilots attempted to do this, but Captain Schaffer encountered difficulties because of the poor condition of his machine and many times was unable to get it into the air. At the county fair at Mesburg, Colorado, he made one successful flight and then took off on a second. As he attempted to come down, the eager crowd swarmed into his landing place and he was forced to come down in an adjacent field, where rough buffalo wallows flipped over the airplane and heavily damaged the wing sections.⁴ The captain may have given up flying following this accident, for all official flights by the Nebraska Militia during the summer of 1915 were done by Captain McMillen, and Schaffer's name does not appear in the October 23 list of officers successfully passing the Guard course of instruction and examination for 1915.

Captain McMillen filled many dates with his Curtiss pusher-type biplane and had few accidents, apparently none of them serious. Once while flying at York, Nebraska, his engine stopped when he was over the center of the town, but he managed to glide to a safe landing.

On July 15, 1915, the Nebraska Militia officially organized an Aviation Corps with headquarters at the state fairgrounds in Lincoln. The order which created the corps hints at plans for an

expanding unit to assume major responsibilities in the militia and is interesting enough to repeat here in its entirety.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, Adjutant General's Department, Office of the Adjutant General, Lincoln, Nebr., July 15, 1915. General Orders No. 17.

Under the provisions of Paragraph 3918, Section 20, Revised Statutes of Nebraska, an Aviation Corps is hereby organized, the word 'Corps' to be used for the organization. The rules and regulations governing the organization of the corps are as follows:

One plane is designated as a unit

Two planes or more, not to exceed four, a squadron.

The following personnel will compose a unit:

One pilot with the rank of Captain.

One observer who may be assigned from any branch of the service not to exceed the rank of Lieutenant Colonel One signal man with the rank of First Lieutenant. One plane man with the rank of Second Lieutenant. One engine man with the rank of Second Lieutenant. Two mechanic[i]ans with the rank of Sergeant. Two motorcycle men with the rank of Corporal. Six utility men with the rank of private.

The uniform for the commissioned personnel of this organization shall be the same as that for the Signal Corps, with the exception that attached to the crossed flags and torch there shall be silver wings for both dress and service uniforms for the collar devices. The uniform for the enlisted men shall be the same as that for the Signal Corps.

At the time the Nebraska Militia/National Guard was composed of only two regiments—the 4th Infantry, made up of companies north of the Platte River, (a convenient east-west dividing line); and the 5th Infantry, formed of companies to the south. The 4th and 5th had been created in 1913 by a reorganization of the 1st and 2nd Infantry Regiments.⁸ On July 30, 1915, General Orders No. 18 called for the 4th to attend the annual Camp of Instruction at Fremont, Nebraska, from August 10 to 16 and the 5th to encamp at Crete, Nebraska, from August 19 to 25. Fremont is just north of the Platte River and about forty miles north of Lincoln, while Crete is twenty miles southwest of the capital, both convenient for moving the Aviation Corps from its headquarters. The aviation branch was not assigned to either of the regiments and apparently operated with each as conditions dictated. The 4th Regiment arrived at Camp L. D. Richards just south of Fremont on August 9, and the Aviation Corps checked in at 9:30 p.m. Attending were fifty-two officers and 589 enlisted men, of whom four officers and nine men were assigned to the aviation branch. One of the men was undoubtedly Edgar W. Bagnell, who had joined the National Guard as a private in 1912 and later became an accomplished pilot in the unit.

During the seven days which followed, Captain McMillen flew a number of times. On August 13 at 6:30 p.m., he made a trip over the camp and Fremont. In his report to the adjutant general, Colonel George A. Eberly of the 4th Infantry commented on two outstanding flights. It was during the one on Sunday, August 15, that McMillen experimented with bombs dropped from the air, a flight which presaged future battle developments. That evening at about 7 p.m. the captain again made a "trial flight" that lasted fifteen minutes.

The Aviation Corps was doubled in strength on August 14 when Edgar Bagnell was commissioned a first lieutenant in the Aviation Corps,¹¹ though he may not have been qualified since McMillen made all recorded flights at both encampments. Much of the captain's work was done in conjunction with the activities of the infantry who engaged in mock battles with the enemy, conducted reconnaissance missions, and built fortifications through August 16 when the companies of the 4th broke camp and the men returned to their homes.

On August 19 the Camp of Instruction for the 5th Regiment opened at Crete with the aviation squadron reporting in at 10:30 a.m. Captain McMillen may have flown Ms airplane to the encampment because he did make a flight from Beaver Crossing to Crete "over unfamiliar territory," a distance of twenty-five miles. This was apparently a test to see if he could reach a destination which had been given to him by phone just before take off.¹⁴ On Sunday, August 22, following church services, a mock battle was staged for the visiting public in which the 1st Battalion, in position, was attacked by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. McMillen made two flights over the battle demonstrating aerial reconnaissance and attack (and perhaps bombing). The complete exercise lasted two hours. The captain was also an accomplished photographer whose work illustrated the 1915-1916 Biannual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Nebraska. During the two National Guard encampments he took many aerial photographs showing troop movements to prove the worth of this form of observation. The Aviation Squadron entrained at the end of the camp on the morning of the 25th for its return to Lincoln.

McMillen made many flights during the rest of 1915 in the Lincoln area in which he continued to develop tactics and procedures for bomb dropping, aerial photography, night flying, and night signaling. One of his many pictures was of the state Capitol from a height of 4,000 feet. On November 21 he made a fifty-mile flight from Lincoln to Omaha with a message from Governor John H. Morehead to Mayor James C. Dahlman of Omaha. While the immediate value of these flights is questionable, the fact that such varied experimentation was conducted is an indication of the advanced thinking of the two officers who made up the Nebraska Aviation Corps in 1915—Captain McMillen and Lieutenant Bagnell.

With winter's arrival flying activity dwindled and did not resume in strength until the spring of 1916, when Lieutenant Bagnell was probably a full pilot in the Nebraska unit. By this time there were far more serious problems than mere flying, for the country was on the verge of war with Mexico following Francisco Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico, in March and the Punitive Expedition's invasion of Mexican territory under General John J. Pershing to disperse the bandit's forces. The situation became serious enough that the secretary of war issued a call on May 9 to the states of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona to place their militia units on the border under Army control.

While conditions were worsening between the two countries, the Nebraska Aviation Corps received some assistance from the Aero Club of America. This organization, with headquarters in New York City, had been publicizing the weak condition of military aviation in the United States, and had undertaken a huge fund-raising campaign to finance the training of hundreds of civilian pilots for potential military service. Besides providing training the funds collected also purchased a small number of airplanes for several state militia and naval militia organizations, mostly along the East Coast. The Aero Club was also interested in improving the condition of

National Guard units across the country and was a strong influence in Congress in pushing for new legislation and increased appropriations. It was perhaps only natural that the 1st Aero Company of New York State received more assistance than any other.

In order to become a military aviator, it was necessary that a person be able to do far more than merely fly an airplane. In the case of McMillen and Bagnell, both had reached a high level of aeronautical knowledge but may not have had certificates from the Aero Club. A certificate indicated a candidate had passed the test requirements of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI), an organization headquartered in Paris, France, whose representative in the United States was the Aero Club. To qualify as an Army aviator, additional training, followed by a more stringent flying test, was required of a candidate. The course led to the award of either a reserve military aviator rating (RMA) for reservists or a military aviator rating (MA) for those in the Regular Army. For a national guardsman to enter the aviation section of the Army, an RMA was necessary.

In the spring of 1916, the Aero Club donated \$350 and tuition for both McMillen and Bagnell to take flying instruction at the Curtiss company Atlantic Coast Aeronautical Station at Newport News, Virginia. The lieutenant and captain immediately relocated there, and formal training began. Within a month McMillen had completed the course, probably receiving his FAI certificate, and returned to Nebraska to continue exhibition flying as a means to support his dependent mother.

In the meantime Bagnell continued his training. In May he and other volunteers assisted the Aero Club in a concentrated campaign to increase congressional appropriations for the coming year. On May 26, 1916, President Alan R. Hawley of the Aero Club, with the help of the Curtiss Aeroplane Company, had the firm's test pilot fly him non-stop from Sheepshead Bay, New York, to Washington, D.C., in a new Curtiss Twin JN airplane as a publicity stunt. The Twin JN, a twin-engine machine which could be armed, was being promoted as a "battleplane"* for the air service to replace inadequate trainer types then in use. At Washington it was placed in charge of Captain Ralph L. Taylor of the Connecticut National Guard, whose instruction was also being financed by the Aero Club. Taylor was assisted by Lieutenant Bagnell for three days in explaining the machine and its capabilities to the public, as well as to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, other Cabinet members, and many congressmen. The public showing may have been instrumental in increasing the naval aviation appropriation which passed in May at a figure nearly twice that being considered earlier.

On June 3 the National Defense Act of 1916 became law and converted the Organized Militia into the National Guard as we know it today by removing the nine-month limit on federal service imposed by congressional act of 1903. The new law called for reorganization of both the Regular Army and the National Guard to enable guard units to move into federal service without organizational changes that had confused previous conscriptions. The situation with Mexico had become critical, and President Woodrow Wilson on June 18 ordered the federalized National Guard of many more states to join those of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona on the Mexican border. The Nebraska 4th and 5th Regiments were among those called. The following day Adjutant General Hall wired the Division of Militia Affairs that Captain McMillen had completed his training and Lieutenant Bagnell would finish within the week. He asked if they

could be utilized as airmen and if an aero company would be accepted as a separate unit. Thus began Bagnell's long and trying campaign to enter the aviation section of the Army as a national guardsman. His tribulations were typical of those of many others attempting the same thing.¹⁹ In requests for help from the Aero Club of America and congressmen from the area, Hall mentioned that the Nebraska Aero Company was organized according to War Department directives, and that there were three professional aviators (McMillen, Bagnell, and perhaps Captain Schaffer), five balloon men, and mechanics.

On June 27 General Hall reported that McMillen at the mobilization camp in Lincoln and Lieutenant Bagnell at Newport News were both "qualified as pilots" (indicating the lieutenant's training at the civilian school was complete), though they probably had only their FAI certificates. In addition, the names of the following Nebraskans were supplied as desiring to enter aviation school: Tandy N. Dillon, Ernest R. Wells, William A. Lovelady, Alva N. White, Robert P. Chesney, Fred Bolton, Harley J. Devoe, Leo D. Westover, Joe E. Westover, Fred E. Roberts, Roscoe J. Craig, and Walter T. Hansen. They were probably members of the Nebraska Aviation Corps.

During the next few days wires flew back and forth between Adjutant General William A. Simpson of the Eastern Department, U.S. Army, and General Hall with increased optimism that federalization of the Aero Company was imminent. Lieutenant Bagnell was informed by Hall that he was, in fact, an officer of the Aero Company (a shift in names to suit Army terminology), whose organization was being completed at Lincoln, and to stand by for further orders. On June 29 Simpson advised that all National Guard members at Newport News would be mustered into Army service and would complete their flying instruction there.

On July 2 Hall requested that the Nebraska Aero Company be inspected, mustered into service, and moved to Newport News for training as a unit. The optimism of the Nebraskans was shattered when they received a communication from the chief of the Militia Bureau in Washington dated July 3, which advised them the Aero Company could not be considered until all the state's units were at full war strength. Since the 4th and 5th Infantry Regiments were only at peace-time level and some units had already left for the border, it was impossible to bring them to the higher figure. It was believed the best solution would be to shift the Aero Company to one of the regiments, thus making it eligible for federal service, and transfer the men to aviation duty later. But this was never done.

Further inquiries elicited the comment from Simpson on July 5 that only McMillen and Bagnell were covered by the orders for mustering into federal service but that Bagnell was ineligible because he was not a member of a federally recognized unit (the 4th or 5th Regiments). Proving that the Nebraska National Guard was as adept at circumventing red tape as the Army was in creating it, General Hall on July 7 made Bagnell a quartermaster captain in the 5th Infantry, thus making him a member of a federalized unit and eligible for muster. He entered federal service on July 19 and was ordered to the Army's aviation school at Mineola, New York, for further training.

In the meantime on July 14, Hall attempted to obtain for Captain McMillen an RMA rating by contacting the Aero Club of America and inquiring about the test. The captain had fractured both

legs in an accident in 1912, eliminating him physically, and he was not permitted to enter federal service. Instead, he remained in Nebraska, where he continued to earn a living by flying in exhibitions.²⁴ Still a member of the Nebraska National Guard, he made almost daily trips in his 75 h.p. Curtiss machine in late July under the direction of the adjutant general. On the 23rd he made a spectacular night flight over Lincoln under simulated wartime conditions. While flying in a display at St. Francis, Kansas, on September 2, 1916, Captain McMillen crashed and was killed.

These incidents signified an end to the Nebraska Aero Company, which had never owned an airplane but could claim as many as three qualified pilots on its rolls at its peak. Captain Bagnell, continued to represent the Nebraska unit for many more months.

The position of National Guard training at Mineola and the few other Army flying fields was dictated by appropriations, and the picture had changed drastically during the summer months. While the organization by the Army of the National Guard of the states into twelve divisions, each with its own aero squadron, had been approved in 1914, no funds were made available to accomplish the plan. In the spring of 1916, the proposed Army aviation appropriation for fiscal 1917 amounted to \$1,222,000 and that for the National Guard only \$76,000—enough to purchase only a few airplanes.

When the situation on the Mexican border directed attention to Army deficiencies, the War Department drew up a plan to organize twelve National Guard squadrons and submitted it in June to the Senate. A modified bill was approved that would have made \$9,640,800 available for this purpose and \$3,440,866 for regular Army squadrons. After a Senate-House committee modified the bill, a total appropriation of \$13,281,666 was voted into law on August 29, 1916.²⁷ It, altered the original version which favored the National Guard and included only the original \$76,000 for militia aviation units. By so structuring the bill, Congress acknowledged the primary need of the Army for a greatly expanded aviation section, but also ended any immediate chance for reinforcing the National Guard as an aviation reserve. On September 9 the chief of the Militia Bureau advised state governments this money was sufficient to purchase only four airplanes and train only fifty officers over the entire country.

While the bulk of the Nebraska National Guard infantry units were on the border at Llano Grande, Texas, their lone airman moved to Mineola, New York, the Army's only training field on the East Coast. When he arrived, he found to his surprise that the government had just begun operations there on July 22, that Lieutenant Joseph E. Carberry was the only Army officer at the field, and that no military airplanes were available. About a week later the first of four Curtiss JN-4 military trainers arrived and the rest were received by the end of September. The JN-4 was powered by a Curtiss OX-2 engine of 90 h.p. and was a good flying machine for its day. It was of the same type on which Bagnell had trained at Newport News, and later models became known as the "Jennies" of World War I.

The 1st Aero Company of the New York National Guard had been using this flying field for some time before its muster into federal service on July 13, and a number of hangars lined the flying area. In the first weeks the few guardsmen from other states used the New York unit's

trainers as much as they did the two planes the Army had available. Civilian instructors included Overton M. Bounds, H. W. Blakely, and Bertrand B. Acosta. When it became evident that the Army would not be able to support the training program adequately, Colonel Raynal C. Boiling, in charge of the New York unit, obtained \$7,500 on loan from the Aero Club and purchased another JN-4 to add to the two the 1st Aero Company already had.

In September the New York 1st Aero Company was augmented by the entire 2nd Aero Company from Buffalo, New York, as well as by ten officers from other states. Included was 2nd Lieutenant Bagnell, his Army commission rank considerably beneath his Nebraska National Guard captaincy. When the reduced appropriation announcement came from the Militia Bureau on September 9, the 2nd Aero Company was disbanded that same day, there being no possibility of state financing for National Guard instruction.

By the end of October, Lieutenant Carberry, the commanding officer at Mineola, had on hand nine Army JN-4 trainers and was able to mount a reasonable training program. Bagnell remained at Mineola during the winter of 1916-1917 and flew many cross-country flights, such as the December 30 trip in which twelve airplanes participated and experimental clothing was used. It was 18 degrees below zero at 6,000 feet where most planes flew, and crewmen nearly froze in open cockpits that allowed wind to whip clear to their feet. There were minor accidents, but the JN-4 piloted by Lieutenant Bagnell flew to Philadelphia and returned without incident

At the completion of his training, he took flying tests, probably in January, 1917. One was to climb to 500 feet within the bounds of a field 2,000 feet square. In the trial requiring that he cut off his engine at 1,000 feet and land within 200 feet of a designated point, he stopped within 60 feet. When landing over an obstacle, he traveled only 65 feet in his second attempt, though 1,500 feet were allowed. Other requirements were completed satisfactorily, and Bagnell received a reserve military aviator rating to become a Reserve Corps signal officer and a formal member of the Air Service.

In early February, 1917, Lieutenant Bagnell returned to Lincoln to visit his parents. The border confrontation with Mexico was now no longer explosive, and many National Guard units returned to their states for demobilization. Bagnell was assigned to assist in mustering out the Nebraska 5th Infantry Regiment at Omaha when it returned that same month. Newspaper accounts reported that he was to be assigned either to the Army's 1st Aero Squadron at Columbus, New Mexico, or to the aviation school at San Diego, California.³³ Actually he was ordered to the border, and prior to April 6, when war with Germany was declared, was assigned to the Air Service's newly created 3rd Aero Squadron at San Antonio, Texas. Organization of this unit had begun the previous October, but its build-up had been slow. Only about nine officers were on the rolls when the country entered the war-five of them, like Bagnell, being members of the Signal Officers Reserve Corps.³⁴ It became an organized squadron in April, was transferred to Kelly Field, Texas, in May, and to Post Field, Oklahoma, in August, 1917, without seeing overseas service. The total time spent by the Nebraska officer from his first efforts to enter the Air Service to his assignment to this squadron had been eight months.

Lieutenant Bagnell was one of only sixteen National Guards-men from outside New York state to receive Army pilot certificates in 1916, a minuscule number considering that the country was in its most serious international crisis in 18 years.

Of these twenty-one officers, two died in accidents during the war: Captain Ralph Taylor of Connecticut on August 2, 1917, and Captain L. P. Billard of Kansas on July 24, 1918. Taylor had been active in efforts to strengthen the aviation arms of both services in 1916 and was stationed at Mineola, New York, probably as an instructor at the time of his death.

The incomplete names of only four other Nebraska guards-men have been identified as undertaking flying training in this period, none under the Army, and whether three of them received pilot's ratings is not known. In early 1917 Lieutenants Westover* and Boyd were being instructed by the famous woman aviator, Miss Ruth Law of Chicago, but the location of their instruction sessions is unknown. At the same time a Lieutenant Hillburg was in Florida undergoing flight training. Lastly, Captain E. E. Newbold apparently did complete his flying instruction after war was declared in April, 1917. The Nebraska Aero Company no longer existed and his further flying activities would not have been connected with it.

From the limited number of guardsmen who received Army instruction, it is obvious that the other states fared no better than Nebraska. Only New York had a complete aero squadron organized, yet it was equipped with only four trainers at its peak. Michigan, for example, obtained one L.W.F. airplane in 1916, but when it was damaged in an accident the state could not afford to repair it. Later it was sold to the Army by the factory where it was being restored.

National Guard aviation did not really become effective until federal funds became available in ample amounts in the 1920's. While the experiences during World War I were unfortunate^ they were dictated by temporary circumstances, and the Air National Guard in the next decade was finally able to take its place in supporting federal military aviation. Pioneer airmen Captain Ralph EL McMillen of Nebraska, Captain Ralph L. Taylor of Connecticut, and L. P. Billard of Kansas, did not live to see this transition.

A major reorganization took place on November 1st, 1950. All Fighter Groups were reorganized as Fighter Wings under the "Wing Base" concept which automatically deactivated Nebraska's Air Service Group and the Utility Flight. The support units were reorganized into five squadrons (Headquarters, Communications, Food Service, Air Police and Installations) which comprised an Air Base Group. All of the 132nd Air Base Group squadrons were federally recognized in November 1950. This Air Base Group was a part of the 132nd Fighter Wing located in Des Moines, Iowa and was the first Air Base Group in the Nation to be located at a separate location from its Wing Headquarters. Lt. Col. John M. Campbell was the Commander of the 132nd Air Base Group and Major Fred H. Bailey, Jr. became the Commander of the 173rd Fighter Squadron.

The entire 132nd Fighter Wing (all of the Iowa and Nebraska Air National Guard units) was called into active service on April 1st, 1951 to serve during the Korean Conflict. The units remained in Federal status for twenty-one months and then were released to resume their

National Guard role. The units of the Nebraska Air National Guard (also the Iowa Air Guard units) were released from active duty on December 31st, 1952 and returned to National Guard status on January 1st, 1953.

The first major task confronting the unit commanders was to rebuild their organizations into full-strength and combat-ready units. Col. John M. Campbell was appointed Chief of Staff for Air in Nebraska. Major Fred H. Bailey, Jr., was released from Active Duty and returned to his previous duties as the Tactical Squadron Commander and also Base Detachment Commander. Major Donald E. Coy returned to Lincoln as the Air Base Group Commander. The 8173rd Utility Flight, commanded by Capt. Elmer E. Herron, was deactivated with the return of the Air Guard Units. This Utility Flight organization had remained in Nebraska throughout the period. The rest of the Air Guard was on Active Duty. They separated and maintained one C-47 Administrative type aircraft which was at the disposal of the Governor and the Adjutant General.

The F-80 began to arrive in the fall of 1953. Two fatal accidents as a result of material failure occurred during this period and ill of the jet aircraft were returned to the Lockheed factory for complete modernization and modification.

Aircraft were returned to the Tactical Squadron in sufficient time to permit adequate pilot and mechanic training in preparation for Field Training in Casper, Wyoming, August 1954. The Tactical Squadron was re-designated as the 173rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron and was given the primary mission with the Air Defense Command. The training conducted during the 1954 Field Training period in Casper, Wyoming was in accordance with Air Defense standards and requirements.

As the plans were firmed up for the Air Defense augmentation of the Air Guard units, the added responsibility required an even greater pilot proficiency for aerial gunnery. The tactical flying during the 1955 Field Training period was devoted entirely to practicing aerial gunnery and the pilots in the Fighter Squadron flew more than 1000 tactical jet hours in a two week period. More than 67,000 rounds of 50 caliber ammunition were expended. The average aerial gunnery mission was slightly more than one hour in duration so the Squadron's twenty-five pilots were kept quite busy.

Authorization was received in the summer of 1955 to construct new facilities for the Air Guard units. The Lincoln Air Force Base was reactivated and became a permanent Strategic Air Command Base which necessitated all National Guard units to move into new facilities as soon as possible. The new Air Guard site was obtained just south of the Commercial Air Terminal adjoining the Lincoln Air Force Base and construction began in the fall of 1955. Construction was completed in September 1956 on the Hangar, warehouse, paint storage building and the motor vehicle shop. Construction on a second warehouse began in November, 1956. Construction on a Flight Simulator Building began in March 1957 which will complete the two million dollar Air Guard installation.

On July 1st 1956, the Nebraska Air National Guard assumed an active role in the aerial defense on the United States. Pilots patrol the skies daily and are on constant alert in search of

unidentified aircraft. Pilots and their aircraft, when not flying on a mission, are on a "five minute alert" which means they have The 173rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron began to receive new all-weather fighter aircraft in March 1957. The pilots and mechanics attended an extensive training program and were capable of flying and maintaining the new aircraft during the 1957 Field Training Period

The Nebraska Air National Guard Units combine with the Iowa Air Guard units to form the 132nd Fighter Interceptor Wing. The 132nd Air Base Group and one of the Fighter Squadrons (173rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron) within the 132nd Fighter Interceptor Group are located in Lincoln, Nebraska. The 173rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron is augmented with three elements from the Maintenance and Supply Group and one element from the Medical Group. The remainder of the Wing making up the Iowa Air National Guard. The Wing Headquarters is located in Des Moines, Iowa.

The 132nd Air Base Group has the responsibility of supporting the Fighter Squadron and keeping the Air Base in operation. Its Food Service Squadron prepares and serves the meals for all personnel. The Communications Squadron operates and maintains the ground communications systems. The Air Police Squadron provides security for the military installation and all of the equipment. The Installations Squadron builds, repairs and maintains all real property, operates crash rescue equipment and performs many other functions. The Headquarters Squadron provides administrative assistance and liaison between the various Squadrons and the Air Base Group Commander. The Headquarters Squadron also provides overall personnel services such as operation of the theater, mail service, Service Club, Officer's and Airmen's Club, Base Operations, Photography Laboratory and others. These activities and many more are essential in the operation of an Air Base and every reasonable effort is expended in keeping the personnel mentally and physically capable of performing their assigned duties.

The 173rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron is the tactical flying unit in the Nebraska Air National Guard. There are approximately 35 tactical pilots and three hundred airmen in the Fighter Squadron. The Squadron has twenty-five tactical aircraft assigned plus the associated support equipment such as the refueling trucks, starting units, maintenance stands, etc. The personnel authorization and assigned equipment is standard in all Fighter Squadrons in the Air Force and in the Air National Guard.

The primary mission of the Fighter Squadron is aerial defense of the United States. The Squadron is assigned to the Air Defense Command and would be under their control in the event of a National Emergency.

The Squadron is responsible for the maintenance of its assigned aircraft and the proficiency for the assigned personnel. Group and flying training programs are administered by the Squadron. The level of training and combat effectiveness is closely supervised by the Squadron Commander and the Air Force Advisor.

The Senior Air Force Adviser is an officer attached to the Nebraska Air National Guard from Headquarters, Tenth Air Force. The SAFA and his three airmen technical advisors monitor

the Air National Guard program and provide assistance whenever possible. Being representatives from the regular Air Force they obtain information through Air Force channels and make distribution to the assigned Air Guard units. They also submit reports of training, assigned strengths and combat effectiveness to their Air Force Headquarters. Every Air Guard unit has an Air Force Advisor organization.

Another organization that assists the Air Guard Commanders in the formation of local policies and directives is the Headquarters, Air National Guard. The Adjutant General, Chief of Staff for Air and their staff monitor the overall operation of the units and coordinate their activities with local and state requirement. The Air Staff consists of a well qualified officer in each field i.e. Operations, Administration, Supply and these officers supervise all activities in his specialty in the state.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources