

The Michigan
Air National
Guard at War
**A Combat History,
1917-1953**



Michigan ANG at War, 1917-1953

In the post-9/11 world, the Michigan Air National Guard has been in constant demand, deploying Airmen and aircraft almost continuously since the day of the terror attack that marked the start of a new era.

The Michigan ANG's combat history goes back long before Sept. 11, 2001, however. One of the state's flying units served in World War I. The other two were born of the crucible of World War II. All three — and more — served in Korea.

This booklet provides a brief overview of the combat deployments of the 107th, 171st and 172nd squad-

rons from World War I through the Korean War. While the history highlights the flying squadrons, readers can be assured that in each and every case, scores of maintenance and other supporting Airmen stood behind every mission.

From the earliest traditions of the Minuteman to today's high-tech, modern force, Michigan Airmen continue to set the standard for others to follow. These pages contain but a small part of their story.

— *Tech. Sgt. Dan Heaton*
Michigan Air National Guard
Editor



Airmen of the 374th Fighter Squadron, 361st Fighter Group, load ammunition prior to a mission in a P-51 Mustang in this image from World War II, c. late 1944 or early 1945. The 374th later became the 171st Squadron, assigned to the Michigan Air National Guard.

**French-built
Nieuport 28
pursuit
(fighter) air-
craft at the 3rd
Air Instruction-
al Center,
Issoudun
Aerodrome,
1918.**



The 107th Aero Squadron is born

World War I began barely a decade after the Wright Brothers' first flight. U.S. military aviation was in its infancy when the war began. With the U.S. declaration of war in the spring of 1917, the Army began a rapid build-up of "aero squadrons" to complement the massive land forces that would be needed during the war. Among those units created in the summer of 1917 was the 107th Aero Squadron, the predecessor of today's 107th Fighter Squadron. The 107th is the only Michigan flying squadron that traces its lineage back to the World War I era. Michigan's other two flying squadrons, the 171st and 172nd, both were born of necessity during the second World War. Selfridge Field was also created in the build-up for World War I, though at that time, the field was not used by the Michigan National Guard. Through 1971, the

history of Selfridge and of the Michigan Air National Guard existed on two separate tracks.

The modern 107th Fighter Squadron traces its lineage to the 107th Aero Squadron, one of numerous U.S. Army Air Service units created as the United States entered World War I. The squadron spent almost all of 1918 in France as part of the American Expeditionary Forces. The unit spent the bulk of the war at the 3rd Air Instructional Center, Issoudun Aerodrome, in central France. Though the 107th is one of the oldest flying squadrons in today's Air National Guard, its service in World War I consisted of primarily an aviation support role.

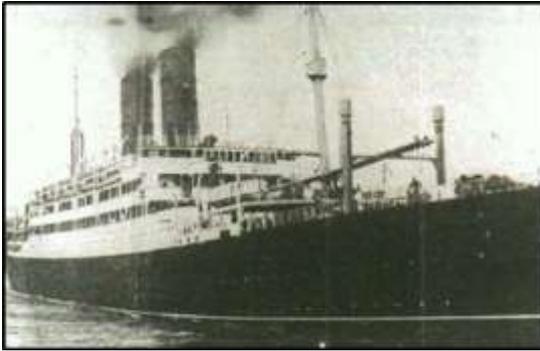
The U.S. declared war on Germany and the Central Powers on April 6, 1917. The first U.S. troops began arriving in France in late May 1917, but it would be October 1917 before the

AEF was in place and fully prepared to engage in its first major operations at the front lines of the war.

The 107th Aero Squadron was organized at Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas, on Aug. 27, 1917, formed of approximately 150 recruits primarily from Vancouver Barracks in Washington state and Fort Thomas, Kentucky. The 107th Aero Squadron organized at Kelly was completely separate from the

107th Aero Squadron (Service) that would later be created, in March 1918, at Rich Field in Waco, Texas.

After two months of basic indoctrination, the 107th was sent to the Aviation Concentration Center, Garden City, Long Island, New York, on Oct. 26, 1917. After additional training at the AIC, the squadron moved by train to St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, where, on Dec. 7, 1917, it boarded the SS Tuscania, a cruise ship pressed into duty as a troop transport vessel, for passage to England. The squadron arrived in Liverpool, England, on Christmas morning, Dec. 25, 1917. (The Tuscania would be sunk by a



SS Tuscania in 1914.

German U-boat on Feb. 5, 1918, resulting in a loss of more than 200 soldiers and crews. Among the units that were on board at the time were elements of the 32nd Infantry Division, made up of soldiers from Michigan and Wisconsin National Guards.) After further travel, the 107th arrived at the AEF Replacement Concentration Center, St. Maixent Barracks, France, on Jan. 2, 1918. At St. Maixent, the

107th was redesignated as the 801st Aero Squadron, and later as the 801st Aero Squadron (Repair), and used as

a pool of general labor around the camp for about two months.

Finally, the squadron was deployed to the Issoudun Aerodrome on February 21, where it remained through the end of the war. At Issoudun, American pilots were given their final combat flight training prior to being sent to front-line squadrons. The American pilots were given their initial flight training at air fields in the U.S., including the newly-created Selfridge Field in Michigan. During the war, Issoudun was the largest



The 107th Observation Squadron in 1926. The squadron had begun meeting in 1925 and received federal recognition the following year.

“aerodrome,” or airport, in the world, with a total of 15 adjacent air fields (only 10 of which were completed and in use by the war’s end). While at Issoudun, the 801st was assigned to the facility’s Field 1, working in the aircraft assembly and test departments. In June, the squadron sent a detachment of about 100 men – more than half of its strength – to Issoudun’s Field 2 and was tasked with the general operation of the field.

The squadron remained at Issoudun, conducting air field operations and assembling, servicing and

repairing aircraft through the armistice to end the war on Nov. 11, 1918. The unit remained at Issoudun until January 1919, winding down operations at the field. After a brief stay in the French port city of St. Nazaire, awaiting transport across the Atlantic, the squadron was returned to the U.S. in March and arrived at Hazelhurst Field (later named Mitchel Air Force Base) in Long Island, New York, where on March 18, 1919, the unit was officially demobilized and most its personnel returned to civilian life.

In 1925, a group of 20 officers

and 90 enlisted men began meeting weekly in a Detroit garage and created the Michigan National Guard's first flying unit. On May 7, 1926, the unit received federal recognition and was designated as the 107th Observation Squadron. At the time, the 107th was the fifth National Guard flying squad-

ron so designated. In 1936, the lineage and honors of the 107th Aero Squadron/801st Aero Squadron were consolidated with those of the new 107th Observation Squadron. The squadron has remained a component of the Michigan National Guard since that time.

WWI: Selfridge Field is launched

While Selfridge Field began in the early days of U.S. involvement in World War I — and there was a Michigan National Guard unit at the base on the very first day it became a military installation — the Michigan National Guard did not have a significant presence at the base until the 1970s.

Selfridge Field became a military air base on July 1, 1917, when Company G, 22rd Infantry, 125th Infantry Regiment, of the Michigan National Guard took possession of the property. The Guard turned the property over to the 8th and 9th Aero Squadrons of the active-duty Army Air Service a few days later. During WWI, the base was primarily used to train pilots and aerial gunners for service in France.

The base was used extensively in World War II as a training site, including housing, for a time, of unit of the “Tuskegee Airmen,” an all-

African American unit operating in the segregated military of the day.

The base was turned over to the Michigan Air National Guard in 1971 and most of the active-duty military departed. Since that time, Selfridge Air National Guard Base has primarily been used for training of Guard and



**Lt. Thomas
Selfridge**

Reserve forces.

The base was named in honor of Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge who was the first member of the U.S. military to pilot an aircraft. He was also the first person in the world to die in an airplane crash, on a Sept. 17, 1908, flight with Orville Wright.

107th earns Presidential honor

The 107th was first called to active duty prior to American entry into World War II. The squadron, equipped at the time with Douglas O-38 and North American O-47 observation planes and at its home station of Detroit Metropolitan Airport, was federalized on Oct. 15, 1940. The 107th was sent to the airfield at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana for unit training on Oct. 28, 1940. For many years this airfield was simply called the Artillery Range Airport Camp. Shortly after the arrival of the 107th, the airfield was renamed Esler Field, in honor of 107th pilot Lt. Wilmer Esler who was killed in the crash of an O-47 in a training flight at the field.

On Sept. 1, 1941, the 107th was joined by two other National Guard observation units to form the 67th Observation Group. One week after the Pearl Harbor attack of Dec. 7, 1941, the 67th Group was sent to Charleston Army Airfield in South Carolina, where it performed anti-submarine patrolling off the East Coast of the US until March 1942, when it returned to Louisiana for training in fighter aircraft.

The 67th Group was sent to Membury, England, in August 1942 and flew Mk V Spitfires and Tiger Moths for a year until equipped with F



O-47 at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.

-6s, the observation variant of the P-51 Mustang. While in England, the 107th was re-located several times, operating at various points from RAF Membury, RAF Aldermaston and RAF Middle Wallop. Upon arrival at Middle Wallop on Dec. 11, 1943, the 107th began focusing on observation missions flown over the French coastline, in preparation for the D-Day invasion in June 1944. For successful photo missions of the French invasion coastline without loss of a single aircraft, the 107th was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation on 7 April 1945.

The 67th Group advance detachments landed in Normandy 13 days after D-Day. Assigned to support the First U.S. Army during the Normandy Campaign, the 107th was the first reconnaissance unit to operate from French soil. As the U.S. Army advanced from the French coast into



The 107th Observation Squadron, Michigan National Guard, one of 29 National Guard observation squadrons, was ordered into active Federal in 1940. Along with 4,000 other National Guard Air Corps personnel, the men of the 107th expanded the rapidly-growing U.S. Army Air Forces. (National Guard heritage painting.)

Germany, the 107th continued to move to bases close to the front. In France, the squadron operated at Deux Jumeaux, Le Molay and Toussus-le-Noble airfields. In September 1944, the squadron moved forward to Belgium, operating at Gosselies and then Chievres airfields. On March 23, 1945, the 107th began operating in Germany, first at Vogelsang Airfield, then at Limburg and Eschwege airfields. At each location, 107th pilots

and aircraft provided airborne reconnaissance for U.S. Army ground forces. The squadron's aerial reconnaissance was in particularly high demand during the Dec. 16, 1944-Jan. 25, 1945, Battle of the Bulge, the last major German offensive of the war. For its contributions in that battle, the 107th was awarded the Belgian Fourragere device.

The 107th remained on station in Germany through July 1945, several

months after the German surrender. The squadron returned to the U.S. by troop transport ship and then spent about three months at an air base in Florida, before essentially going dormant and existing only as a paper unit until the 107th was re-organized in the Michigan National Guard (later Air National Guard) in 1946.

Almost exactly 60 years after it became the first observation squadron to operate in continental Europe during World War II, the 107th Fighter squadron became the first F-16 unit to be based in Iraq during operations there in 2004.

Today, the 107th Fighter Squadron operates A-10 Thunderbolt IIs at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

A noted World War II Airman later became a member of the 107th squadron and helped organize the post-war Michigan Air National Guard.

Urban L. "Ben" Drew was a Detroit native who became the first pilot to shoot down two enemy jet aircraft in a single mission - while flying a propeller-driven P-51 Mustang -- in the later stages of World War II. Drew, who left the military as a major in 1950, also served as the first assistant adjutant general for air for the Michigan National Guard, helping to guide the organization of the Michigan Air National Guard in the years after the Air Force became a



Major Urban "Ben" Drew is seen standing next to his P-51, the "Detroit Miss" in this World War II-era photo.

separate military service.

A native of Detroit and later an alumnus of both Wayne (now Wayne State) University and the University of Michigan, Drew was flying with the Yellowjackets of the 375th Fighter Squadron, 361st Fighter Group, in Europe when he became an ace, recording a total of six aerial victories. While flying in Europe, Drew's P-51 was nicknamed "The Detroit Miss" after his hometown.

Part of the Eighth Air Force flying out of England, Drew and his fellow Airmen were assigned to fly escort missions to U.S. bombers on missions into Germany. On Oct. 7, 1944, on a flight near Hamm, Germany, Drew engaged and shot down two German ME-262 jet aircraft - the first

U.S. pilot or allied Airman to do so. That action drew a request from his squadron that he be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, but the medal was rejected due to a lack of supporting evidence. During the combat, the gun camera aboard the Detroit Miss jammed leaving no film of the victories. His Wingman during the flight, 2nd Lt. Robert McCandliss, was shot down by anti-aircraft fire during the flight and spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner of war.

Several decades later, the actions of Drew were reviewed by the Air Force - and confirmed by war records of the German Luftwaffe - and he was awarded the Air Force Cross for the action, one of only two such medals awarded for actions during World War II. Drew was finally awarded the medal in 1983. (The Air Force was not established as a separate service until two years after the war.)

After World War II, Drew left the active Air Force and became a member of the newly-re-designated 107th Bombardment Squadron (Light) of the newly-created Michigan Air National Guard. Through several name changes, the 107th today operates as the

107th Fighter Squadron, flying the A-10 Thunderbolt II. The 107th is nicknamed the "Red Devils." When Drew was assigned to the unit as an instructor pilot, the squadron had recently begun flying F-51 Mustangs - essentially the same aircraft as the P-51, but re-designated in a new naming convention. Drew served with the Michigan Air National Guard 1947-1950.



**Key Dates – 107th
Squadron in World
War II
December 20,
1943**

The 107th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, formerly the 107th

Observation Squadron, Michigan Air National Guard, commenced combat operations over France from the United Kingdom with its F-6A's in preparation for the Allied invasion of Europe.

February 23, 1944

The 107th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, formerly the 107th Observation Squadron, Michigan National Guard, and other units of the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Group were assigned the responsibility of photographing the French coastline in preparation for the Normandy invasion, Operation Overlord.



A P-47 Thunderbolt flown by 1st Lt. Vernon R. Richards is seen in this undated photo from World War II. This aircraft was operated by the 374th Fighter Squadron, 361st Fighter Group, 8th Air Force, at Bottisham Airfield, England, at the time of this photo. The 374th is the direct predecessor of the 171st Air Refueling Squadron, which is now assigned to Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., as part of the Michigan Air National Guard.

171st provides crucial bomber escort duty for 8th Air Force

The 171st Air Refueling Squadron was created during World War II and did not become assigned to the Michigan Air National Guard until several months after the end of the war.

The squadron was constituted on paper as the 374th Fighter Squadron on 28 January 1943 and activated on 10 February 1943, more than a year after the U.S. entry into World War II. The squadron operated throughout the war as the 374th and was a component of

the 361st Fighter Group, 8th Air Force.

After initial training at bases in Virginia, Maryland and New Jersey, the squadron was forward deployed to RAF Bottisham, England on 30 November 1943. The 374th, flying P-47 Thunderbolt fighter aircraft, was tasked with providing fighter escort to the B-17 Superfortress and B-24 Liberator bombers assigned to the 8th Air Force, which were operating from England and assigned to bomb loca-

World War II

tions in Germany. While the unit served primarily as a bomber escort, the 374th, then a part of the U.S. Army Air Forces, did engage in other missions, at times assigned to strafe and dive-bomb strategic sites in Germany and in the German-controlled Netherlands.

Among the major battles that the 374th participated in were the bomb attacks against the German aircraft industry during “Big Week,” 20-25 February 1944. Prior to the 6 June D-Day landings, the 374th was assigned to numerous attacks on enemy transportation facilities, meant to stymie the Axis Powers’ ability to respond to the invasion.

While principally assigned to RAF Bottisham and RAF Little Walden in England, the unit operated from air fields in France and Belgium from 23 December 1944-7 April 1945.

The 374th flew its final combat mission on 20 April 1945 and was demobilized while still on station in England. The unit was officially deactivated on 24 October 1945. The unit remained dormant for about six months and then was re-activated, designated as the 171st Fighter Squadron (Single Engine) and allotted to the Michigan Air National Guard on 24 May 1946, initially assigned to what is now known as Detroit Metropolitan Airport, where the unit was stationed



Airmen from the 191st Maintenance Squadron pose on the wing of a KC-135 Stratotanker, flown by the 171st Air Refueling Squadron. The 191st painted the checkerboard stripe on the KC-135, which has long been the distinctive logo of the “Michigan Six-Pack” as the 171st/191st has been known since the days it was flying the F-106 Delta Dart in the early 1970s.

until 1971 when it moved to Selfridge Air National Guard Base, where it remains today.

The 374th began the war flying the P-47 Thunderbolt. In May 1944, the unit transitioned to flying the P-51 Mustang. After being assigned to the Michigan Air National Guard, the new 171st squadron continued to fly the P-51 until 1950, when it then transitioned to its first jet-powered aircraft, the F-84 Thunderjet. It flew F-51 Mustangs again from 1952-1953.

Key Dates – 171st Squadron in World War II

January 28, 1942

The 374th Fighter Squadron is constituted at Richmond Army Air Base, Virginia. The unit is assigned the P-47 Thunderbolt.

November 30, 1943

The squadron is deployed to RAF Bottisham, England.

January 21, 1944

The squadron's first combat patrol on an area patrol west of St. Omer, France.

January 29, 1944

On the squadron's 4th mission, the squadron suffers its first combat loss: Lt. Charles B. Screws of the 374th was hit by flak and crash-landed his

plane north of Amiens. He survived. The next day, the squadron claimed its first victories during the first of two bomber escort missions when 374th Squadron pilots destroyed four Me109s near Rheine, Germany, but



World War II-era emblem of the 171st/374th Fighter Squadron.

Lt. Ethelbert F. Amason was killed in action, the first of 20 374th pilots and one enlisted man to make the ultimate sacrifice during the war.

May 1, 1944

The squadron receives its first P-51 Mustangs.

September 28, 1944

The squadron is assigned to RAF Little Walden, England.

December 23, 1944

The squadron is assigned to St. Dizier Airfield, France.

February 1, 1945

The squadron is assigned to Chievres Airdrome, Belgium.

April 7, 1945

The squadron returns to RAF Little Walden.

October 24, 1945

The squadron is inactivated.

May 24, 1946

The squadron is redesignated as the 171st Fighter Squadron (Single Engine) and assigned to the Michigan Air National Guard at Detroit-Wayne Major Airport (now Detroit Metropolitan Airport).



"The Bottisham Four," a famous photo showing four U.S. Army Air Force North American P-51 Mustang fighters from the 375th Fighter Squadron, 361st Fighter Group, from RAF Bottisham, Cambridgeshire (UK), in flight on 26 July 1944. The nearest aircraft is "Lou IV," the 4th aircraft named after the daughter of the 361st Fighter Group commanding officer, Col. Thomas J.J. Christian Jr., who was killed in this plane while dive-bombing the Arras marshalling yards on 12 August 1944.

172nd in action for 'Big Week'

The 172nd Squadron's story is similar to that of the 171st. Now the 172nd Air Support Squadron and assigned to a unmanned aerial vehicle mission, the 172nd is assigned to the 110th Air Wing, Battle Creek. The squadron was first created during World War II.

Constituted at Richmond (Virg.) Army Air Base as the 375th Fighter Squadron on Jan. 28, 1943 and officially activated on Feb. 10, the 375th was created to support U.S. and allied bomber aircraft in Europe. After training at several bases on the eastern

seaboard, the 375th and its assigned P-47 Thunderbolts were assigned to the 361st Fighter Group, 8th Air Force in at RAF Bottisham, England, on Nov. 30, 1943.

The squadron served primarily as a bomber escort organization, covering the penetration, attack, and withdrawal of B-17/B-24 bomber formations that the USAAF sent against targets in Europe. The squadron also engaged in counter-air patrols, fighter sweeps, and strafing and dive-bombing missions. Separately, the squadron also attacked such targets as airdromes, marshalling yards, missile sites, industrial areas, ordnance depots, oil refineries, trains, and highways. During its operations, the unit participated in the assault against the German Luftwaffe and aircraft industry during the Big Week air campaign of Feb. 20–25, 1944, and the attack on transportation facilities prior to the Normandy invasion and support of the invasion forces thereafter, including the Saint-Lô breakthrough in July, 1944. In the summer of 1944, the squadron transitioned to using P-51 Mustangs (and then continued to fly P-51s through 1954.)

The squadron supported the airborne attack on the Netherlands



The 375th/172nd Squadron was one of many World War II era squadrons to have a Disney character as a unit mascot, in this case Donald Duck. The famous duck is still a part of the unit's logo.

in September 1944, and deployed to Chievres Airdrome, Belgium, between February and April, 1945, flying tactical ground support missions during the airborne assault across the Rhine. The unit returned to Little Walden and flew its last combat mission on April 20, 1945. Demobilized during the summer of 1945 in England, it inactivated in the United States as a paper unit in October 1945.

The squadron remained dormant until reconstituted and allotted to the Michigan Air National Guard May 24, 1946.

Korean Conflict brings training, home defense missions for ANG

The Korean War prompted the first major mobilization of the Michigan Air National Guard, less than five years after the Michigan ANG had been reorganized independent from the Michigan Army National Guard. The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, when North Korea invaded South Korea. The war ended with an armistice signed on July 27, 1953.

Like all state Air National Guard units, Michigan's ANG was officially established on Sept. 18, 1947, when the U.S. Air Force was created as an independent component of the U.S. Armed Forces. Three and a half years later, essentially the entire Michigan ANG was mobilized due to the conflict in Korea. The Michigan units from the Detroit area – the 107th Fighter Squadron (Jet) and the 171st Fighter Squadron, both of which had been operating at Detroit Metro Airport – were deployed to Luke Air Force Base, and there re-designated as the 127th Pilot Training Wing. The Battle Creek-based 172nd Fighter Squadron was then sent to Detroit, on active duty, and assigned to Air Defense Command at Selfridge Air Force Base (today Air National Guard Base). The

Michigan ANG's 127th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron was mobilized and sent to Fort Williams, Maine.

During the Korean War era, all three Michigan flying squadrons were components of the Michigan Air National Guard's 127th Fighter Group, which was command by Lt. Col. Donald W. Armstrong, January 1950-February 1951; Col. Henry J. Amen, February 1951-September 1952; and Col. Magnus B. Marks, September 1952-October 1958.

The 107th Fighter Squadron in the Korean era

In the spring of 1950, the 107th Bomb Squadron Light converted from B-26 Marauders to F-84 Thunderjets and on 1 July, 1950, was re-designated as the 107th Fighter Squadron (Jet). The F-84 was the first jet-powered aircraft assigned to the Michigan Air National Guard. On Feb. 1, 1951, the 107th was mobilized for the war and deployed to Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. On Feb. 10, 1951, the 107th and the 171st stood up the newly-created 127th Pilot Training Wing, Air Training Command, at Luke. 107th Airmen



Above and below, a Michigan Air National Guard F-84 Thunderjet at Luke Air Force Base, circa 1952.



officially began training new pilots on March 1, 1951, initially training new Airmen to fly the F-51 Mustang (an aircraft 107th Airmen had flown prior to being assigned the B-26 at home

station). Training with the F-51 lasted only a few weeks before the training moved to the F-84. The 107th remained on duty at Luke through Sept. 11, 1952, when it was released from



Michigan Air National Guard F-51 Mustangs, circa 1951.

active duty and returned to the Michigan Air National Guard. After the 107th returned to Michigan, it transitioned into the F-86 Sabre, and continued to operate at Detroit Metro Airport, which was then known as Detroit-Wayne Major Airport.

The 171st Fighter Squadron in the Korean era

In the spring of 1950, the 171st was converted from F-51 Mustangs to F-84 Thunderjets. On Feb. 1, 1951, the 171st was mobilized for the war and deployed to Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. On Feb. 10, 1951, the 107th and the 171st stood up the newly-created 127th Pilot Training Wing, Air Training Command, at Luke. 171st Airmen officially began training new pilots on March 1, 1951, initially training new Airmen to fly the F-51 Mustang. Training with the F-51 lasted only a

few weeks before the training moved to the F-84. The 171st remained on duty at Luke until Nov. 1, 1952, when it was released from active duty and returned to Michigan. After the 171st returned to Michigan, it was redesignated as the 171st Fighter-Bomber Squadron and transitioned back to the F-51 Mustang for about a year before transitioning again into the F-86 Sabre. Back in Michigan, the squadron continued to operate at Detroit Metro Airport for the next two decades.

The Michigan ANG at Luke AFB

Luke Army Air Field was the largest fighter training base in the Army Air Forces during World War II. The base was deactivated Nov. 30, 1946, about a year after the war ended. After several years of relative dorman-

cy, the base was re-activated as Luke Air Force Base on Feb. 1, 1951, for use as a training site. The Michigan ANG units arrived at Luke on Feb. 23, opening shuttered World War II buildings for use as the new USAF Air Crew School (Fighter-Bomber/ Escort). On Nov. 1, 1952, the active-duty 3600th Flying Training Wing (Fighter) was stood up and assumed the primary flight training duties at the base, allowing the two Michigan squadrons to be released from active service.

The 172nd Fighter Squadron in the Korean era

The Battle Creek-based 172nd was mobilized on Feb. 1, 1951, re-designated as the 172nd Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, and assigned to the 56th Fighter Wing, part of the Air Defense Command, at Selfridge Air Force Base. The squadron was one of 16 ANG flying squadrons activated on the same day and assigned to ADC at locations around the nation. The 172nd was flying F-51 Mustangs prior to the mobilization and continued to be assigned that aircraft through the end of the war. The 172nd remained on active duty at Selfridge through Nov. 1, 1952 when the squadron's mission – and aircraft – were assigned to the active duty 431st Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, which was stood up the same day. Following the demobilization, the

172nd returned to state control and home station at Kellogg Air National Guard Base in Battle Creek. It continued to fly the F-51 Mustang after demobilization until transitioning to the F-86 Sabre in 1954.

The 127th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron in the Korean era

The 127th AC&WS was one of eight similar command & control ANG units from across the nation mobilized on Sept. 1, 1951. The Michigan squadron was assigned from its home base at Detroit Metro Airport to Fort Williams, a shore defense fort in Cape Elizabeth, Maine. The fort provided the harbor defense for the active shipping facilities in Portland, Maine. The squadron was assigned to the 4711th Air Defense Wing, providing command and control, operating the TPS-1B long-range radar system, for several fighter-interceptor squadrons assigned to the region. The 127th AC&WS remained on active duty for exactly two years, demobilizing and returning to home station at Detroit Metro Airport on Sept. 1, 1953. The active-duty 4711th was in operation for less than five years in total and was re-assigned in early 1956 to Selfridge Air Force Base. The 4711th was deactivated on July 8, 1956. The 127th AC&WS was de-activated in the 1960s.



MICHIGAN NATIONAL GUARD

