

In the fall of 1960, the 146th Fighter Squadron began to convert over to the F-102 Delta Dagger. The mission was Air Defense, to defend the eastern US from Soviet bombers. This was during the Cold War era, when it was presumed that every cloud had a Russian airplane hiding behind it. Here in Pittsburgh, four crews pulled continuous round-the-clock alert duty. The pilots would scramble their F-102s whenever the radar even hinted that the enemy was coming. Back then, just as now, the Air National Guard played a vital part in our national defense. Our F-102 is displayed just outside the main entrance to the base.



F-102A "Delta Dagger"
(1960-1975) Tail Number 56-1415

Built by: Conair Aircraft Company in 1955. Wingspan: 38 Feet; Length: 68 Feet Height: 21 Feet. Powered by Pratt & Whitney J-57 Turbo-jet engine rated at 15,000 lbs thrust with afterburner. Normal takeoff weight: 27,000 lbs. Maximum speed: 825 MPH at 40,000 feet (Mach 1.25). Operational Ceiling: 54,000 feet; normal range: 500 miles with internal fuel. With two external tanks, range increased to 1,350 miles. Equipped with the Hughes MG-10 fire-control system, six AIM missiles and 24 2.75-inch folding-fin rockets.



A-7D "Sluf"
(1975-1991) Tail Number 73-002

Built by: Vought Corporation. Length: 46 feet. Wing span: 38 feet. Height: 16 feet. Maximum operating ceiling: 42,000 feet. Ferry range: 1,945 miles. range is unlimited with inflight refueling. Engine: TF-41, non-afterburner turbofan. Power: 13,390 pounds of thrust at sea level. Weight: 22,000 pounds, with a maximum operating weight of 42,000 pounds. The A-7D has an all-weather combat capability. Armament: single, nose-mounted M-61 Gatling gun, six wing-mounted store pylons, and two fuselage-mounted store pylons. A variety of missiles and bombs can be carried and released in manual or automatic modes. Our A-7D is located on Mustang Road, on your right just inside the main gate.

The A-7D was the last fighter aircraft to be based at the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. The 112th Tactical Fighter Group was redesignated the 112th Air Refueling Group in 1992, and transitioned into the KC-135E "Stratotanker". The 112th ultimately was consolidated into the 171st Air Refueling Wing, which remains at Greater Pittsburgh International Airport today.



**Welcome to the
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at the
**171st
Air Refueling Wing**
of the
**Pennsylvania
Air National Guard**

*"Preserving Pittsburgh's Military
History for ALL to Enjoy"*



This pamphlet is produced by the
171st Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Shop
Commercial: (412) 776-7350 DSN: 294-7350
Email: usaf.pa.171-arw.mbx.public-affairs@mail.mil
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P-47 Thunderbolt "Jug"
(1949 – 1951) Tail Number 48-9342

Built by: Republic Aviation Corporation. Wingspan: 40 feet Length: 36 feet Height: 14 feet. Powered by the Pratt & Whitney R-2800 radial engine rated at 2,000 takeoff horsepower. Normal take-off weight: 14,000 lbs. Maximum speed: 433 MPH at 30,000 feet. Normal Range: 640 miles. Armament comprised of eight .50 caliber Browning machine guns. Capable of carrying 500-pound bombs beneath the fuselage and wings. The P-47 is one of three aircraft displayed at the intersection of Mustang Drive and Tanker Road.

Spartan was a kind description of the Pittsburgh military airfield in the 1940s. A shack built from lumber scavenged from the crates that aircraft parts and engines were received in, served as the maintenance and motor pool facility. Eventually, two hangars and an administration building were constructed and the base began to take shape. The P-47s that arrived in Pittsburgh were veterans of World War II, just like the men who were to fly them. Every member was a volunteer, and very often tools and supplies were scrounged from home or work to support the fledgling unit.



F-51 “Mustang”
(1951-1954) Tail Number 46-4581

Built by: North American Aviation Corporation. **Wing Span:** 37 feet. **Length:** 32 feet **Height:** 13 feet. **Powered by a Supercharged Packard-built V-1650 Rolls-Royce Merlin engine producing 1695 horsepower. Maximum takeoff weight: 12,100 lbs. Range: 1,000 miles Service Ceiling: 41,900 feet.**

In June of 1951 the 146th and 147th Fighter Squadrons converted over to the sleek F-51 “Mustang” fighter. The Mustang was one of the fastest of all the World War II aircraft. The units’ mission remained the same, defense of the eastern United States. This role continued until October of 1952 when the 112th Fighter Group at Pittsburgh, and attached 146th and 147th Fighter Squadrons were prematurely redesignated Fighter Interceptor Group and Squadrons. Less than two months later, all units were redesignated Fighter-Bomber. The F-51 remained the Group’s primary weapons system until 1954 when the first F-86 jet fighters were received. The F-86s only lasted a short time; the units soon received orders to convert to the F-84 “Thunderstreak” fighter.

F-84 “Thunderstreak”
(1954-1957) Tail Number 51-1508

Built by : Republic Aviation Corporation. Wingspan: 33 feet. Length 43 feet. Height: 14 feet. Powered by a Wright J-65 turbo-jet engine rated at 7,220 pounds of thrust. Normal takeoff weight: 28,000 lbs. Maximum speed: 695 mph at sea level. Normal range: 810 miles. Armament consisted of six .50 caliber Browning machine guns and 6,000 pounds of external ordinance.

In September of 1954 the units received the first of their ‘new’ F-84F Thunderstreak jet fighters. In 1955 a conversion to the Fighter-Interceptor mission took place. At about the same time, the Air Force began to provide the first pilot training slots in their schools. Also in 1955, Captain George McCrory of the 112th FG set a new speed record of 611 mph to capture third place in the first ever Ricks Memorial Trophy Race. Just two years later, in 1957, Major Pete Phillipy represented the 147th in the Third annual Ricks Trophy Race. He flew from Fresno, California to Washington DC in just 4 hours, 13 minutes and 42 seconds; top speed was an astounding 638 MPH for a new world record. The F-84 now on display in front of Base Headquarters is the very aircraft that captured the 1957 Ricks Trophy and set the Coast-to-Coast Speed Record.



“The Little Omicron”

In the early 1950’s, Pittsburgh radio personality Rege Cordic’s name was a household word. His rather animated radio show involved a number of fictional characters of his own creation, including “Omicron.” Omicron was a devilish-looking little green man who flew about while hunkered down in an aircraft that looked suspiciously like an F-84. Armed with laser beam weapons, and with lightning bolts flashing from his helmet, the Omicron soon became one of Cordic’s most famous characters. The Omicron was officially adopted as Squadron Mascot by the 147th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in 1955, and was proudly displayed on all their aircraft. The Omicron lives on today, in tribute to both Rege Cordic and the members of the 147th. He still rides proudly on the side of old 508, displayed at the intersection of Tanker Road and Mustang Drive. A beautiful full-color plaque featuring the Omicron is also on featured prominently in the hallway of the Squadron Operations building.



F-86 “Sabre”
(1957-1960) Tail Number 53-0894

Built by: North American Aviation Corporation. **Wingspan:** 37 feet. **Length:** 40 feet. **Height:** 15 feet. **Powered by a General Electric J-47 Turbojet engine rated at 7,650 pounds of thrust. Normal takeoff weight: 19,500 lbs. Maximum speed: 693 MPH at sea level. Normal range: 270 miles with internal fuel. Maximum range: 600 miles with external tanks. Armament: twenty-four 2.75 folding-fin rockets. Our F-86L appears on Mustang road, on your left as you head up the hill.**

The Ricks Trophy victory marked the end of the F-84 era for the 146th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, for in 1957 the 146th transitioned into the F-86L “Sabre” jet fighter. The following year, the 147th followed suit. The F-86L was a modified F-86D, with upgrades to the original radar/fire control systems to provide ‘data-link’ capability between the aircraft and ground controllers, eliminating the use of vocal instructions during intercept missions. New wing slats and an increase in wing span of 2 feet improved performance of the -L model over the -D. In the 1950s, no fighter aircraft in the world could take on the Sabre without being at a disadvantage. It is no wonder the F-86 Sabre is widely acknowledged along with the P-51 Mustang and the F-4 Phantom as one of the three great fighter aircraft in US history.