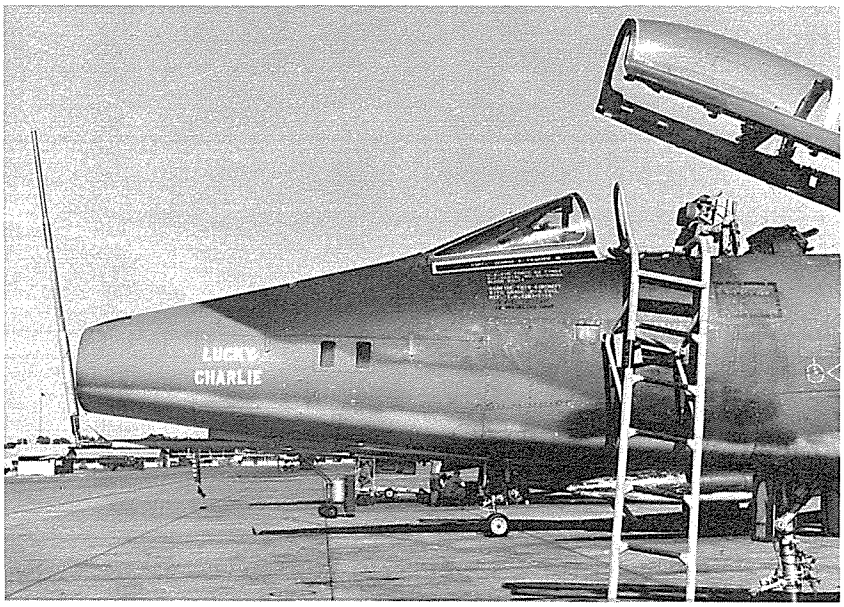
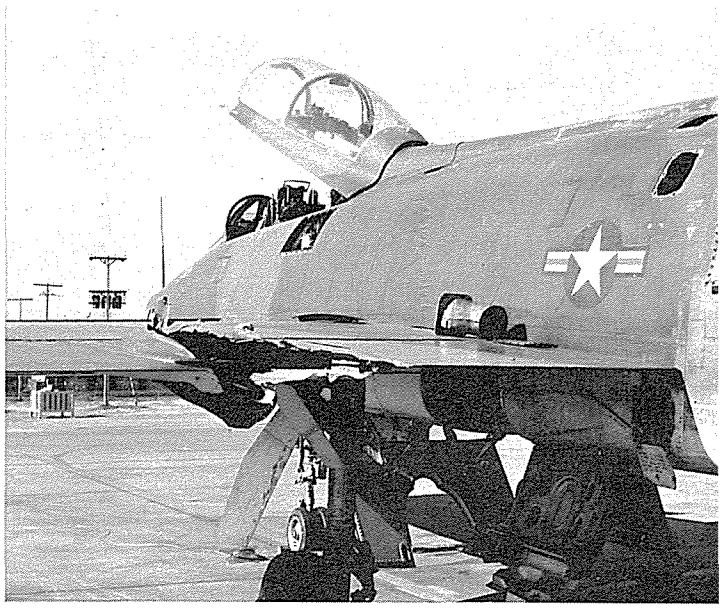




SOUTHEAST ASIA AIR OPERATIONS

After three years of combat in SouthEast Asia, Commando Sabre, more commonly known as "Misty FAC," ended operations on June 8, 1970. Commando Sabre pioneered the use of high speed jet fighters in the Forward Air Controller (FAC) role over highly defended areas where traditional slow FAC aircraft, such as the O-1 and the O-2, could not survive. The responsibility for this operation was assigned to Detachment 1 of the 416th Tactical Fighter Squadron in June 1967. The 416th TFS operated from Phu Cat AB, Viet Nam, as a unit of the 37th Tactical Fighter Wing until May 1969 when it was transferred to the 31st TFW at Tuy Hoa AB.

Flying two-seat F-100F's and using the call sign "Misty," Commando Sabre's mission was "to conduct visual reconnaissance and control strike operations, with the objective of interdicting the flow of enemy logistics and destroying his capability to fight." Secondary tasks included "suppressing enemy anti-aircraft artillery defenses, conducting rescue combat air patrol over downed aircraft and personnel, and providing photo reconnaissance of their area of interest."

A typical Misty mission, flown by a single F-100F, would usually entail several aerial refuelings from a KC-135A tanker. Between refuelings the Misty would sweep his assigned area of operations at low altitude searching for targets of opportunity such as vehicles, barges, flak or missile sites, almost always while under intensive ground fire. After locating several targets the Misty would contact the Airborne Battlefield Command & Control Center (ABCCC) by radio and request strike fighters.

The ABCCC, an orbiting C-130 on station 24 hours a day, would then divert airborne strike fighters to rendezvous with the Misty FAC. These rendezvous would take place at a specific "Delta" point designated by the Misty and located near the target. Delta points were selected to cover all areas controlled by the enemy and each one had a specific number, "i.e. Delta 42." When the strike fighters were in visual contact with the Misty, he would mark the target with white phosphorus rockets and then control the attack by radio.

The pilots who flew these challenging missions were all highly qualified strike pilots and volunteers for the Misty program. During three years in SEA, 160 pilots flew over 21,000 combat hours. The success of the pioneering Misty FAC program led to the activation of several other high speed FAC programs. Some of these were:

"Wolf" FAC, 8th TFW, Ubon AB, Thailand (F-4D)
"Stormy" FAC, 366th TFW, DaNang AB, Viet Nam (F-4D)
"Tiger" FAC, 388th TFW, Korat AB, Thailand (F-4E)

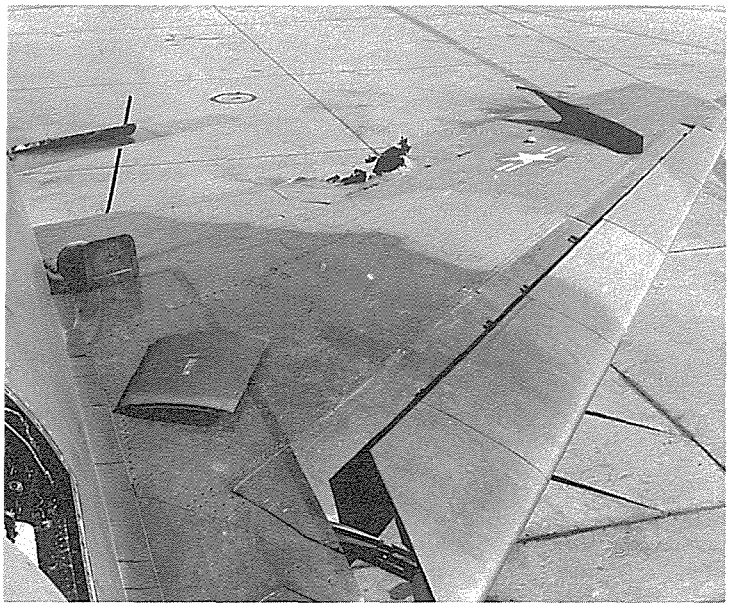
The Marine Corps had a similar program, using two-seat TA-4's, which was also highly successful.

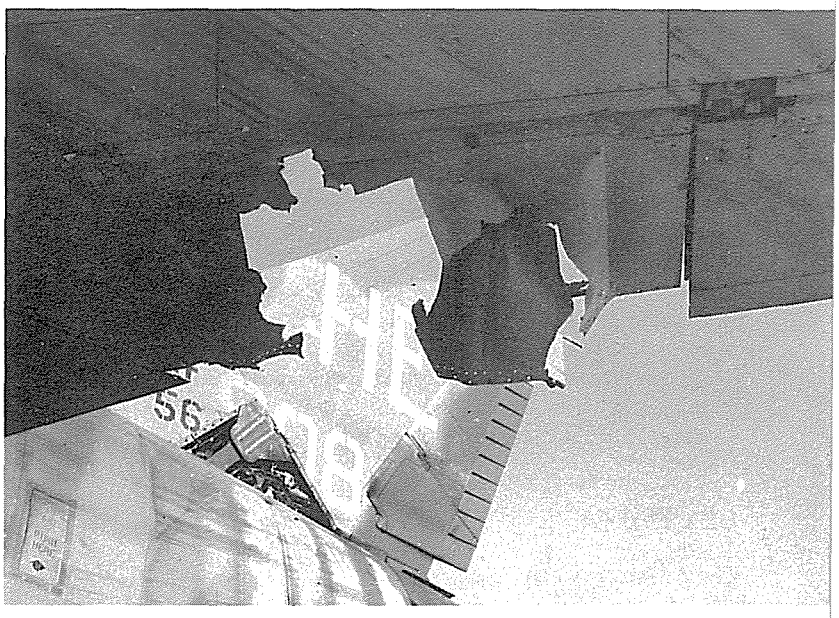
REFERENCES

1. "Aerospace World." *AIR FORCE and SPACE DIGEST,* July 1970, page 22.
2. Interview with Captain Gregg O. Parker USAF, a former Misty pilot now stationed at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, July 1970.
3. Author's observations based on several F-4 combat missions flown under the control of Misty FAC's in SEA June 1968-May 1969.

RESPONSE TO A HOSTILE CRISIS

Ten Air National Guard (ANG) tactical fighter squadrons and three tactical reconnaissance squadrons were mobilized in the aftermath of the North Korean seizure of the intelligence collection ship U.S.S. PUEBLO in January 1968.





By ALBERT C. PICCIRILLO

PART TWO — COMMANDO SABRE

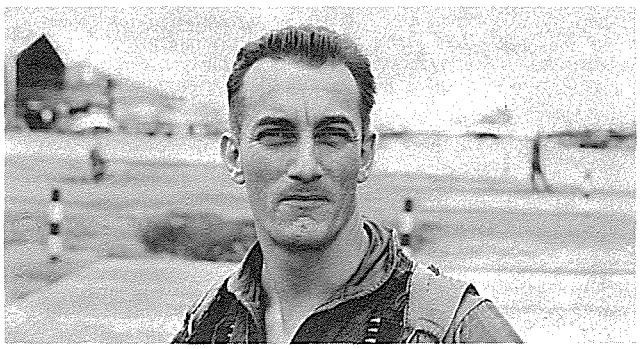
Nine of these squadrons saw overseas service during the mobilization period. Four ANG F-100C squadrons (the 120th, 136th, 174th, and 188th TFS's) were based in Viet Nam. Their pilots, plus ANG pilots assigned to the USAF's F-100D equipped 355th TFS, flew over 30,000 sorties for a total of more than 50,000 combat flying hours during their eleven month tour of duty in SE Asia. Two ANG F-100C squadrons (the 127th and 166th TFS's) were based in Korea. All three TRS's flying RF-101G/H's spent three- and four-month periods of temporary duty at Itazuke AB, Japan during their period of mobilization.

Distinctive Unit Identification Markings, in the form of two 24 inch tall letters carried on the vertical tailfin, were applied in accordance with TAC Regulation 66-12 following the call up. The F-100 C in the accompanying photos carries these markings which are typical for an aircraft belonging to a mobilized ANG unit. These photos were taken by the author from an F-4D in December 1968 during a flight from Clark AB, Phillipines, to the SE Asian mainland. Mixed aircraft formations were fairly common procedure for long overwater delivery flights and individual aircraft continued on to their respective bases once safely over the mainland.

Unit	State	Mobilization Date	Demobilization Date	Tail Code	Airplane Type
138TFS	NY	May 68	DEC 68	CS	F-86H
104TFS	MD	May 68	Dec 68	CT	F-86H
119TFS	NJ	Jan 68	Jun 69	XA	F-100C
121TFS	DC	Jan 68	Jun 69	XB	F-100C
121TFS	DC	Jan 68	Jun 69	XD	F-100C
174TFS	Iowa	Jan 68	Jun 69	HA	F-100C
136TFS	NY	Jan 68	Jun 69	SG	F-100C
188TFS	NM	Jan 68	Jun 69	SK	F-100C
120TFS	Colo	Jan 68	Jun 69	VS	F-100C
127TFS	Kan	Jan 68	Jun 69	BP	F-100C
166TFS	Ohio	Jan 68	Jun 69	BO	F-100C
154TFS	Ark	Jan 68	Dec 68	RB	RF-101G/H
165TFS	Ky	Jan 68	Jun 69	RG	RF-101G/H
192TFS	Nev	Jan 68	Jun 69	RJ	RF-101G/H

REFERENCES:

1. "The Air National Guard," Air Force and Space Digest, September 1969. pp. 169-171.
2. TAC/DOFT Message, 10 July 1968, Subject: "Distinctive Unit Aircraft Identification Markings."
3. TAC Regulation 66-12, Marking of Aerospace Vehicles, 8 Feb. 1968.
4. Correspondence, various, Tom Brewer (IPMS) to author, 1970.



Hazards of the "Misty FAC" operation shown by LUCKY CHARLIE'S damage. F-100F-10-NA, 56-3908, with pilot's name, Capt. George A. Franzer, white letters on black rectangle outlined in white. LUCKY CHARLIE in white letters. Wing trailing edge was caused by 37 mm flak. Repairs such as this were made in the field at the squadron base by ground crews, and the "down time" used to good advantage for other maintainence. Above right, tail code "HE" is viewed through flak damage. (Photos by author)
At right, the author, Albert C. Piccirillo.