

27 FIS Advance Party to Loring AFB Maine

By Frank Champlin



I was with the 27th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Loring AFB, Limestone, Maine. One of 13 sent as advanced party to prepare Loring for the 1st F-106. I arrived sept 17, 1959. Was ranking member, as airmen 2nd, due to test scores coming out of school for the 106 at McGuire AFB.

They gave us blue id cards, labeled ADC, (air defense command), which went over like a ton of rocks at a sac base. But those blue ids got us what we wanted, even having to make a few phone calls. I got so many truckloads of parkas and toolboxes and other items from base supply, they put me in charge at base supply for the 27th. That lasted about a month then our first 106 was brought in by squadron Commander col. Stewart.

Upon landing his throttle was stuck at 20%. I was contacted, asked for procedures, told him to burn the brakes, but not to pop the drag chute till he got it slowed down. It was a hot landing but replaced the brakes.

Our new hanger was not ready because they installed F-102 equipment that was to go to Bangor, Maine. We were put in the famous arch hanger with a B-52 until the hanger was ready.

We flew the hell out of those aircraft, a lot of extreme cold weather, to the point of closing down the flight line for safety. We always had the 4 armed ready to go in the alert hanger.

My greatest pleasure at Loring with 106's was taking the aircraft to the trim pad to run those engines. Hooking up those cables and watching that plane fly while tied down was my pleasure.

Because of the huge back up of old NCOs prior to Vietnam, no one could get promotions. They wanted me to stay, but the deal was a stripe or I was leaving. I loved working on the aircraft, but that was not to be. Three months after I left, the 27th got a unit citation and most everyone got a stripe. It was not to be for me.

We were on the Canadian border, meet a young lady the day I arrived at Loring, we have been married for 62 years. Still living 12 miles from the end of the runway that is now defunct. The 2nd longest runway of the east coast, what a waste. I could go on for hours on this subject.

Take care and keep flying.