

## 149th Fighter Wing 70 years

Seventy years is a long time, it don't seem that long ago to me; to me, that was the best days of the Guard cause we were a small unit; everybody knew everybody else, including their families, kids, and everything. Two of our pilots shoot down MIG aircraft, which was the North Korean's aircraft, and that was an accomplishment cause the F-84 was definitely not a high-speed aircraft. To give you an idea of the equipment we had back then, I use a bicycle to run up and down the flight line cause we didn't have a vehicle.

I retired in 79 at they were just getting the F-4 when I retired.

(Music)

My experience with working for the Guard flying air plains and so forth, I found out that everything works real good when the morale is high. And if I wanted to give advice to anybody, for commanders on down, "Work every day on improving the moral, and if you do that, everything else is a breeze."

The formation of today's 149th Fighter Wing actually traces back to 1943 when the 396th Tigher Squadron was Activated and served honorable during World War Two. After the War, most Guard Units were given the lineage of similar World War Two Combat units. In keeping with this tradition, the 396th Fighter squadron was inactivated and redesignated the 182nd Fighter Squadron. On October 6th, 1947, the 182nd won federal recognition and was given a fighter bomber mission. Members were ordered to active duty during the Korean Conflict and equipped with F-84E thunder jets. Besides assisting in bombing, rocketing, and strafing communist rail lines, the 182nd lent its support to B-29 Bomb raids. The unit experienced many firsts during this time. It was the first air national guard Arial combat unit since world war two, the first to destroy a MIG-15 in air combat and the first to use aerial refueling technics under combat conditions. In 1955 the unit got a taste of Hollywood when members provided F-51 planes to be used in the movie Battle Hymn starring rock Huston, about a Korean War mustang pilot. In 1956 the unit received its first delivery of F-80s and soon moved from Brooks Air Force Base to Kelly Air

Force Base to use buildings. To use buildings originally occupied during World War Two. The F-86 saber jet replaced the F-80 as the unit plane 1958, and in June of 1960, the unit received the other set of aircraft F-102's. The following month on July 1st, the unit was reorganized as the 149th Fighter Group, with the 182nd now a component of the group. In 1969 the 149th received its first delivery of F-84s after retiring the 102's, but the following year, an attack aircraft had arrived from England, the F-100 Super Saber. Ten years later, when the unit began its conversion to the F-4 Phantom, it also took on a mission of tactical air support of maritime operations; this meant the 149th was the only Air Force unit Trained to flu over the ocean and sink ships, a mission typically reserved for the Navy. In 1999 the 149th Fighter Wing became a formal training unit for Guard, Reserve and active-duty F-16 pilots. After changing operations from Air Combat Command to Air Education and Training Command. Today the 149th is an F-16 training unit with a worldwide mobility commitment. It's mission is to produce the finest Airman for global engagements and domestic operations while supporting its families and serving its communities. Its members are known as the Lone star Gunfighters and consist of both traditional and full-time air guard members as well as Texas state employees. Because its Guard men and women swear allegiance to the United States and the State of Texas, they must accomplish their state mission in conjunction with their federal responsibility. When activated by the governor, the 149th fighter wing joins forces with its geographically separated units and other Air and Army Guard units around the state. This joint task force can deploy rapidly whenever and where ever needed, responding to hurricanes and other disasters by providing food, water, and medical support for thousands of Texans living in disaster-ravaged areas; the unit's motto boasts having exceptional airmen deliver uncompromised excellence and mission dominance.

"We are the one 149th Fighter Wing!"