

IV. ALL-WEATHER L

THE L (Fiscal Year 1958)

Sunrise to sunset active air defense with the day-fighter F-86E SABRE JET was fine, but what about air defense protection at night? The 109th AC&W Sq scanned the skies 24 hours a day at Punamano AFS, but what about the significant areas of approaches to the island of Oahu which were "blanked out" by the mountains? USAF programmed the fighter squadron to have the F-86L all weather fighter interceptor SABRE JET and the 169th AC&W Sq was to commence 24 hour active air defense at Koko Crater AFS. There was *some* lead time for implementation planning, and the HANG made the most of it.

Conversion from the day-fighter E to the all weather fighter L presented some good-sized headaches; the new engine had an afterburner, and space was inadequate in the Engine Shop; the L had a drag chute, and the HANG needed a larger parachute building; Supply had to secure some 7,000 new line items and plan to dispose of some 5,000 E line items; the L \$405,000 Flight Simulator was too big for the present Link Trainer building (Hickam moved out a C-97 Flight Simulator and provided the HANG space in their Flight Simulator building), etc. The L had a much more elaborate fire control system (lots of "little black boxes"!). The armament was 2.75 inch "Mighty Mouse" air-to-air folding fin rockets instead of cal. .50 machine guns with which the HANG was



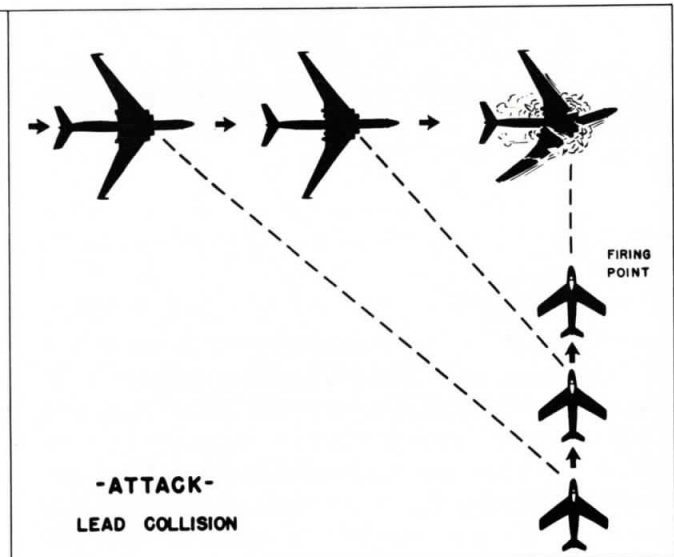
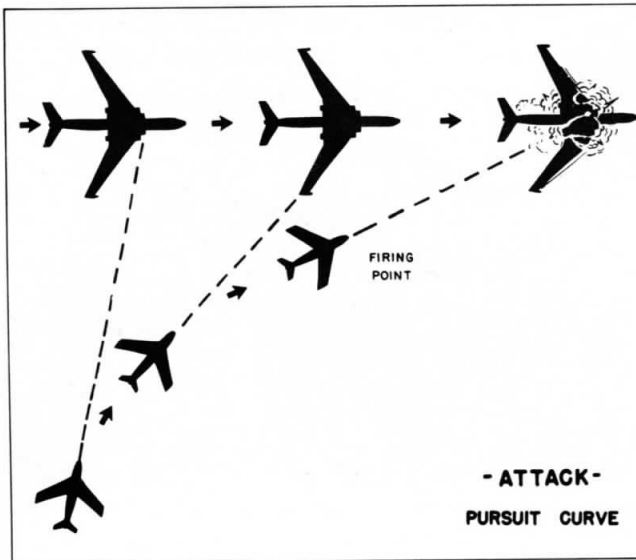
very familiar. Changes in manning documents from day to all-weather fighter didn't occur until the middle of the next fiscal year. This caused numerous mal-assignments.

The pilots had to learn not only about the intricate systems of the new aircraft but also new tactics—"lead collision" instead of the familiar "pursuit curve". Head in the Bucket, son! Oh yes, there could be no stand-down of E active air defense during the conversion period . . .

Mobile Training Detachment F-86-6 arrived in Nov 1957 and began to conduct classes on the L systems. Factory technical representatives were provided for a year: North American Aviation Co., (aircraft), General Electric Co., (engine), Lear Inc., (auto pilot), and Engineering Research Corp., (flight simulator).

The 169th AC&W Sq was currently busy installing a new Search Radar (FPS-8) and allied equipment at Koko Crater AFS. The Sand Island facility was abandoned and the station of the 169th AC&W Sq became solely Koko Crater AFS 15 Dec 1957. The 169th commenced 24 hour active air defense 1 Feb 1958.

F-86Ls began to arrive 5 Feb 1958 and were rapidly





SEA LIFT BY JEEP CARRIER. Arrival of the cocooned F-86Ls at Pearl Harbor aboard the USS Windham Bay.

“de-cocooned”. Pacific Air Forces provided three well qualified all weather jet pilots to assist in the checkout of 199th pilots (Maj George R. Duncan was the first HANG pilot to transition into the L). The all-weather L replaced the day-fighter E on sunrise to sunset active air defense Alert 1 May 1958 with NAFAR sight capability only (24 hour Alert was commenced five months later). The Chief of the National Guard Bureau sent a TWX stating “the most rapid and best conversion yet...” The E’s were phased out 30 May 1958.

During this fiscal year there was an infusion of new pilots, the last large group sent to USAF flying schools to “win their wings”: 1st Lt John S. Carroll, 2d Lts Thomas A. Haine, Lloyd T. Hiraoka, Charles F. Johnston, George E. Kuroda, Marlin L. Little, Carl T. Nakamura, Edward V. Richardson, C. Hutton Smith, and Melvin E. Souza. Maj Russell L. Smith was the first HANG pilot to attain the rating of Command Pilot (3,000 hours and 15 years of pilot service). Capt Lorenz L. Kumeilike was awarded the 7th Air Force Aerial Gunnery Trophy.

All HANGmen contributed to the Arizona Memorial Fund Drive which helped make possible the erection of a permanent shrine on the submerged hull of the U.S.S. Arizona at Pearl Harbor.

Summer camp, 21 June-5 July, was held at the various home stations of HANG units. Pacific Air Forces conducted a Practice Mobilization Test at 0300 on the first day (72.5% assembled within two hours), performed an Annual General Inspection during the encampment, and tested initial conversion capabilities with an Operational Readiness Evaluation. All units were deemed Satisfactory... only four months following receipt of the new aircraft which required new tactics to employ as a weapon.

The 199th appointed Mr. Arthur P. Harris as an honorary member of the squadron, “always in good standing”, on 27 June 1958. This was “heartily con-

curred in” by Col Valentine A. Siefermann (Asst AG, Air) and Maj Gen F. W. Makinney (AG). Mr. Harris headed Hickam’s Reclamation Yard and provided inestimable assistance. The citation read in part: “As he has spent sleepless nights assisting in moving Squadron aircraft to and from locations in Honolulu for displays, aviation cadet drives, christening, etc., and has cheerfully moved such traffic signs as impeded passage, . . . and . . . as from time to time, especially during the initial states of conversions, support from his Reclamation Yard has enabled the Squadron to operate . . .”

The fast and furious pace of this fiscal year resulted in flying 6,854 jet hours—the tactical pilots averaged 201 flying hours. The AC&W squadrons plotted some 71,000 tracks and provided 55 assists to aircraft in trouble or “uncertain of their position”. The HANG was at 96.6% strength compared to authorization documents, 156 attended service schools, and the re-enlistment rate was 87.6%. Average drill attendance was 95%, and 98% attended annual field training.

The National Guard Bureau advised at the close of the fiscal year that the abbreviation “HANG” was out, and “HAFNG” was in. This met with some resistance from HANGmen . . .

ALL WEATHER TRAINING (Fiscal Year 1959)

The name of the game this fiscal year was train, train, train.

All tactical pilots were checked out in the L by 6 July 1958. All were qualified to fly the L using visual pursuit curve tactics, but none were qualified



DAY VERSUS ALL WEATHER. F-86E, Maj George R. Duncan, and F-86L.