

McChord Air Museum



McChord AFB's First F-106's 1959



McChord AFB's First F-106's in 1959

Written by the McChord Air Museum

www.mcchordairmuseum.org

Today Jan 22, 2021 we highlight an F-106 related “first” and “last” for our McChord Air Museum’s Flashback Friday Feature.

In the last years of the Eisenhower era, the box office hit “Some like it Hot” starring Marilyn Monroe premiered in New York in the last week of March 1959. One year later, McChord would be the location for its own “premiere” with the arrival of two wasp waist (often described as a “Coke bottle” or “Marilyn Monroe” shaped) starlets – F-106A Delta Dart interceptors, (s/n 59-0050 & 59-0051) flown in straight from the Convair Factory. The two aircraft would make up a force of “Ultimate Interceptors” fielded by the 325th Fighter Wing tasked with protecting the airspace of the Northwest.

As a reminder that the day to day flying in fighter aircraft could be just as dangerous as facing your adversary in an air-to-air battle, F-106 # 050 was lost after a landing accident at McChord in April of 1964. Thankfully the pilot survived, which brings another reminder - a saying in aviation “any landing you can walk away from is a good one!”

The other of McChord’s F-106 “originals” #051 left McChord in a less tragic sense The aircraft would soldier on at the base participating in many of the wings exercises and deployments with the 325 Fighter Wing and 318th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron until leaving for the final time becoming a “Red Bull” with a transfer to the 87th FIS in July of

1970. The aircraft would serve with the Red Bulls for the remainder of her career until her retirement to the "Boneyard" on August 22, 1985, where she spent the next 8 years until her final assignment.

On July 29, 1993, #051 awoke from her lengthy sleep and flew to Illinois where many F-106's before her went in preparation for their last assignment - a move from the hunter to the hunted as a Full Scaled Target Drone, the 255 and last to do so.

In some cultures, 8 is a lucky number – and it was for # 051. The aircraft flew for 8 years as a QF-106 drone before being deemed expendable. With the peace time adversary of the F-106, the F-4 Phantom, next up for the drone program knocking at the door, the QF-106's days were numbered.

On January 28, 1998 McChord's first F-106 became the last (Q) F-106 drone to be shot down, on a NULLO "Not Under Live Local Operation" mission at the hands of an AIM-9M Sidewinder.

In the first photo below we see F-106A 59-0051 showing the classic lines of the F-106 shortly after her transfer to the 87th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron before the squadron adopted the famous "Red Bull" tail flash. The "0" before the serial number was the method used at the time to identify an aircraft that has been in service over 10 years.



In the second photo below as the "hunter" - #051 is pictured on the taxiway at Tyndall AFB during the 1984 William Tell Weapons Meet.



In the third photo below #051 is seen in the Boneyard in 1993, the white material, called Spraylat, seals aircraft from dust, sunlight, and high temperatures.



In the fourth photo below it is shown as a QF-106 and re-designated as "AD255" - #051 pictured after the QF-106 Conversion Crew from AEL Inc., East Alton, IL accomplished her drone conversion. (Courtesy of <https://www.f-106deltadart.com/>)

Here it is pictured back at Tyndall AFB FL with its tail and wingtips painted red to assist in the identification of drones. Drones are flown "manned" for a number of missions before they are flown by remote control.

