

Wildcats Meet the

The New Hampshire ANG boosts its power through a new association with active duty airmen.

Photography by Ted Carlson



Ugly Babies



An F-16 from the Vermont Air National Guard takes on fuel from a New Hampshire Guard KC-135 during a training mission in the skies over New England.

Total Force integration brings active duty, Air National Guard, and Reserve units together to maximize efficiency. Last October, the New Hampshire ANG began receiving personnel through an active-associate arrangement in which active duty airmen are assigned to a Guard or Reserve base. In this case, active duty airmen of the 64th Air Refueling Squadron (McConnell AFB, Kan.) are stationed with the 133rd Air Refueling Squadron at Pease International Tradeport ANG, N.H. This linkup of the 133rd—known as the “Wildcats”—and the 64th, known as the “Ugly Babies”—has become a closely watched experiment. [1] A Boeing KC-135R comes in for a landing at Pease. [2] One of the 157th Air Refueling Wing’s KC-135s delivers fuel to a KC-10 from JB McGuire, N.J. The 157th is the parent unit of the 133rd ARS.



[3] MSgt. Erik White (l) and SSgt. Thomas Michaud, of the 157th Security Forces Squadron, stand watch at Pease. [4] The tail of Stratotanker No. 62-3515 at Pease. The KC-135s are old, but they have been well-maintained and frequently upgraded.



[1] SSgt. Jason Inglis observes from the ground as other airmen prepare to work on the vertical stabilizer of one of the Wildcats' KC-135s. **[2]** View from the cockpit of a Vermont Air Guard F-16 as it approaches the boom in a mission over New Hampshire. **[3]** View of the flight line and parking ramp at Pease. **[4]** A KC-135 of the 157th

ARW is readied for its next mission. The integration plan will increase use of the eight tankers shared by the 157th ARW and the 64th ARS, by bolstering the traditional Air Guard staffing with full-time active duty airmen. **[5]** TSgt. Paul Burke directs a KC-135 at Pease. Guard bases are attractive homes for Total Force ar-

rangements because highly experienced Air Guardsmen tend to make good mentors for younger active duty airmen.

[1] TSgt. Christie Rouleau flies the boom toward an approaching KC-10 during a refueling mission. **[2]** Maj. Scott Sigfried of the Vermont Guard's 158th Fighter Wing brings his F-16 in for fuel over New England. **[3]** View of a KC-135's boom. **[4]** The KC-135R has been upgraded many times, such as with the modern engines visible here. A pair of the Vermont F-16s trail the Stratotanker. **[5]** TSgt. Mark Brophy, boom operator, works at the navigator's station aboard a KC-135R.





[1] SSgt. Edward Chaison (l) and TSgt. John Sequin secure a KC-135 after a mission. **[2]** The business end of a Stratotanker. **[3]** MSgt. Michael Viera inspects a KC-135 engine in preparation for another refueling mission. **[4]** In the tower, A1C Andrew Parla (foreground), MSgt.

David Pinard, and A1C Joseph Yahnia (with binoculars) manage the airspace. **[5]** The crew returns after a successful day spent delivering fuel. From left are Rouleau, MSgt. Mike Dunlap, Capt. Ryan Jones, Capt. Wiley Semrau, and Capt. Toby Pelenz. This blended crew consisted of

enlisted Guardsmen and active duty pilots.

[1] A C-17 from Dover AFB, Del., refuels over New Hampshire. **[2]** In the hangar at Pease, SSgt. Owen Murray inspects the outboard spoiler assembly. **[3]** The KC-135 boom operator's view of a JB McGuire KC-10 crew in flight. **[4]** Once all the additional crewmen have arrived to fly and maintain Pease's KC-135s, such as this one, there will be approximately 130 active duty airmen participating in the base's Total Force initiative. **[5]** Jones (l) and Pellenz, active duty pilots, in the cockpit of a Guard tanker. The venerable KC-135s have received upgraded cockpit displays, auxiliary power units, navigation systems, and other enhancements to keep them viable.





1



2



3



4

[1] The increased manning of the Total Force integration arrangement ensures the Air Force will get the most out of its ancient KC-135s, which will not ride off into the sunset any time soon. [2] A KC-135R comes in for a landing. [3] Airspace controllers SrA. Ray Miller (rear), A1C Jacob Richards (center), and A1C Elizabeth Gray monitor the radars on base. [4] ANG tankers were not being flown as frequently, so adding active duty personnel at Pease and other active-associate locations allows the Air Force to increase its utilization rates. The Guard averages about 350 hours on each KC-135 airframe per year, while the active duty ute rate is closer to 800 hours. The tankers may date to the Kennedy Administration, but the hard work and professionalism of their crews will ensure their value for years to come. ■