Runway Finished . . Planes Return . . Kingsley Field Back On First Line Status

Completion of runway reconstruction last week and the return of Kingsley Field aircraft and men this week means that the base will soon be back on its status as a first line Air Defense Command base.

Kingsley F101-B "Voodoos" and their air and ground crews have been deployed for five months at McChord Air Force Base near Tacoma, Wash., during reconstruction of 9,000 feet of the 10,300-foot primary north-south runway.

A decision was made to lay a new base and resurface the runway after Air Force officials became aware of the pounding the strip was taking from the 25-ton "Voodoos." Cracks had begun to appear near touch down points and the sides of taxiways were beginning to cave in.

Three Spokane heavy construction companies combined to submit the low bid for the job. They were Carl Carbon Inc., N. A. Degerstrom Inc. and Crick and Sons. The bid was $1,619,734.

In addition to reconstruction of the main runway, the contract called for rebuilding of taxiways and the alert hangar apron at the north end of the field. Original target date for completion was Sept. 25.

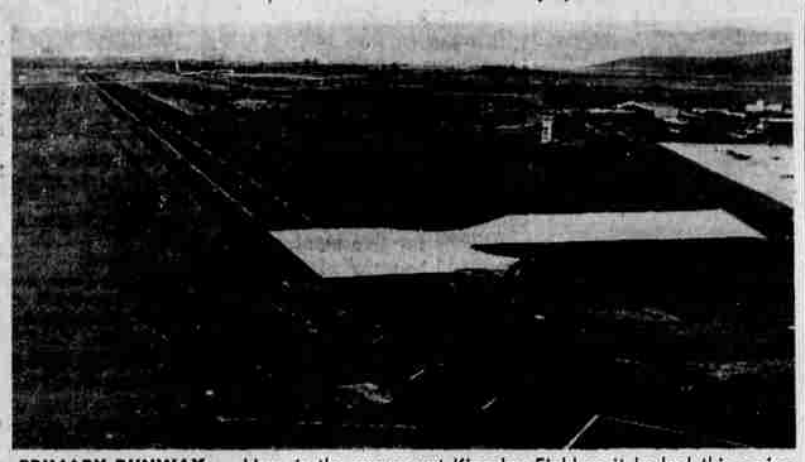
Air and ground crews from the 322nd Fighter-Interceptor Squadron and the 408th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron moved out to McChord in May and the project began. After falling behind schedule, the contractors worked extra shifts to catch up and almost made it in July before they became involved in a labor-management dispute.

The dispute started in Southwest Washington, when members of the Hoisting and Portable Engineers' Union struck about six heavy construction projects. Members of the Associated General Contractors began to lockout workers in the striking union and the dispute spread to Oregon.

At first the Kingsley project was declared an emergency but finally the contractors were pushed into the lockout on July 20 and work stopped for three weeks. Another delay was experienced with heavy rains in Mid-September and the job was finished about two and one-half weeks after the original deadline on Oct. 11.

Asphaltic concrete was poured four inches thick on a base of sand and crushed rock. The type of base construction varied depending upon conditions encountered in the old runway.

The newly resurfaced runway was a welcome sight to the fliers when they returned home early this week after five months in "exile." And the brand new, shiny black runway worked to perfection. It was plain that the men were glad to be back as Col. Rupert C. Welch led the formation on its return flight from McChord. And, from "Welcome Home" signs blossoming out all over town it was evident that Klamath Falls was glad to have them back again, sonic booms and all.



PRIMARY RUNWAY — Here is the runway at Kingsley Field as it looked this spring before being resurfaced. It is 10,300 feet long and runs north and south. The long airstrip is the only one of the base's runways that is usable by the F101-B jet interceptors, which require considerable distance in which to land and take off. The Federal Aviation Agency control tower is at the right.

DIRT AND ROCK —This is how the main runway at Kingsley Field looked on June 28, early in the reconstruction project concluded last week. A bulldozer in the background is scraping away sections of the old runway while dump trucks place new base materials, sand and crushed rock, on the airstrip. The old runway had begun to crack from constant pounding at the hands (or wheels) of the 25-ton F101-B "Voodoos".

A STRIP OF ASPHALT — Here is how the runway looked later in the project when crews of the Carbon, Crick and Degerstrom companies of Spokane began to lay asphaltic concrete. A four-inch-thick layer of asphalt was poured on a sand and crushed rock base along 9,000 feet of the 10,300-foot runway. Paving was delayed by September rains and the entire project was set back almost three weeks in July by a labor-management dispute which spread throughout the Northwest.

'Sonic Boom' Returns To Klamath With Jets

The return of F101-B "Voodoos" to Kingsley Field also means the return of the sonic boom—an essential part of the daily operations of Air Defense Command bases such as Kingsley.

Sonic booms are created by supersonic aircraft passing overhead faster than the speed of sound. They rarely do more than assault the ear drums.

If this man-made thunder were visible, it would look like two cones, one at the nose and one at the tail of the plane. These are shock waves that travel to earth at the speed of sound.

As each wave moves it is robbed of energy by friction of the air, a friction that is affected by physical obstructions such as temperature, humidity and clouds. Then, when the shock reaches the ground, the waves are further obstructed by mountains, buildings, fences and trees.

The two shock cones are so close they almost sound like a single clap of thunder to the observer. But the usual altitude of supersonic flights is above 30,000 feet, which means that the wave reaching earth will have lost most of its energy and will not possess the destructive force to damage even the flimsiest of buildings.

The Air Force, according to the Kingsley Field information office, is doing and will continue to do all within its power to reduce the impact of this noisy problem. At Kingsley Field, however, planes must take off daily to invade the airspace above the Pacific Northwest. Most supersonic flights are made over the ocean or desolate areas and few are to be expected over the Klamath Falls area.

Sonic booms have been termed the "sound of security" and that sound is returning to Southern Oregon.

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