

102nd RESCUE SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

1st Aero Company activated 1 Nov 1915

Inactivated 23 May 1917

102nd Aero Squadron organized 23 Aug 1917

Demobilized 1 May 1919

102nd Squadron activated 17 Nov 1921

Redesignated 102nd Observation Squadron 25 Jan 1923

102nd Observation Squadron and 102nd Aero Squadron consolidated, 1936

Ordered to active service, 15 Oct 1940

Redesignated 102nd Observation Squadron (Light), 13 Jan 1942

Redesignated 102nd Observation Squadron, 4 Jul 1942

Redesignated 102nd Reconnaissance Squadron (Bombardment), 2 Apr 1943

Redesignated 102nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 11 Aug 1943

Disbanded, 15 Apr 1944

Reconstituted, 21 Jun 1945

Redesignated 102nd Bombardment Squadron (Light), and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946

Activated, 30 Nov 1947

Redesignated 102nd Bombardment Squadron (Medium), May 1951

Redesignated 102nd Bombardment Squadron (Light), 1 Dec 1952

Redesignated 102nd Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 15 Jun 1957

Redesignated 102nd Aeromedical Transport Squadron, Sep 1958

Redesignated 102nd Air Transport Squadron (Heavy), 1 Jan 1963

Redesignated 102nd Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1966
Redesignated 102nd Air Refueling Squadron, 17 Sep 1969
Redesignated 102nd Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 2 Dec 1972
Redesignated 102nd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 14 Jun 1975
Redesignated 102nd Air Rescue Squadron, 1 Oct 1989

102nd Air Rescue Squadron and 1st Aero Company consolidated, 1 Feb 1991, retained 102nd Air Rescue Squadron designation.

Redesignated 102nd Rescue Squadron

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX, 23 Aug 1917
Garden City, NY, 3-23 Nov 1917
Winchester, England, 9 Dec 1917-9 Jan 1918
St Maixent, France, 16 Jan 1918
Tours, France, 2 Mar 1918-Mar 1919
Garden City, NY, 19 Apr-1 May 1919
Hempstead, NY, 17 Nov 1921
Miller Field, NY, 4 Nov 1922
Ft McClellan, AL 26 Oct 1940
San Bernardino, CA, 22 Dec 1941
Ontario, CA, 31 May 1942
Laurel, MS, 11 Nov 1942
Esler Field, La, 30 Mar 1943
Abilene AAFld, TX, 11 Sep 1943
Esler Field, LA, 13 Nov 1943
Thermal AAFld, CA, 11-15
Floyd Bennett Field, NAS Brooklyn, NY
March AFB, CA
Floyd Bennett Field, NAS Brooklyn, NY
Suffolk County Airport, Westhampton Beach, NY, Jun 1970

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 23 Aug 1917-Mar 1918
Second Aviation Instruction Center, Mar 1918-Mar 1919
Unkn, Mar-1 May 1919
New York NG (divisional aviation, 27th Division), 17 Nov 1921
Second Corps Area, 16 Oct 1940
VII Army Corps, Nov 1940
II Air Support Command, 1 Sep 1941
71st Observation Group, 1 Oct 1941 (attached to 69th Observation Group from Dec 1941)
69th Observation (later Reconnaissance; Tactical Reconnaissance) Group, 29 Mar 1942
76th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 5-15 Apr 1944

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

JN-4H

TW-3

FT-1,

BT-1,

O-11,

O-17

O-38B

O-46A

O-47A,

O-47B

BC-1A

O-52, 1942

O-57, 1941

L-4B

P-39, 1943

P-39N

P-39Q

A-20C,

B-25,

L-5,

P-40

P-40F

P-40R

P-47

F-86

F-94A

P-39N

F-94B

B-26B

B-26C

B-29A

T-33

C-119

MC-119J

C-97A

KC-97L,

F-102A, 1972-1975

TF-102A

HH-3E

HC-130H

HC-130P

HH-60G





COMMANDERS

Maj Kenneth P. Littauer, 17 Nov 1921-20 Oct 1923

Maj George A. Vaughn, 29 Oct 1923-10 Nov 1930

Maj Lawrence G. Brower, 12 Nov 1930-2 Oct 1940



Maj Victor E. Nelson (USAAC photo)

Maj Victor E. Nelson, 15 Oct 1940-Feb 1941

Unknown, Feb 1941-7 Dec 1941

LTC Kevin Reilly

HONORS

Service Streamers

Theater of Operations

Campaign Streamers

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM





On an Air Force blue disc, bordered Air Force golden yellow, a white cloud formation issuing from base, surmounted by a caricatured winged gray ape sailing through the air seated on a white stretcher, his face, ears, hands, and feet light gray, his eyes, wings spread in flight, stethoscope plugged in his ears, and stretcher handles, all Air Force golden yellow, his right hand holding on to his cap, his left hand grasping an Air Force blue medical bag, details white; a red cross on the ape's cap and on the medical bag; outlines and details Air Force blue throughout. (Approved, 28 Apr 1960)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 102nd Rescue Squadron traces its lineage to an "aeronautical corps" formed by aviation enthusiasts in the New York National Guard in April 1908. In 1910, the unit raised \$500.00 to finance its first aircraft. The investment was lost later that year when the airplane crashed on takeoff during maneuvers. In 1911, the Curtiss Aeroplane Company loaned the NY National Guard an aircraft and a pilot named Beckwith Havens. He later joined the unit as a private and was recognized as the National Guard's first aviator. In August 1912, Private Havens flew with the Regular Army in joint maneuvers.

The unit was officially formed in November 1915 as an unnumbered aviation detachment of the 1st Battalion Signal Corps under the command of Captain Raynal Bolling. The unit trained with JN4s on a field in Mineola, Long Island.

It became an actual aviation company when the 1st Aero Company, Signal Corps, NY National Guard was established on 1 November 1915. First Federal recognition as a constituted unit is traced from that time. The 1st Aero Company became the first National Guard aviation unit to be called into Federal service when it was federalized on 13 July 1916 for use in The Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa in northern Mexico. It did not embark for Texas but instead, remained in camp at Mineola, NY. It was mustered out of Federal service on 2 November 1916.

On November 18, 1916, aviators of the 1st Aero Company, NYNG, flying Curtiss JN-4 "Jennies" made the first mass cross-country flight in U.S. military aviation history. Twelve of the unit's aircraft flew from Mineola, NY to Princeton, NJ on the 18th and returned the next day. When the United States entered World War I all National Guard aviation units were dissolved. New York's 1st Aero Company was no different and it was disbanded on 23 May 1917. The founder of the unit, Captain Raynall Cawthorne Bolling (for whom Bolling AFB is named) and almost all of the members of the unit left the National Guard to join the Army Signal Corps Reserve and in May 1917 founded the 1st Aero Reserve Squadron. That unit was sent to France in August 1917.

This Air Service unit moved to England in December 1917 and to France in January 1918 where it served as a transportation and aircraft repair and maintenance unit with the AEF. It was demobilized at Garden City, NY, on 1 May 1919.

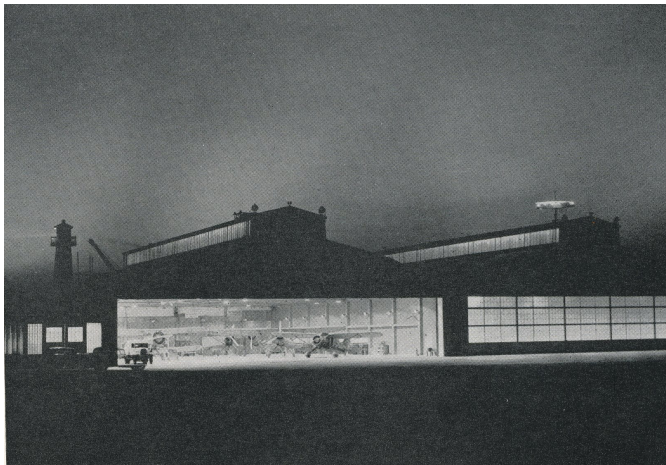
102nd Squadron (Observation) was constituted in the National Guard on 30 December 1920 as the assigned to the 27th Division, and allotted to the state of New York. Organized on 17 November 1921 from the Observation Squadron, New York National Guard (organized on 22 March 1921 at Hempstead, Long Island, NY, with personnel from K Company, 14th Infantry, New York National Guard). Concurrently Federally recognized at Hempstead. Inactivated on 3 September 1922 at Hempstead. Reorganized and Federally recognized on 4 November 1922 at Miller Field, Staten Island, NY. Redesignated as the 102nd Observation Squadron on 25 January 1923.

The 102nd Aero Squadron was made inactive after the World War and reactivated as the 102nd Observation Squadron in September 1923. Starting out with the need to give New York State a well balanced military unit, and the necessity of supplying the National Guard with an Air Corps unit, Brigadier General J. Lester, canvassed a group of World War Aces early in 1923, and sounded them out with the possibilities of organizing an observation squadron. They obtained governmental backing and secured the necessary field, hangars, airplanes and equipment. As the first leaders of this squadron, they secured Major George A. Vaughn and Major Kenneth P. Lettauer of the old Lafayette Flying Corps, both of whom fought through every action at the front in France. When the Squadron's roster of pilots was completed, it was found that among the men gathered were several World War aces. Records show that they had accounted for over fifty-five enemy planes officially, and many more unofficially.

That first Saturday afternoon's drill was a thrilling and daring spectacle to the crowds that gathered to watch the Squadron at practice. Airplanes and aviators were still sufficiently a novelty as to attract unusual attention, and since at least half the pilots present were pursuit fighters in the war, several impromptu aerial combats were staged which combined all the tricks that these men had learned overseas. At that time, it must be remembered, top speed of the planes of those days was one-hundred miles per hour, and the aerial acrobacy that the ships partook of, was sufficiently dangerous as to capture the imagination of the public. By using novel and modern recruiting methods, the Squadron presented forcibly to the minds of

young men the advantages to be derived from join-ing the unit: They could not fail to secure the recruits needed to build up the strength of the squadron, and ever since those days, the 102nd Observation Squadron has had a long list of waiting applicants, eager to enlist. It never had any trouble in getting the highest type of man for its personnel.

Operating from Miller Field, New Dorp, Staten Island, the Squadron soon came up to Air Corps standards. As the 27th Division Aviation Squadron, it has taken part in all of the Divisional maneuvers, and has also played many a dramatic public service roll as a search or first aid unit, where other means of transportation or aid has failed.



Miller Field, New York City. (USAAC photo)

In its years as a National Guard unit, it has given the lives of seven of its men. Upon induction the 102nd Observation Squadron was attached to the 27th Division and the squadron moved into its quarters at Reilly Field, Fort McClellan, Alabama. There under the direction of Major Nelson, it resumed its work of training.

The squadron, or elements thereof, was called up to perform the following state duties: to conduct reconnaissance for the Treasury Department of vessels conducting illegal-liquor trade off the New York-New Jersey coast in the 1920s; to support flood relief efforts in Vermont 6-16 November 1927; aid to civil authorities during a prison break at Auburn, NY, 11-12 December 1930, and for flood relief efforts in upstate New York 11-13 July 1935. Relieved on 15 February 1929 from assignment to the 27th Division. Concurrently attached to the 27th Division for command and control purposes. Assigned on 1 October 1933 to the 42nd Observation Group (II Corps). Conducted summer training at Pine Camp, NY, 1921-40 where it generally supported the training of the 52nd Field Artillery Brigade. Conducted annual summer training most years at Miller Field and Mitchel Field. Inducted into active Federal service 15 October 1940 at Miller Field, relieved from assignment to the 42nd Observation Group, and assigned to the VII Corps. Transferred to Fort McClellan, AL, and arrived there on 26 October 1940. Further assigned 1 October 1941 to the 71st Observation Group (VII Corps).

The Ardmore facility was designated, July 12, 1943, as a Martin "Marauder" B-26 Crew Training

Base. The 394th Bombardment Group's four squadrons, the 584th, (Captain Kenneth T. Wilhite, Squadron Commander); 585th, (Captain Edward B. Saxon); 586th, (Captain Joseph M. Silk) and 587th, (Captain Robert E. Keating), under command of Lt. Colonel Thomas B. Hall, were here during a brief period of five weeks before they were transferred, August 19, 1943, to Kellogg Field, Battle Creek, Michigan. They had previously been stationed at MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida since activation, March 3, 1943, and were involved with Phase Two crew training while at Ardmore. This involved local and distant training flights with simulated missions allowing all crew members to practice and improve their skills. Classroom instruction was also part of the program. At this time, no gunnery or bombing ranges were associated with the Ardmore field. It is reported that the 394th used a bombing range located in the Great Salt Plains area of northern Oklahoma as did other training units. The outlines of a German battleship, the Scharnhorst, and an oil refinery were used as simulated targets.

The 394th was assigned to the 9th Air Force at Boreham, England, March 11, 1944, and reassigned to Homsley South, July 24, 1944. From these bases and others in France and Holland in mid-to-late 1944 and 1945, the 394th built a reputation of being experts at destroying marshalling yards, railways, bridges and factories. By the end of WWII, 30 men of the unit had been lost to accidents, 180 killed in action, 59 prisoners of war, two missing in action, 40 wounded in action, 13 evadees, and 11 injured in action. Fast Forward Note: Colonel Hall, commanding officer, April 6, 1943 to January 24, 1945, survived WWII but died in action over North Korea, February 11, 1951.

The 102nd Bombardment Squadron (L) returned to state control once more at the end of World War II. On May 24, 1946, it was assigned to the newly formed 106th Bombardment Wing (L). The Wing was relocated to the naval air station at Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn, NY. The 106th Bombardment Wing received the lineage and honors from a World War II Army Air Forces unit, the 394th Bombardment Group (M), a 9th Air Force B-26 group that operated out of England and France.

The postwar years saw numerous mission and aircraft changes. When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, the entire 106th Bomb Wing returned to Federal service and was assigned to March AFB, CA. The Wing traded its B-26 for the B-29 in 1951. The Wing returned to New York State control in 1952. After returning to New York, the 106th Bomb Wing regained its light bombers and flew them until its conversion to an air defense fighter unit in 1956. It operated the T-33, the F-94 and the F-86. In 1959, the unit was again given a new mission and new aircraft when it became an airlift group equipped with the C-119. It operated as a general transport and aeromedical evacuation unit until being re-equipped with the C-97 in 1962.

In 1969, the Air Force closed Suffolk County Air Force Base; it remained vacant for less than a year when the Air National Guard relocated the 106th from its home of 24 years, Floyd Bennett Field to eastern Long Island.

In 1969, the C-97s were modified into the tanker version, the KC-97. The 106th flew this aircraft until 1972.

The 106th Air Refueling Group moved to Suffolk County Airport in 1970 and returned to the air defense community in 1972 when it received the Convair F-102 "Delta Dagger." Once again, the Wing's mission was short lived. The year 1975 would see a dramatic mission change for the 106th Fighter Interceptor Group, one that would have far reaching impact and long lasting significance for the unit, Long Island and the nation.

The 106th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group was the new name for the former fighter unit. The F-102s were replaced by HC-130 and the HH-3. The group's new home at Suffolk County Airport was ideally suited for the rescue mission along the eastern seaboard of the country. The 106th was now the only Air Force rescue organization in the northeastern portion of the United States.

14 June 1975. After Congress rejected a 1974 Department of Defense proposal to deactivate it and several other Air Guard outfits, New York's 102nd Fighter Interceptor Squadron was redesignated the 102nd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron effective this date. To accomplish its new combat rescue mission, the unit converted from F/TF-102As to HC-130H'Ps and HH-3Es.

27 December 1979. Responding to a call for help from a commercial sailing vessel, the John F. Leavitt, two HH-3 and paramedics from the New York Air Guard's 102nd Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron saved nine crewmen whose vessel was sinking in storm tossed Atlantic Ocean about 260 miles southeast of the unit's base at the Suffolk County Airport on Long Island. The HH-3s were refueled enroute shortly before sighting the sinking ship. All aircraft plus crewmen from the Leavitt and the Air Guardsmen returned safely to the Suffolk County Airport after the eight hour mission.

In October of 1991, a helicopter and HC-130 flew to a distressed sailboat about 250 miles south of Gabreski ANGB to recover the lone sailor. The helicopter and HC-130 dropped survival gear to the vessel, which was riding out the storm sufficiently and began their return journey to base. Both aircraft flew into wicked weather conditions and the helicopter was unable to take fuel in flight. The aircraft was forced to ditch in the Atlantic Ocean about 60 miles south of the base and the crewmembers were in the fight of their lives in what would later become known as the Perfect Storm. The mission was recounted both in the bestselling book and the major motion picture and both provided a fitting tribute to the only crewmember who was not recovered by the valiant efforts of the crew of Coast Guard Vessel Tamaroa. TSgt Arden "Rick" Smith, pararescuman (PJ), gave the ultimate sacrifice that day so "That Others May Live."

In 1993 the 106th Rescue Group was redesignated the 106th Rescue Wing. In 1994 it received national and international recognition when the aircrews and pararescuemen of the 102nd Rescue Squadron successfully completed the "longest over-water rescue with a helicopter in aviation history." In December 1994, the 106th Rescue Wing launched two HH-60s from Gabreski Airport on a mission that would take them to Halifax, Canada and then, 750 miles out over the Atlantic to search for survivors of the Ukrainian merchant vessel Salvador Allende.

After searching the sea, one survivor was spotted. By the time the two helicopters and their crews arrived over the search area, most of the ship's crew had perished. A merchant ship picked up one survivor. After searching the sea, TSgt James "Doc" Dougherty jumped into the water and retrieved the last living member of the crew, Alexander Taranov. The two helicopters then began the arduous seven-hour return flight to Halifax, Nova Scotia. During the 15-hour mission, the two helicopter crews were refueled in flight 10 times by the Wing's HC-130s.

10 December 1994. After nine mid-air refuelings, an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter and crew from the New York ANG's 102nd Rescue Squadron pulled a sailor from a sunken Ukrainian freighter out of 30-foot seas about 750 miles off the coast of Nova Scotia and returned him safely to shore.

The 106th Rescue Wing received national attention again in July 1996 when its aircraft and rescue personnel were the first unit on-scene after the TWA Flight 800 disaster. It assisted local, state and federal authorities for more than a week after that tragic event.

The 106th is a key part of the Total Force and supports Air Force contingency operations around the world. Since the end of the Gulf War, it has provided personnel and aircraft to support the Air Force mission in Operation Northern Watch in Turkey and Operation Southern Watch in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. In 2001, after the September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the 106th Rescue Wing went to the front lines in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the War on Terrorism. While supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, the Wing made its first two Combat Rescues by recovering Army soldiers trapped in the wreckage of a Chinook helicopter shot down near Fallujah in 2003.

The 106th Rescue Wing was tasked to provide rescue service to the City of New Orleans following the levee failure in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. Two rescue helicopters, a HC-130 airborne tanker and a Pararescue team deployed to Louisiana to assist in the massive recovery efforts underway. The helicopters worked both day and night using night vision goggles and forward looking infrared (FLIR) and fuel was provided in flight by the HC-130 tanker crews. The ability to be refueled in flight over New Orleans was a big advantage for the 106th since much of the ground refueling could not be done because of power outages and fuel trucks were overwhelmed by the demands of the recovery efforts.

The Pararescue teams (PJs) worked from the helicopters and were hoisted onto flooded rooftops to assist survivors in escaping from their devastated homes. The PJs were able to provide immediate medical assistance to those in need and clearly saved the lives of many who were in extreme medical danger. The teams also worked from inflatable Zodiac boats and moved from house to house in the flooded streets recovering survivors. Two weeks of effort resulted in 161 lives saved and became the largest single life saving event in the 31 year history of the 106th Rescue Wing.

An HH-60G deployed to Afghanistan from the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing at Francis S. Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach, N.Y., crashed Jan. 16 near Kabul

with no injuries to crew or passengers, the Long Island Newsday reported. The 106th RQW airmen were on a medical evacuation mission at the time of the incident. 2009

Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 29 Sep 2010

Updated: 30 Jan 2018

Sources

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The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

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