

# 121 WEATHER FLIGHT

## MISSION

## LINEAGE

121 Weather Flight

## STATIONS

Andrews AFB, MD

## ASSIGNMENTS

## COMMANDERS

## HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

## EMBLEM

## MOTTO

## NICKNAME

## OPERATIONS

*During 1946 the War Department authorized the District of Columbia National Guard to activate the following air units: the 113th Fighter Group HQ, the 113th Air Service Group HQ, Detachment "A" 113th Air Service Group, the 121st Fighter Squadron (SE) (meaning "single engine") and an Attached Utility Flight, the 121st Weather Station (Type A), and the 113th*

***Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron. These would be manned and equipped according to War Department Tables of Organization and Equipment.***

***When the DCANG reformed in 1946, Capt. Albert S. Dereskervich commanded the 121st Weather Squadron***

***During 1948, the 113th Fighter Group left for its second two-week summer encampment. It went to Dover AFB, DE from July 31 to August 14. The units attending were 121st Weather Station "Type A"; The commander of the 121st Weather Station was Capt. Doyne Sartor***

***The 1949 summer camp was at New Castle AFB in Wilmington. It began on August 13 when 600 officers and enlisted left for Delaware. The DCANG took 17 Thunderbolts, three B-26s, three C-47s and several training aircraft. The units involved were the 121<sup>st</sup> Weather Squadron,***

***On December 19,1950, by direction of the President and the Secretary of Defense, the 113th Fighter Wing Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, 121st Weather Station were ordered to active federal service at Andrews, as of February 1,1951. They were to serve for 21 consecutive months, or such other period as may be authorized by law, unless sooner relieved.***

The 121st Weather Flight was formed on July 7, 1953 when the Guard Bureau directed the 121st Weather Limited Forecasting Flight be organized on July 16, 1953. On August 19, 1953 Headquarters, DC ANG, directed the 121st Limited Forecasting Flight be organized as part of the DC ANG. The flight received federal recognition on September 15 at Andrews, with two officers and six airmen. It was attached to the 121st Fighter-Bomber Squadron for administrative, training and logistical support. During mobilization, the Weather Flight would transfer to the Air Force Weather

The units attending the 1954 camp were the 121st Limited (Weather) Forecasting Flight, commanded by 1 st Lt. George A. Wright

As of July 1,1955, the 121st Weather Limited Forecasting Flight was redesignated the 121st Weather Flight (Limited Forecasting).

The 121st Weather Flight's gaining command became the Military Air Transportation Service on July 27, 1961. The Flight was ordered to extended active duty on September 6,1961, during the Berlin Crisis, and assigned to the 3rd Weather Squadron, 2nd Weather Group, for 12 consecutive months. Later in October 1961, the flight was ordered to Niagara Falls Municipal Airport where they remained until deactivation in September 1962.

On November 27, 1962, the 121st Weather Flight (Limited Forecasting) was attached to the 113th for administrative and logistical support.

By December 1966, the 121st Weather Flight had 15 members. The flight was commanded by

Maj. William A. Vogel. Their duty was to gather data on the weather for training and advise the pilots of the Wing on weather conditions. Several members of the flight were graduate meteorologists.

The 121st Weather Flight was activated a second time on January 27, 1968. Three members went to Vietnam, and the others to Myrtle Beach.

As of June 18, 1969, the 113th was relieved from extended active duty with Tactical Air Command and returned to the District of Columbia National Guard. All members of the 121st Weather Flight returned to Andrews when the flight was deactivated in June.

The 121st Weather Flight was at Travis from August 8 to 22, and at Suffolk County AP, NY from July 11 to 25, 1970. When the 121st Weather Flight camped at Travis Field, Savannah, GA for annual field training, the unit served as the base weather facility. It provided operational weather support for assorted F-84 flights performing gunnery, air-to-air refueling, and cross-country missions. Additionally, the Weather Flight provided daily weather briefings to the Virginia Air Guard staff and to the pilots attending the instrument training school, and forecasting and observing service in support of local and transient flying activities. At the time, the unit was commanded by Lt. Col. William A. Vogel. Its primary mission was to train to operate as an independent weather flight, if mobilized, and provide forecasting and observing services. The Weather Flight supported the 113th and its subordinate units during unit training assemblies as well as Air National Guard tactical flying units during field training.

at Andrews from July 10 to 24, 1971 while the 121st Weather Flight performed its annual training at Tyndall AFB, FL with Detachment 9 of the 4th Weather Wing at Panama City. The experience working with this active base weather facility was extremely beneficial. The unit was cited by the commander of Detachment 9 for an outstanding performance. At the same time, the 231st held its annual training at Ft. Meade.

In January 1972, the 121st Weather Flight acquired a 21 foot long Mobile Meteorological Van, which was totally self-contained and supplied its own electrical power and supported an environmental control system. The unit then possessed 100% of its mobility equipment. The van, called an MMQ-2, came from a weather installation in Vietnam. The vans were supplied to the 39 National Guard weather flights throughout the United States. The two-person unit was valued at \$24,000. It carried one weather observer and one equipment repairman. The van could be transferred by air, truck or flatbed train. It was equipped with meteorological instruments which measured temperature, dew point, windspeed and direction, cloud bases, sea level pressure and altimeter setting. The 121st Weather Flight was the first Air National Guard weather flight to use the MMQ-2 at a field training encampment. Each observer had an opportunity to train and work with a maintenance technician operating the van.

From March 30 to April 1, 1974, the 121st Weather Flight provided weather information for the flying missions associated with the 113th's Operational Readiness Inspection. On April 1, the 121st Weather Flight (F-O) was redesignated the 121st Weather Flight, Mobile, with no change

in station or gaining command.

On June 15, 1974, the 113th deployed to Alpena for the first time in 14 years. Clear skies at the northern base permitted an outstanding flying program with 282 sorties and 453 hours flown. The annual training was held at Phelps-Collins until June 29. The 121st Weather Flight also performed annual training at Phelps-Collins. It provided weather support for the 113th and the 179th TFG of the annual training at Phelps-Collins. It provided weather support for the 113th and the 179th TFG of the Ohio ANG for F-105D and F-100 flying operations. Fourteen members of the flight trained at Alpena, with five members authorized to participate in field training activities during other periods.

The 121st Weather Flight (Mobile/Fixed) was redesignated on April 10, 1976 to the 121st Weather Flight (Fixed). There was no change in strength, station or command. This change was because the Air Weather Service and the National Guard Bureau agreed that because of the change in deployment concepts for weather flights, the "mobile" designation was no longer required.

By March 1977, members of the 121st Weather Flight had worked side-by-side for the past year with the active Air Force at the Andrews Weather Station. This was because the Weather Flight was part of the "Total Force" concept in the Air Force, enabling Air Guard members and Air Reservists to more readily assume these duties in an emergency. The 121st not only supported the Andrews Station, but also the Virginia Air Guard.

During 1977, the 121st Weather Flight was tasked to provide weather support at the Alpena, MI training site from June 15 to July 9. The unit supported ANG flying units from Indiana and Michigan in addition to supporting the 113th during its annual training encampment. The unit also provided training in weather observation procedures for aircraft controllers and ground control operators from various ANG units. Unit personnel had become proficient during the year using a sophisticated new piece of equipment, the COMEDS. This collected and disseminated weather and Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) data throughout the United States.

In June 1979, the 121st Weather Flight deployed to MacDill AFB, Tampa, FL. The flight augmented Detachment 32 of the 3rd Weather Squadron in the base weather station. The 121st Weather Flight participated in all phases of support to Detachment 32 in an outstanding demonstration of the Total Force Policy. The flight commander, Lt. Col. Falk Kantor, presented daily stand-up weather briefings to the commander of the 56th TFW and his staff.

Until the end of September 1979, the 121st Weather Flight provided information to the flying units of the DCANG and the Air Force. On October 1, the 121st Weather Flight, along with 37 out of 39 other ANG weather flights across the country, acquired an Army support mobility mission. The 121st Weather Flight was assigned to provide operational support, in the event of mobilization, to the 116th Infantry Brigade (Separate) of the Virginia Army National Guard, located in Staunton, VA. This required weather flight personnel to be proficient in Army mobility (field) operations and capable of providing tactical weather support to Army maneuver

units. This brought a major challenge for the flight because never before were they required to learn tactical survival. The survival skills were not without frustration, but, in the end, the flight did well with the training. It placed an emphasis on upgrading the flight's capabilities to provide tactical Army weather support.

The 121st Weather Flight accompanied the 116th Infantry Brigade to annual training at Ft. A.P. Hill, VA in 1980. On June 14, three officers and eight enlisted from the Weather Flight reported for annual training. The members acquired personal field gear and weapons, and underwent intensive training sessions for their proper use. The 121st Weather Flight then deployed to a field location for four days and nights of realistic tactical training. The Weather Flight underwent extensive Army mobility training. Members of the flight participated in training courses covering tactical communications, convoy procedures, site selection and tent erection, and map and compass familiarization. The 121st Weather Flight also provided instruction to brigade personnel on such subjects as weather hazards to helicopter operations, soil trafficability, and wind diffusion effects on nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. As a result, the 121st Weather Flight increased its capability to fulfill its new Army support mission while maintaining its proficiency in providing support to the Air Force mission.

In September 1981, the 121st Weather Flight was chosen as the Outstanding Weather unit in competition with weather units across the nation and won the Military Airlift Command's Collins Award.

Training for the 121st Weather Flight in June 1983 was highlighted by a deployment to support the 116th Infantry Brigade during the its annual two-week encampment held at Ft. A.P. Hill, VA. The Weather Flight accompanied the 116th during all tactical maneuvers, including a night displacement of the Tactical Operations Center. This training was critical as it was the only time the flight and the brigade trained together. During the training, the flight, comprised of three officers and nine enlisted, provided 24 and 48-hour forecasts, hourly updates, data to gauge environmental stress to personnel, and flight planning information for the brigade's aviation section. The flight worked with various elements of the brigade, including the intelligence and operations section, the artillery meteorological unit, the chemical unit, and an aviation support company. The Weather Flight provided training to brigade intelligence personnel in the forward area limited observing program, and in turn, participated in a full spectrum of Army training activities that included disaster preparedness, site security, and field communications.

In August 1983, two members of the 121st Weather Flight participated in LOGEX-83 at Ft. Pickett, V A. The personnel were assigned to the 116th Infantry Brigade as staff weather officers and provided operational weather support. The purpose was to assist the active and Guard/Reserve units in training to support and conduct operations on the air-land battlefield.

The 121st Weather Flight participated in Sentry Storm II over September 5 to 10,1984. The flight provided observers in the drop zones. Exercise Sentry Storm II tested the combat readiness of the Air National Guard and active duty units. This large, combined exercise featured a realistic scenario. Approximately 1,000 Guardsmen from New York, Pennsylvania,

Massachusetts, Ohio, Missouri, Maine, California and Washington, D.C. joined forces in a 32-hour operation, the first of this magnitude. Members of the 231st Combat Communications Squadron also participated, providing tactical expertise, designing a communications net, and providing radar control (RAPCON) support and air traffic control services within a 25-mile radius ensuring safe movement of aircraft.

The mission of the 121st Weather Flight changed in 1986 when on May 1 it was to support the 29th Light Infantry Division, Virginia and Maryland Army National Guards. Now the Weather Flight was more self-reliant, both technically and tactically. The key word for light infantry is "austere." Every flight member learned the skills of a soldier in the field, as well as weather forecasting. The survival training paid off, and the flight adapted with excellence. Personnel increased from 13 authorized to 21.

In 1987, the 121st Weather Flight participated in exercise Capitol Guardian in May.

In April 1988, the 121st Weather Flight participated in the Joint Readiness Training Center rotation.

On October 1, 1989, the 121st Weather Flight realigned to support the First US Army, with headquarters at Ft. Meade, MD.

From June 19 to 29, 1990, the 121st Weather Flight provided a weather observer team in support of a 231st Combat Communications Squadron exercise at Georgetown, DE. The Weather Flight also performed two one-week annual training periods at Andrews from June 23 to 30 and July 23 to 29, 1990. The time was spent establishing the procedures that would be followed in supporting the First Army.

During January 26 to February 24, 1991, the 121st Weather Flight provided real-time weather support for Headquarters, First Army, during the flight's annual training. The Weather Flight divided into two teams covering two weeks for each period.

The 121st Weather Flight provided daily weather outlooks from October 1990 to February 1991 to Readiness Group Meade to aid in deployment planning for activated Army Guard and Reserve units assigned to Ft. Meade for mobilization.

During the March 1991 unit training assembly, Maj. Samuel P. Williamson assumed command of the 121st Weather Flight from Lt. Col. Ihor Procinisky, who retired. On April 1, the major gaining command for the 121st Weather Flight changed from Military Airlift Command to the Air Weather Service.

Between April and May 1991, the 121st Weather Flight provided emergency weather support observers to the Andrews Weather Station.

From August 25 to September 6, 1991, the 113th deployed for an Operational Readiness

Exercise to Phelps-Collins for the first time since 1989. This was the first encampment there with the Fighting Falcon. There were 22 F-15s joining 630 personnel. The 121st Weather Flight provided weather support.

During 1991, the 121st Weather Flight, previously gained by Military Airlift Command, Air Weather Service and Tactical Air Command, became an Air Combat Command-gained unit. The 121st Weather Flight was named the Air Guard's Outstanding Weather Flight for 1991.

Between January and June 1992, the 121st Weather Flight supported Headquarters, First Army.

A Ninth Air Force Operational Readiness Exercise was conducted on the 113th at Alpena from April 10 to 17, 1992. About 700 unit members participated in the week long ORE, transported to the northern shore of Michigan in two C-130s and a C-22B. During April and June, the 121st Weather Flight provided support for the 113th's ORE and ORI, as did the 231st Combat Communication Squadron.

In January 1993, the 121st Weather Flight provided weather support for First U.S. Army during the presidential inaugural.

During July 1993, several members of the 121st Weather Flight participated in the Midwest Flood Relief Operation. Flight personnel provided weather forecasting, weather warnings and advisories, and continuous weather watch and staff briefings for the First Army Commanding General and his staff for the states of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin. First Army used the weather information to make decisions relevant to the flood relief operations. This provided an opportunity for the 121st Weather Flight to prove its capabilities and solidify the accomplishments of the unit's mission. The First Army Commanding General commended the 121st Weather Flight for its role in the relief efforts.

The 121st Weather Flight supported the First U.S. Army during Hurricane Emily from August 29 through September 2, 1993. The support provided current weather forecasts and hurricane warnings from the affected areas of the southeast United States.

During the months of January through July 1994, the 121st Weather Flight provided support for the exercise Fuertes Caminos '94 North, Task Force Dirigo. They successfully managed and deployed weather support elements to Salama, Puerto Barrios, Coban, Rabinal and Guatemala City, Guatemala. Weather Flight personnel worked and lived under field conditions, from an ADVON team Bare Base building at the Task Force encampment, and primitive conditions in Coban and Rabinal.

The 121st Weather Flight provided weather support for the 231st Combat Communications Squadron in support of their ORI at Bethany Beach and Dover AFB, DE during June 4 to 19, 1994. The weather support was well received by the 231st and the ORI Inspector General Team.

By December 1995, 121st Weather Flight received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

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Air Force Unit Histories

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.