

128 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

840 Aero Squadron organized, 1 Feb 1918
Demobilized, Mar 1919

128 Observation Squadron activated 30 Jul 1940
Activated, 1 May 1941
Ordered to active service, 15 Sep 1941
Redesignated 128 Observation Squadron (Light), 13 Jan 1942
Redesignated 128 Observation Squadron on 4 Jul 1942
Redesignated 21st Antisubmarine Squadron (Medium), 3 Mar 1943
Redesignated 21st Antisubmarine Squadron (Heavy), 20 Apr 1943
Redesignated 818th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 28 Sep 1943

840 Aero Squadron reconstituted and consolidated with 818th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy),
1944. Consolidated unit redesignated 840th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 15 Feb 1944

Inactivated, 25 Sep 1945
Redesignated 128 Fighter Squadron, and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946
128 FS (SE) extended federal recognition 20 Aug 1946
Redesignated 128 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1 Dec 1952
Redesignated 128 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 1 Jul 1952
Redesignated 128 Air Transport Squadron, 1 Apr 1961
Redesignated 128 Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1966
Redesignated 128 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 4 Apr 1973
Redesignated 128 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992
Redesignated 128 Bomb Squadron
Redesignated 128 Airborne Command and Control Squadron

STATIONS

Waco, TX, 1 Feb 1918
Garden City, NY, 4 Mar-15 Apr 1918
Yate, England, 4 May-13 Aug 1918
Courban, France, 20 Aug 1918
Latrecey, France, 20 Nov 1918
Brest, France, 1-11 Feb 1919
Langley Field, VA, 4 Mar-Mar 1919
Atlanta Mun Aprt, GA, 1 May 1941
Lawson Field, GA, 23 Sep 1941
Key Field, MS, 13 Apr 1942
New Orleans AAB, LA, 20 Jun 1942
Gulfport AAFld, MS, 2 May 1943
Ephrata AAB, WA, 28 Sep 1943
MacDill Field, FL, 7 Nov 1943-2 Mar 1944
Sterparone Airfield, Italy, 9 Apr 1944
Pisa, Italy, 15 May-25 Sep 1945
Dobbins, GA
Robins AFB, GA

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 1 Feb-20 Aug 1918
Number 3 Aircraft Depot, Independent Forces, RAF, attached 20 Aug 1918
2 Air Depot, AEF, 20 Nov 1918-29 Jan 1919
unkn, 29 Jan-Mar 1919
Georgia NG, 1 May 1941
II Air Support Command, 15 Sep 1941
71 Observation Group, 1 Oct 1941
Third Air Force, 26 Feb 1942; 77th Observation Group, 12 Mar 1942
AAF Antisubmarine Command, 8 Mar 1943
483 Bombardment Group, 28 Sep 1943-25 Sep 1945

ATTACHMENTS

Gulf Task Force, 3 Jul-7 Sep 1942, and AAF Antisubmarine Command, 15 Oct 1942-3 Mar 1943

WEAPON SYSTEMS

L-4
O-38
O-46
O-43
A-18
O-49, 1941-1942
O-47, 1942-1943

B-25, 1943
B-17, 1943-1945
P-47
F-84D, 1950
F-51
F-84, 1955
F-86, 1958
C-97, 1961
C-124, 1965
F-100, 1973
F-105
F-4
F-15
B-1
E-8

COMMANDERS

Maj George G. Finch, 1941-1942
Maj Wilbur B. Morgan, 1942 - 1943
Maj Wilbur B. Morgan, 1943
LTC James R. Dubose, 1943
LTC James R. Bubose, 1943
Maj James V. Reardon, 1943 - 1944
Maj Louis T. Seith, 1944
CPT Leo T. Brooks, 1944- 1945
CPT Alpha A. Fowler, 1945
LTC Ollie O. Simpson III, 1946-1950
Maj Edward C. Heckman Jr., 1950
LTC Ollie O. Simpson III, 1950-1951
LTC Arthur D. Thomas, 1951-1952
LTC Joel B. Paris, 1952 - 1956
Maj Fletcher E. Meadows, 1956-1959
LTC Glenn H. Herd, 1959 - 1968
LTC Charles H. Allen 1968 - 1970
LTC John E. Hayes, 1970 - 1972
LTC Thomas N. Saffold, 1972 - 1974
LTC Furman M. Owens, 1974 - 1975
LTC Stephen Havas, 1975 - 1976
LTC Darwin M. Puls, 1976 - 1978
LTC Don V. Hubbard, 1978 - 1979
LTC George D. Graves, 1979 - 1982
LTC Maj William D. Cooper, 1982 -1983
LTC Maj Stephen G. Kearney, 1983 - 1985
LTC John Whaley, 1986 - 1988

LTC E.J. Rosethal 1989 - 1990
LTC John Disoway 1990-1991
LTC William G. Bader 1991-1994
LTC Scott Hammond 1994 - 1995
LTC Richard Zatorski 1995 - 1997
LTC Thomas Jordan 1998 - 1999
LTC William Welsh 1999-Present

HONORS

Service Streamers

Theater of Operations

Campaign Streamers

Antisubmarine, American Theater
Air Offensive, Europe
Rome-Arno
Normandy
Northern France
Southern France
North Apennine
Rhineland
Central Europe
Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Germany 18 Jul 1944
Germany, 24 Mar 1945

EMBLEM



On a grayed green disc, thin border triparted orange, white, and black, a nonchalant, caricatured wild cat yellow orange, outlined black, wearing an orange jersey, yellow orange trousers, black shoes, yellow orange cartridge belt supporting two black and white revolvers in orange holsters, legs crossed, and leaning on black aerial bomb resting on yellow tail fins, while flicking ignited ashes from an orange cigar with white tip, held in left forepaw. (Approved, 12 Jan 1944)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

It was the middle of the cold and stormy month of December 1917 that a bunch of men left their comfortable homes and modes of easy living with the intentions of doing their bit in the Great World's War. They were quickly initiated into the ways of the Army. Fort Slocum and the Columbus Barracks doing their full share, where this certain bunch of men along with thousands of others waited in line in the bitter cold for hours in order to say "I do" to be inoculated and to get equipment. They all came thru these trials with flying colors and showed that they were made of the true Yankee spirit.

Within a week all were shipped to that soldiers' nightmare, Kelly Field, where they were further educated into the mysteries of a soldier's life, full courses being given in guard duty, inoculations, ditch digging, woodcarving and Army rumors. We ate our Christmas dinner without hat or blouse seated on the ground in a large sandy field. What seasoning in the food the cooks forgot, the wind made up for, as it very gently sprinkled our dinner with sand. I can freely say that we got our share of sand in our brief stay at never to be forgotten Kelly Field.

January the 8th these men were transferred to Waco and placed in temporary squadrons. They were promptly initiated to a snow storm, waking up one morning and having to dig their frozen limbs from a young snow bank. It wasn't but a few nights later that they had a cloud burst and it looked more like a pond than a camp and many of the men had to vacate their tents.

Things went on smoothly, the time being taken up by drills, hikes, physical exercises and lectures. On February the 4th one hundred and fifty of the best of these thousands of men were selected and formed into the 840th Aero Squadron and put under the guiding hand of Second Lieutenant Raymond L. Hiles. The hikes and physical exercises were continued with an occasional double time hike before breakfast to whet up our already enormous appetites.

In the afternoon of February the 9th moving orders were received, we went through the delousing plant at midnight and then on to barracks. It was 3.00 A. M. before blankets were drawn and everybody was ready to turn in. We expected to embark the next day, but just before time for departure, orders came in to remain in camp as it was too rough to load from the lighter to the ship. The following day we hiked to the docks, boarded the lighter at 11.00 A.

M.; three months to the hour after the signing of the Armistice. The lighter took us out to the U. S. Battleship Rhode Island. We pulled anchor the next morning, February 12th, at 8.00 A. M., a rather submissive bunch, not a cheer being heard as the shores of France faded in the distance.

Soon after steaming out of the harbor many "very serious" cases of sea sickness developed, but after three or four days most everyone had their sea legs and were all right. The southern course was taken, some very rough weather was encountered with the consequence that our stay on the water was four days longer than was expected. We slept in hammocks and with the exception of a few spills got along very well. After many anxious hours of looking, land was sighted at 2.00 P. M. February 27th; we steamed into the harbor, cast anchor and lay there over night.

The ship docked the next morning, February 28th, at 9.00 A. M. at C. & O. Pier No. 5, Newport News, Virginia, debarking at 10.00 o'clock and once again setting foot on our native soil after being in foreign lands almost eleven months. The Red Cross met us at the wharf and very generously donated chocolate, cigarettes and cakes. We marched through Newport News, receiving a very warm reception from the people, marched about three miles to Camp Stuart where the best living condition were found since we had been in the army

February the 27th saw the addition to our squadron of Second Lieutenant Francis B. Small who joined us in the capacity of Supply Officer. On the following day, February the 28th, after expecting to move for the last two weeks, 840 finally pulled stakes, packed up and left Waco. It was hot and the high wind was keeping the dust well stirred up when we marched down to the train. Our brows were wet with honest sweat and they made a good stopping place for the dust. It was hard to tell whether we were white or black when we boarded the train, but that was the least of our worries.

Our trip to Garden City was a series of good times and pleasant experiences, five days and nights were spent aboard the Pullmans. We stopped each day enroute and took a short hike or drill, always receiving a royal welcome from the enthusiastic people. The Red Cross chapters at Nashville, Tenn., Lynchburg, Va., and the Pennsylvania Station N.Y. met us as we came thru these places and very generously donated postal cards, magazines, cigarettes and chocolate. We had our own kitchen on the train and lived in fine style.

Our stay at Camp Stuart was very short as we left there Tuesday morning, March 4th, boarding street cars and rode ten miles to Langley Field. We were the first overseas troops to arrive at this field and were shown the finest treatment and hospitality.

We landed in Garden City and at one P.M. Monday March the 4th with many unanswered questions in our minds: Are we going to receive our training here? Are we going directly overseas? Will we not get a chance to go home? We were not given long to think about these things as the next morning everybody was sent out on detail work. Friday morning we started home on a four and a half day pass, It was a happy bunch that started down the railroad tracks towards Garden City that Friday morning soon after reveille. We came back to camp the next

Tuesday noon really expecting to leave for overseas within three or four days but all we found was detail with an occasional hike or drill. First Lieutenant Henry E. Somers Named our "Big Family" is Medical Officer in time to go with us on our twenty four mile hike and camping trip.

One o'clock Monday, April the 15th found us in formation with packs on our backs ready to start on a hike. Our plans were suddenly changed when Lieutenant Hiles came rushing in with orders to move. Packs were quickly taken off and everybody was busy packing up and getting ready. Three hours later we boarded the train, road to Long Island City transferred to a ferry which took us to Pier 61 of the White Star Line, where after a hurried physical examination we boarded the "Canopie" The next day, April the 16th about four thirty P.M. we were ordered below decks and were tugged out of the harbor. We viewed the Statue of Liberty for the last time with varying emotions, wondering when we would, see again. After shifting several times between second class state rooms and the "Hole" we settled down for the trip (most of us in the hole). We were twelve days on the deep blue sea, our time being spent in life boat drills, submarine watches physical exercises and feeding the fish occasionally when the waves got too rough.

We were told that when we got over "That Hill" we would be in England, it proved to be true but it certainly was one long hill. Excitement ran high for a couple of days when we were hotly pursued by submarines which in turn were chased by the wonderful little sub chasers, which won the admiration of all by their quick and effective work against our hidden enemy.

Sunday morning, April the 28th, we debarked at Liverpool, England, marched thru the town to the railway station and had our first experience with the English railway. We traveled cross country marveling at the speed of our toy engine.

That night we were rudely awakened and told to get off the train; half asleep we piled off, got into formation and started on our way. It certainly was mysterious entry into England, it was too dark to distinguish anything. We marched away hoping somebody saw where we were going. After a march of about two miles along a winding, hedge lined road we came to our destination, Romsey Hante, an American rest camp. We haven't discovered yet why they called it a rest camp, as we were out on detail every day and some evenings as well, doing such work as concrete mixing, shoveling coal etc. Here we had our first experience with English money and it wasn't long until we were saying "Tupence apenny" like a real Englishmen.

We left Romsey Saturday morning, May the 4th, Marched to the station, boarded the train and had a very pleasant and interesting ride across England, arriving in late that afternoon.

Number 3 Western Aircraft Depot of the Royal Air Force was stationed here and we were to get our training working with the English at this depot. We were soon settled in our new quarters and were placed in the different departments of the airplane plant where were soon busily engaged in the production and repair of airplanes. We formed an excellent Jazz Band; our baseball team made a fine record, only losing one game out of eight played; our track team entered the R.A.F. meet held July the 24th and made a fine showing, soaring 36 points. We also

held a volleyball and basketball tournament while here. We were very, fortunate in having officers who took an interest in athletics and our excellent showing was the result, to a great extent, of the encouragement given by them.

We were the second American squadron at this camp and there very few Americans in this part of England, so we were quite a curiosity on our weekend visits to Bristol and neighboring towns. July the 4th we were royally entertained in Bristol. It was the first 4th of July these people had ever celebrated, but judging from the enthusiasm they showed one would have thought they had been celebrating it all their lives.

FOR its glorious impressions, and as a memento of the important episodes in 840's overseas career, Independence day July 4th, 1918, can only be superseded by that greatest of all days which again found the world at peace. The good people of Bristol, England, had taken it upon themselves to offer us, as the representatives of our people, the freedom of their city. Nature had given all her charm to the day's opening, and did not take back her gift until the "shades of night" commanded. Of course, the spirit of the day alone was enough to inspire us. It was not strange, therefore, that the expression of our feelings inspired our English Allies, who had so uncompromisingly taken it upon themselves to make the day an unforgettable one. That they more than succeeded in their endeavor anyone of us will accede to, in words of praise.

We were to be Uncle Sam's representatives, on his greatest holiday, in one of England's most important cities. We and the 823rd Aero Squadron—barely three hundred men. Small wonder then, that each one of us took extraordinary care to prime himself and his equipment for the occasion. Small wonder, as we marched and heard the ungrudging cheers accorded us, that each one of us felt that the acclamation was extremely personal. Such was the spirit of the reception tendered us by our hosts. Our column was headed by Captain Ammons, the American Post Commandant and our own Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Hiles. Our own bugle and drum corps, which was in perfect harmony for the occasion, aided us to proudly "carry on" throughout

the day. At approximately 10:00 A. M., we boarded a special train at the Yate Station for Bristol where, at 10.30 A. M., we stood in formation in front of Temple Mead Station. The Lord Mayor met us there to lead us on through a city literally bedecked with our colors—the wonderful "Stars and Stripes." The first halt in the march occurred at the Bristol Cathedral where we attended a most impressive service. The following extracts from a Bristol newspaper faithfully record the most significant happenings of the day

The Dean, in the course of an eloquent address welcomed the guests, and recalled the momentous occasions of the anniversary and of the visit, reminding them that nowhere did the idea of world progress through national development find greater support than in the pages of Scripture, nowhere a fuller recognition of those bounds which He hath set and within which He is governor. The address proceeded: One hundred and fifty years ago by the Declaration of Independence, like a full-blooded son bursting with soul-energy, in reluctant revolt against a loving but ever restrictive father. And your forefathers gave their blood for it. Now, in these days of vast clashings of an embattled world, your great nation has made another Declaration

of Independence in support of the free development of all national life, all the world .one. States small as well as great following unmolested and untrammled their own appointed course, their own line of advance. Brothers, your banners craved for freedom then; they wave for freedom now, and the blast of the wind that stirs them is the very breath of the Spirit of God. For where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty.

BEST our readers criticize our humble efforts too harshly, the editor, in sending this publication to press, begs said readers to take into consideration the following points, so as to have some conception of the difficulties and environment midst which the publication had its being and the purpose of its being. The Propeller was conceived with the idea of being, primarily, an amusement and book of record for the members of the 840th squadron—to collect the pictures and data pertaining to the squadron, which in time to come will undoubtedly prove of great interest and value to the 840 men.

Those who edited and contributed herein, are supposed to be, and we trust are, soldiers, rather than literary geniuses and our efforts have been aimed more with a view to a complete and comprehensive covering of squadron activities rather than with an eye to the strictly grammatical and typographical.

The contributions were prepared during the few moments after work hours, when the boys came swinging back from the aerodrome tired and weary with an arduous day's work. You may imagine that it required no little exercise of will power on the part of a would-be writer to sacrifice these few brief moments of rest to wield the pen. Perched upon the edge of his bunk, with only the uncertain light of a flickering candle and midst the chaos of fifty or sixty swearing, arguing, singing comrades in arms, he must endeavor to woo the muse as best he may. We have a hunch that even Shakespeare himself could not have accomplished much in like circumstances.

If the contents bear mostly upon activities while we were stationed in England and seemingly slighting La Belle France, it must be remembered that while in France we were always in the Zone of Advance and little opportunity was afforded for any activities outside of walloping the Hun.

With these few facts in mind we hope the reader will take The Propeller as it is intended and derive amusement and pleasure herein, commensurate with the efforts we have put into it. In after years we trust it will prove a source of ever growing joy to all members of the "Old 840" in reviving the memories and scenes of our soldier days, while sojourning with Uncle Sam, in Europe.

AND so we came to France and over here our boys have fought, have striven, have died and have accomplished the working out of the Nation's and world's destiny to a successful issue and only by dint of hard fighting, striving and indomitable perseverance have we accomplished what no nation's army has ever accomplished or dreamed could be accomplished. The world has witnessed with amazement what the Yanks have done and history will duly' enter their

deeds upon her gilded pages. But whence emanated this splendid energy of the Yankee army, whence came the inspiration that made possible their splendid achievements? We don't look far for the answer. We have it in three words "the home folks." Without their ready backing and earnest cooperation, our army never could have been placed in the field at the crucial moment to strike the Hun and bolster up the courage of our Allies and today "kultur" would have reigned supreme. So our homefolks were directly responsible for victory, not alone through their astounding raising of unity millions of dollars and the millions of tons of food sent to Europe, at the expense of personal hardship and sacrifice on the part of practically every man, woman and child from millionaire to street urchin in our great country, but upon the brave unwavering faith they held

in our American ideals of right and the united spirit of sacrifice for those ideals, and above all the unshakable optimism and good cheer which they managed to instill into their departing soldier

sons, and from them permeating on through all the Allied ranks. This, my friends, spelt victory. Over here in Europe they may tout their titles and so-called Nobility, but we Americans know the only true aristocracy and human worth to be based upon the solid, homely virtues and sound ideals of the great American people.

Time soon passed and shortly after our three months training period was up, we moved. Second Lieutenant Merwin C. Randall joining us the day of our departure as Technical Office. We left that fateful day August the 13th, headed by the English band and accompanied by the American and English personnel of the depot to the station here we were given a rousing send off as our train pulled out.

We arrived in Southampton that afternoon and rolled three miles to a rest camp. We marched back to the dock the next afternoon and got on board "King Edward VII" at five P.M., laid in the harbor until seven o'clock and then started across that treacherous strip of water, the English Channel. It was a quiet a clear night, the channel was very smooth and no submarines appeared so we had an uneventful but crowded trip, standing room being at a premium below decks as it got colder in the small hours of the morning.

We unloaded the next morning. August the 16th at Le Havre, France and marched about a mile to a rest camp. That night an air raid warning was given about midnight and we had to pile out and run for a nearby race track. Some ammunition was stored near our huts which made it a very dangerous place during an air raid. "Jerry" was only bluffing this time and did not visit us, we stayed out on the race track for almost two hours and then returned to our bunks when the "All Clear" signal was given.

After a three days stay in this camp we left at eight o'clock Saturday evening, August the 17th and had our first experience with the French "Side Door Pullman" We were packed in thirty eight to the car for the trip. The next morning we woke up in Rouen where our train stopped, we marched up to a rest comp for breakfast and then back to the train expecting to continue our journey but found there was no train that day and so marched to an Independent Air Force camp. That night all said we had our first opportunity to see French life.

The next afternoon we resumed our journey. We boarded the train and were almost ready to leave when an artillery company marched in and after inquiring found that we were on the wrong train and we were occupying their place. They took our place on the train and pulled out. We have often wondered where we would be have landed had we stayed on that train. Our train came along one hour later and we were on our way once more, some riding in box cars, some in third class carriages and some riding in style in some motor cars loaded on our train. We bounced along all that night and woke up the next morning four miles outside of Paris. We rode all that day enjoying the trip immensely as it was a fine day and we were passing thru a beautiful country, wondering at the large grain crops being harvested, mostly by oxen. That evening, August the 20th, we landed at Courban where number 3 Aircraft depot, the Independent Air Force camp is located. We spent a couple of days in shifting around and getting settled and then started in on our work which we had been looking forward to for eight months.

We soon became adapted to working on the new types of machines, spending most of our time in Handley Page and De Havilland planes. The members of our squadron had the distinction of turning out the first Handley Page built in France. We saw our first Liberty Motor at this depot and marveled at the simplicity and great power of the new Yankee motor. We took an interest in the work and proudly say that a decided increase in the production of planes noted after our addition to the personnel of the depot. There were only three American squadrons attached to the Independent Air Force and we had the honor to be one of them.

But our musings are interrupted by parties of men preparing to remove the debris from the cars to the salvage sheds. Let us follow one of these "crashes," an H.P., and observe what is done with it. Upon being brought into the shed, the plane is energetically attacked by a party of salvage hands who proceed to detach all component parts. The remains of the wings or "sails" are taken off, the twin engines are extracted and sent to the Engine Shop for rejuvenation, the propeller, under carriage and tail planes are detached and we have nothing remaining but the gigantic "Fuselage" or body of the machine.

This is separated into four main divisions, nose, center section and two tail sections, which we now see placed on carriages, and pushed over to the Fuselage Shop, where if we follow we see the painted linen covering ripped from the sections. Then a party of expert woodworkers proceed to tear away all broken or strained parts of the nose section and to replace them with exact duplicates of the original part as it was before being injured. This necessitates a great deal of very careful and precise work. While this is going on there is also a party at work on the center section, repairing, and mending the intricate bombing rack and also one or two men at work getting the tail sections in shape—replacing longerons, struts, etc.

Whenever these sections are prepared all hands are called to lift and carry the cumbersome sections and connect them into one complete fuselage skeleton which is put into correct level position and all wires and sections "trammed" to proper shape and tensity and the wires and shackles locked. The skeleton body is now ready to be taken over to the Dope Shop. At the

Dope Shop strong Irish linen of the best quality is tightly stretched over the entire framework and then the "dope" is applied. Dope is a sort of Varnish composition of ether, banana oil, gun cotton and sulphuric acid, which is applied to the fabric surfaces of the airplane causing them to contract and tighten and rendering them impervious to moisture, also rendering the surfaces smooth so as to offer the least friction with the air.

Four coats of this dope are applied and allowed to dry. Meanwhile let us take a peep into the sail makers shed and see what is transpiring there. Here we perceive that they have brought in the great wing framework from the Carpenter Shop. How fragile and web-like it appears. It is constructed scientifically with a minimum weight and so braced and counter-braced as to obtain the minimum weight and maximum of strength. These frameworks are placed on standards and around each gathers "the sewing circle" which proceeds to stitch on the linen cover. After this is done, dope is applied as in the case of the fuselage. While all this is going on the engine men have taken the battered, bullet punctured engines, "torn them (down" completely till every nut bolt and screw has been dismembered.

Then the process of building up commences. Repaired and new parts are brought from the Store Room and assembled—valves are ground, bearings are scraped and cleaned and a general overhauling takes place. There is usually a bit of competition between parties working on different engines to see which can get its engine in first class shape the soonest. As soon as a party announces the completion of an engine, it is taken out and placed on the "Test Block," where a propeller is attached and an inspector tests out the machine as to the timing of the valves, magnetos, etc.

If he finds the engine will run smoothly and will produce the required number of "Revs" (sixteen hundred revolutions per minute) he tags the engine O. K. and ready for installation in the machine. By this time the complete fuselage has been brought into the "Aero Fitters Shed" where the engines are brought and installed, the wings, which we watched in the process of construction, are connected to the fuselage, the four wheeled undercarriage is attached and the tail planes are put on. Here all the men from the Instrument Shop enter with the altimeters, speedometers, compasses, etc., and the "gun men" from the "Amorers Shop" with their guns, gun carriages and racks.

When these are all duly installed the machine stands complete in every detail. It is a huge affair, measuring eighty-seven feet in length and with a one hundred foot span. (The Super-Handley measures one hundred feet by one hundred and sixteen feet). It is now placed in "flying position," that is, made level latterly and longitudinally and the "R. A. F. wires (streamline wires)" are tightened and locked at the correct tension so as to produce the proper dihedral angle, angle of incidence and stagger. A dozen or so men gather around and push the great bird out onto the Aerodrome, her wings are unfolded and there she stands in majestic potentiality as if sniffing the battle afar off and eager for her first trial flight.

We expected to stay at Courban only until the American Aviation camp at Latracey was finished and then move there. Events took a rapid turn and the Great World's War was finished before

we could believe it. We were quite proud to have our share in the victory as two of our squadrons of thirty planes were with the Yanks on their great attack on Metz, which was really the beginning of the crushing blow launched by the Allies.

It was only a few days after the signing of the Armistice that the Yanks began to leave number 3 A.D. 840 was the last to go. departing Wednesday November the 20th, having spent exactly 3 months in the camp. We marched ten miles to Latresey with fond hopes of a short stay there and of being in the good old USA before the curtain is drawn on the year of years, 1918.

So we came to France—and over here our boys have fought, have striven, have died—and have accomplished the working out of the Nation's and world's destiny to a successful issue and only by dint of hard fighting, striving and indomitable perseverance have we accomplished what no nation's army has ever accomplished or dreamed could be accomplished. The world has witnessed with amazement what the Yanks have done and history will duly enter their deeds upon her gilded pages. But whence emanated this splendid energy of the Yankee army, whence came the inspiration that made possible their splendid achievements?

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This, my friends, spelt victory. Over here in Europe they may tout their titles and so-called Nobility, but we Americans know the only true aristocracy and human worth to be based upon the solid, homely virtues and sound ideals of the great American people.

In the latter months of 1940, Belgium, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Norway had already fallen to Nazi invasions. The United States was preparing its armed forces for war. In February 1939, 2nd Lieutenant Chas M. Ford, Jr., Deputy City Clerk, Atlanta, GA had written a letter to National Guard Bureau inquiring about allocation of Air Corps Squadrons to various states. He implied that Georgia would be interested. Unfortunately, no further allocations were available at that time. This situation changed before 14 Feb 1941 when the Chief National Guard Bureau granted authority to the Adjutant General of Georgia to organize the 128 Observation Squadron in Georgia.

Georgia Governor Ed Rivers asked George G. Finch, prominent Atlanta lawyer and former Air Corps flyer, to organize the first flying unit of the Georgia National Guard. Finch accepted the

challenge and began searching for prospects for what would soon become the 128 Observation Squadron. Georgia's first flying unit was dubbed "Atlanta's own." The first signed was fellow lawyer, James G. Grizzard. Later Finch signed four aircraft mechanics and a radio operator that were employed by Delta. One of these mechanics, Nick Vlass, was crew chief on the unit's first aircraft, a BC-1A. The BC-1A was armed with two guns, one fired through the prop and the other was wing mounted.

In February 1941 a recruiting drive was begun in order to obtain the necessary quota of authorized strength and proficiency of training for Federal recognition. Several professional and amateur pilots who had the necessary flying training as pilots and observers were recruited, together with a satisfactory number of trained specialists as mechanics, radio operators, etc. A coordinated and productive program was then begun with the result that the unit, together with its officers and enlisted men attained its goal of Federal recognition.

It was Federally recognized on 1 May 1941 as a unit of the Georgia National Guard. The new members were gathered in the Ansley Hotel on 1 May 1941 for swearing in ceremonies. Its organization and training were delegated to George Finch, who was commissioned as Major and assumed command of the organization on 1 May 1941. Specialized training of both officers and enlisted men was conducted under his direction. Regular Army Air Corps Instructors Major Elmer E. Rogers and SSgt Robert L. Cook (assigned as Sergeant Major), assisted in the training of the enlisted personnel. The weekly and sometimes biweekly training was carried on at Candler Field Municipal Airport, Atlanta, Georgia and at the National Guard Armory located on East Confederate Avenue. At Candler Field the early Guardsmen operated out of the Army Hangar at the north end of the ramp. The old Hangar Hotel had the contract to furnish government meals for the unit.

Training efforts were doubled by both officers and enlisted men to reach the highest standard of efficiency and training so that the organization would be able to go immediately into the prescribed program of training upon its induction into Federal Service, which was expected at an early date. Weekly training periods were doubled again with flying officers spending much of their own time during the week in training flights in the use of equipment, which was supplied to the squadron. Equipment was either scarce or non-existent in 1941. At this time, the squadron was equipped with one North American BC-1A, one Douglas O-46A, and one Douglas O-38E. Pilots and observers were equipped with a few aerial cameras, but wheeled vehicles to support the squadron's missions were seriously lacking.

On 15 September 1941 the 128 Observation Squadron, consisting of 16 officers and 102 enlisted men (of which one officer and three enlisted men were medical personnel) was inducted into the Army of the United States at Candler Field Municipal Airport, Atlanta, Georgia. During that first week at Candler Field the unit pre-pared for a move. Many went to Fort McPherson for physicals and others tried to acquire missing uniform requirements. Tents were set up at Candler Field as temporary housing.

After induction, the organization was relieved of assignment at Candler Field and assigned to

the Second Air Support Command with its headquarters at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma. The squadron's new station was at Lawson Field, Fort Benning, Georgia, having been transferred there on 23 September 1941. The unit was housed in tents at Lawson Field. As winter approached the nights were cold even with tent stoves supplied.

The unit aircraft were flown to Lawson by Major Finch (BC-IA), ILt Lane (O-46), and ILt Turner (O-38E). Others either drove private vehicles or went by government convoy. Upon arrival at Lawson Field, training was begun to qualify the airmen for the tasks that were before them. Many had no previous military experience and the next few months were spent preparing those men for war.

While working with the Second Armored Division in ground-air support missions at this station, the organization was cited for efficiency and cooperation by Major General W.C. Crittenberger. Special training was also carried out while at this station. Pilots and observers were getting transition time in additional aircraft. Aircraft engine, radio mechanics and radio operators received specialized training in their areas, as did other technical and administrative personnel. The 128 Observation Squadron arrived at Lawson Field with only 3 aircraft but that was soon changed by Major Finch and his expert mechanics. The base commander at Lawson was having trouble maintaining some of his aircraft when Major Finch boasted that his mechanics could do the job. Working around the clock SSgt Reed and his men made a complete engine change on one aircraft, and the 128 was given the use of the aircraft by the amazed base commander.

Through similar efforts the unit soon boasted a fleet of two O-38E's, one O-43, one O-46, two Stinson D-49s (redesignated L-1 in 1942), one Curtis O-52 (redesignated L-1A in 1942), two A-18s, and thirty-six Piper L-4s. When the unit received the O-46, a later model of the O-43, it was the most powerful aircraft yet to be flown in the 128. The A-18's were Curtis built, twin-engine attack bombers. This was the first twin engine aircraft flown by the 128. ILt Orren Lane was the first to fly the A-18. He later checked out Lt Jack White and Lt Carroll Bolender. The squadron finally got its own fuel truck and staff car in December 1941. These mixtures of observation and liaison aircraft were definitely obsolete for use in a combat zone. Since enemy submarines operating off US shores presented a greater immediate threat, most of these squadrons were retained for use on antisubmarine patrol.

Major George G. Finch was relieved as Commanding Officer on 11 April 1942, and transferred to P.O.E., as per secret orders of the Secretary of War. ILt John E. (Pat) Turner, ranking flying officer on duty with the organization then assumed temporary command. Training was carried on under this officer's command until 14 April 1942.

On 15 April 1942 the organization, consisting of 17 officers and 98 enlisted men, was transferred from Lawson Field to Key Field Army Air Base at Meridian, Mississippi and placed under the 77th Observation Group, Second Ground Air Support Command. When they departed Lawson Field the Squadron left behind the remaining O-38ES.

On 14 May 1942 Capt Wilbur B. Morgan, formerly of the 133rd Observation Squadron, assumed

command. The squadron was then reorganized with his staff as follows: Cpt Harl L. Ahl, Executive Officer; ILt James G. Grizzard, S-1 Personnel; ILt Theodore J. Mareesh, S-2 Intelligence; ILt Jack C. White, S-3 Operations and Training; and ILt Harry L. Willingham, S-4 Supply.

In May 1942, shortly after assuming command of the squadron, Capt Morgan was promoted to the rank of Major.

While stationed at Meridian, Mississippi the 128 Observation Squadron won first honors in a field-wide competitive drill. Also, while at this station, the squadron sent nine enlisted men to Officer Candidate School and nine enlisted men to Flight Training School, bringing the total of twenty-eight enlisted men of the original 102, to go to various schools leading to commissions as officers. This decrease was offset in May 1942, by the assignment of 60 enlisted men that had just completed basic training.

The training and transition of pilots had advanced so far that heavier and better aircraft were assigned to the squadron. All obsolete airplanes previously assigned were transferred and the Squadron was assigned six O-47A's.

An intense ground support training program was continued. A part of this program specified liaison pilot training. Eight enlisted men qualified and were presented with wings as Liaison Pilots by Major Morgan. Vlass, Haynes, Rutherford, Johnson, and Mayson were five who earned Liaison Pilot wings. Immediately upon receipt of their wings, all liaison officers and ground crews were ordered to Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, Mississippi to fly operational missions with artillery units stationed there. While flying on one of the many missions at Camp Shelby, one of the unit's L-4s flown by Liaison Pilot SSgt Nick Vlass crashed and caused the death of an artillery observer and seriously injured SSgt Vlass.

On 20 June 1942 the entire squadron left Meridian, Mississippi for the Army Air Base, New Orleans, LA to relieve the 113th Observation Squadron, which was participating in anti-submarine missions under close cooperation with the Eighth Naval District, directed by the Gulf Sea Frontier. The squadron, while participating in these missions, also continued their training program. ILt Jack White and crew were first to spot a submarine. They flew around it and shot 30-caliber ammo to no avail. After this mission the O-47s were taken to Wright Patterson Field for installing bomb racks, one on each side to carry 325lb depth charges plus two 30 caliber machine guns. Their mission now became to seek, find, and kill.

The Gulf Sea Frontier was redesignated the Gulf Task Force and later the 26th Antisubmarine Wing.

A control room was set up at the New Orleans Air Base with Captain Henry L. Langsenkamp as first controller.

Cpt Langsenkamp was transferred to higher headquarters in October 1942. He was replaced by ILt Albert L. Mathey. It was soon after Cpt Langsenkamp left the organization that he was

reported missing in action. His plane went down while on a training flight to Batista Field, Cuba. His promotion to Major came through while he was away but he was never aware of the promotion.

In August 1942 notice was received of the death of Capt Donald R. Harris, killed in action in the North African Theater of Operations. Capt Harris was one of the original members of the Squadron and had been transferred to the Martin Bomber Plant in Baltimore, Maryland. From there he was assigned to duty overseas. Capt Harris was the first member of the Squadron to be killed in action.

On 8 March 1943 the 128 Observation Squadron was redesignated the 21st Antisubmarine Squadron (M), with its new assignment to the 26th Antisubmarine Command. The Squadron took an active part in the Army Air Forces highly successful war on the Axis U-boats.

While at New Orleans, the squadron engaged in specialized training in low altitude bombing, aerial gunnery, radio nets, and also specialized athletics. This training and the operation of the Antisubmarine missions were carried on until 2 May 1943 at which time the squadron, comprising 46 officers and 226 enlisted men, was transferred to Gulfport Field, Mississippi.

Upon arrival at Gulfport Field, the squadron was assigned ten B-25s. The operations and maintenance of this type of aircraft necessitated advance training of ground crew, as well as pilots and flying personnel.

The pilots and crews were sent to Boca Raton, Florida for transition training to two-engine airplanes and also for an intensive period of Antisubmarine Warfare training. Not having sufficient ground personnel to send to school and also to maintain the equipment on hand, it was necessary to train the personnel by actual experience.

On 29 June 1943, Maj Wilbur B. Morgan was relieved of his command by Maj James R. DuBose, Jr., Regular Army Air Corps. After the latter assumed command, a new staff was designated as follows: Maj James R. DuBose, Jr., Commanding; Capt Thomas E. Whitson, S-1 Administration and Personnel; Capt Ray C. Cox, S-2 Intelligence; Capt William R. Ludwig, S-3 Operation and Training; ILt George H. Stone, S-4 Supply.

Under the command of Maj DuBose, training consisted of bivouac, turret gunnery, carbines, Thompson submachine gun, .45 caliber pistol, and ground machine gun. Classes were also conducted for all combat crewmembers on code, identification of aircraft, tanks, ships and merchant vessels, chemical warfare, and practice bombing by the bombardiers.

On 25 June 1943 the greatest tragedy far fell upon the officers and enlisted men of the squadron when a B-25 carrying two officers and six enlisted men failed to reach its destination while on a mission to Tampa, Florida. The plane piloted by Capt John R. Turner, Jr. and carrying one of the most able crews of the unit, is believed to have crashed in the Gulf of Mexico. Among the crew were F/O Milburn W. Rockett, Co-Pilot, and three original members of the

squadron from Atlanta, Georgia - TSgt J.B. Grogan, TSgt Thomas L. Johnson, and SSgt Edward W. Simpson. Other members of the crew were SSgt Jesse R. Ferris, California, Sgt Clarence Lankford, North Carolina, and Sgt Floyd Gilcrease, Arizona. Approximately 18 planes took part in the extensive search extending from Cuba to Galveston, Texas and lasted for over 48 hours. After the search was abandoned by the Army, the Navy took over with surface craft.

After 29 months on active duty in the Southeastern United States the Squadron moved to Ephrata AAB, Washington in September 1943. There, the remaining original 128 members formed a cadre in Headquarters, 483rd Bombardment Group and each of the four squadrons assigned. The 21st Antisubmarine Squadron was reorganized on 28 September 1943 and redesignated the 818th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy). The 815th, 816th and 817th Bombardment Squadrons (Heavy) were the other Squadrons assigned to the Group. The 483rd Bombardment Group was assigned B- 17s.

The 483rd Group was moved to MacDill Field, FL on 7 Nov 1943. After consolidation and reconstitution, the 818th Bombardment Squadron was redesignated the 840th Bombardment Squadron (originally organized as the 840th Aero Squadron in 1918, Waco, Texas) on 15 February 1944. The 840th trained at MacDill Field until 2 March 1944 when it left for the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations (MTO). Arriving 9 April 1944 in Sterparone, Italy with the 483rd Bombardment Group, the 840th Bombardment Squadron began combat operations on 12 April 1944 with an attack against an aircraft component factory at Fischamed Market in Austria. Flying Boeing B-17Gs as part of the 15th Air Force, the 840th Bombardment Squadron remained in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations until after V-E Day.

A highlight of the heroic actions of the 840th Bombardment Squadron and 483rd Bombardment Group operations was a strike on Memmingen, Germany on 18 July 1944 when they lost 14 out of 26 B- 17s. Both units received Distinguished Unit Citations for their action on 18 July 1944. They received another Distinguished Unit Citation for braving fighter assaults and anti-aircraft fire to bomb tank factories in Berlin on 24 Mar 1945. They moved to Pisa, Italy from 15 May to 25 September 1945, where they transported redeployed personnel from Pisa to Casablanca and French Morocco. After V-E Day, 18 of the 20 ex-Guard squadrons still on active duty were inactivated and reassigned to their old squadron numbers. The 840th Bombardment Squadron was inactivated 25 September 1945. The Unit was allotted to the Georgia Air National Guard in March 1946 and federally recognized as the 128 Fighter Squadron (SE) on 20 August 1946.

The 116th Fighter Group Headquarters was activated and moved from Dobbins AFB to George AFB, California during October 1950. The unit was relieved from assignment with 14th AF and assigned to TAC. Three squadrons with F-80s were assigned, together with supporting units. Those three squadrons were the 158th from Savannah, Georgia, the 159th from Jacksonville, Florida, and the 196th from San Bernardino, California. All units were reorganized under the Wing-Base plan and became the 116th Fighter Bomber Wing in Oct 1950. The commander was Colonel Charles M. Ford.

From November 1950 through June 1951, the Wing underwent extensive tactical training and

became a well-organized and smoothly operating unit. In June 1951, the Wing received F-84 and was alerted for overseas movement to USAF in Europe to bolster the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. On 5 July 1951, the 116th Fighter Bomber Wing received word that it would soon be on its way to Japan on a temporary tour of duty with the Far East Air Force. Seven days later on 12 July 1951, the Wing departed Alameda, California. The main body left the aircraft on board the USS Aircraft Carrier SITKOH BAY, the balance following two days later on the WINDHAM BAY. The aircraft were protected by heavy coats of cosmolene and secured to the carrier decks. Maintenance crews were kept busy on the voyage with daily inspections of the aircraft. Nightly movies, volleyball, and a snack bar provided as much entertainment as possible on the way over. The main body arrived Yokosuka, Japan on 27 July 1951.

Then proceeded by train to Misawa AB on 28 July 1951. Flying training was begun 6 August 1951 as F-84's were ferried to Misawa and squadrons began alternating Northern Area Defense alert and a standby alert. The Wing was assigned to the Japan Air Defense Force and stationed at Misawa in northern Honsha. The commander was Colonel James B. Buck. One squadron was later moved to Chitese on the island of Hokkaido. The mission of the Wing was the air defense of northern Japan in case of an attack on those islands.

During December 1951, planes, pilots, and ground crew personnel of the three squadrons were ferried to Korea to participate in missions against the communists in North Korea. Each plane and pilot flew four missions before returning to its home base in Japan. In February 1952, training was conducted on mid-air refueling and shortly thereafter missions were flown from the base in Japan to Korea.

In July 1952, most of the personnel of the Georgia Air National Guard units were returned to state control. The only personnel remaining on active duty were those who voluntarily extended their tour of duty.

December 6, 1953 Killed that fateful day, according to Air Force documents, were Capt. Idon Hodge, 1st Lieutenants Sam Dixon Jr. and Elwood Kent, and 2nd Lt. William Tennent. From official reports and eyewitness accounts, Cole was able to reconstruct what happened just after midnight on Dec. 6, 1953. The four pilots, assigned to the former 128 Fighter Bomber Squadron, 116th Fighter Bomber Group, were flying back to Marietta's Dobbins Air Force Base from a training mission in Miami. Hodge, Dixon Kent and Tennent were flying four F-84Ds in formation through that cloudy, rainy night. Hodge, the lead pilot, depended on his instruments to guide him and his men home. Accident reports indicated the four jets were much lower than Hodge's altimeter because of cockpit instruments which difficult to read. Soon after the crash, the altimeter design was upgraded. When the crash occurred, the four pilots and their aircraft slammed into the rented home of Ernest Brooks. He and his family escaped certain death because they were not home at the time.

Having been equipped with fighter and bomber type aircraft since its beginning, the Georgia Air National Guard 116th Air Defense Wing converted on 1 April 1961 to the 116th Air Transport Wing (H).

A mixed ANG and advisor crew flew the first C-97 of the Georgia Air National Guard to Dobbins AFB on 1 June 1961. The crew was flown to Pease AFB, NH in the unit C-47. Members of the crew were: Lt Col W.R. Hudson, 116th Air Transport Group Commander; CMSgt William Turner, Line Chief; SMSgt Harlan Harrison, Crew Chief; MSgt William Holder, Loadmaster; Major Glenn H. Herd, 128 Air Transport Squadron Commander; Major Joe Wroblewski, AF Advisor Pilot; Major Kermit Fish, AF Advisor Navigator; MSgt J.W. Buckley, AF Advisor Engineer; and TSgt J.C. Jarrard, AF Advisor Engineer.

In August 1961, Annual Field Training was scheduled for home station at Dobbins. Crewmembers were given thorough indoctrination in the complex systems of the C-97 by instructors of a Mobile Training Detachment. The former jet fighter pilots have rapidly adapted their flying talents to the four-engine, long range C-97 and many crews have made Caribbean flights to Panama and Puerto Rico. Before the end of 1962, practically every Air Guard flight crew at Dobbins had been to Europe at least once.

The July 1962 summer camp for some 900 officers and airmen of the 116th Air Transport Group was conducted at Dobbins AFB, GA. It was a period of intense training as the Group geared their organization to the C-97 and their new worldwide mission.

To keep the crews at high levels of proficiency, a flight simulator was installed at the Air Guard hangar at Dobbins. Electronically simulating the flying characteristics of the C-97, the realistic cockpit controls enabled instructors to feed in simulated emergencies to which the pilots and flight engineers had to react swiftly.

Flights to Europe have been scheduled on a regular basis since the first of the year, 1962, with the Georgia pilots guiding their aircraft into such exotic bases as Lajes Field, Azores; Mildenhall RAF Base, Suffolk, England; Chateauroux Air Base, France; Torrejon AFB, Madrid, Spain; Rhein-Main AB, Frankfurt, Germany; Harmon AFB, Newfoundland; and Kindley AFB, Bermuda.

The hauling of cargo in the giant C-97 has been one of the prime missions of the Air Guardsmen for the Military Air Transport Service, but the versatile airmen now handled litter patients aboard the C-97s. Qualified flight nurses and medical attendants of the 128 and the 158th Aeromedical Evacuation Flight were equipped to handle in-flight patients.

For the first time in history, Air National Guardsmen not on active duty have drawn combat pay for hazardous duty half a globe away. Volunteering for a special mission to Vietnam, Air Guard C-97 crews from Georgia and a host of other states participated in Operation CHRISTMAS STAR to provide our servicemen in Southeast Asia with Christmas gifts. Georgia airmen averaged 95 flying hours in the eleven days required to fly there and back. Three aircraft from Dobbins AFB, assigned to the 116th Air Transport Group, and another three from the 165th Air Transport Group at Travis Field, Savannah, took off in late November for the long haul to Vietnam, only minimum crew rest was authorized enroute.

The six Georgia aircraft carried 48,786 pounds of Christmas gifts and mail to South Vietnam, and at the same time hauled 97,086 pounds of USAF cargo to and from the zone, for a total of 145,872 pounds and average of 24,312 pounds per aircraft, or an average of 2,666,688 ton miles each. The first mission departed the Marietta base on 22 November 1965 with Lt Col Charles H. Allen, Wing Director of Operations, as aircraft commander. Pilots for the flight were Maj C.E. Register, Air Force Advisor, Lt J.W. Wyatt, Jr., Capt Herbert C. Hawkins, Lt E.D. Cole II, and Lt W.E. Ridley, Jr., were the Navigators. Flight Engineers are MSgt J. Farriba and TSgt F.E. Reed. TSgt C.H. Owens, was loadmaster and MSgt Gerald Nance, was the Crew Chief.

Georgia crews were meeting each other coming and going throughout the vast Pacific. Colonel Charles S. Thompson, Jr., 116th Air Transportation Wing Commander, and Lt Col John E. Hayes, Aircraft Commanders on the third Dobbins flight, met Lt Col Allen returning to Georgia as they were heading West from Hawaii. Another Savannah crew was also at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, at the same time. From Hickam crews generally flew to Kwajalein Atoll, a missile testing site. The next stop was Guam's Andersen Air Base from which are launched the mighty B-52's of the Strategic Air Command. For one pilot Lt Col Douglas Embry, who was on board the third Dobbins flight, it was not an unfamiliar route. He had traversed the same waters and same bases more that 20 years before in a C-54 enroute to the Philippines.

The Air Guard crews land at Clark Air Base north of Manila for a 15-hour crew rest and a comprehensive briefing on correct procedures for entering the combat zone of Vietnam. Outbound from the Philippines, crews viewed historic Bataan and Corregidor. Three hours of peaceful flying over the South China Sea and the long stretch of Vietnamese coast appeared serenely ahead. Approaching its borders, the terrain resembled that of California, but a closer inspection revealed that a dense jungle covered the mountain area and most of the plains. Plantations and rice fields from high altitude hid the drama that was being enacted at eye level in many of the hamlets spotting the countryside. The closer the crews drew to Saigon, the more intense the activity became, with aircraft of all descriptions inbound and outbound from the important Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

The city itself appeared normal from the sky, except for the harbor which was crowded with traffic. The airport was jammed with aircraft taxiing to and from the parking areas, but it didn't seem to be so far from home when the Marietta C-97, being piloted by Col Hayes, pulled in beside a Savannah Stratofreighter piloted by Cpt Bland. From the airport, the gifts were taken into Saigon to a warehouse where they were to be catalogued by command and distributed to the men in the field. All along the route, other Air Guard transports were seen at every base—part of the total 76 CHRISTMAS STAR missions flown by the ANG. Between 18 November and 15 December, the 76 crews hauled 406 tons of the gifts, along with other greetings and mail to our U.S. fighting men. Taking part were 59 C-97's and 19 C-121's.

Some even stopped enroute at Subic Bay in the Philippines to drop off a share of the goodies for sailors of the Seventh Fleet. Strangely, this mighty armada of aircraft performed this special mission without having to cut back the Air Guard's normal overseas traffic, which has been running at the rate of 135-145 flights per month. It was another spectacular achievement of the

Air National Guard, as it became a more integral part of the United States Air Force while remaining its strongest and most ready back-up force.

The Georgia Air National Guard's 116th Military Airlift Group became the first Air Guard unit in the nation to receive the C-124 on 7 December 1966. On hand when the C-124C arrived were Colonel Charles S. Thompson, Jr., Commander of the 116th Military Airlift Wing, and Cleveland J. Perkins, Commander of the 116th Military Airlift Group. The 116th MAG was one of three Air Guard groups in the nation to phase out its Boeing C-97 for the C-124 which could carry more than 1 1/2 times the cargo of the C-97.

Only six weeks and two days after receiving its first C-124, the 116th Military Airlift Group at Dobbins AFB, GA, took off on its first over-water flight in "Old Shakey". The flight lifted off from Dobbins 23 January 1967 with Lt Col CJ. Perkins, 116th Military Airlift Group commander in command. After a stopover at Patrick AFB, FL, the cavernous cargo compartment was stuffed with 26,000 pounds of equipment and supplies for downrange stations along the missile test route. Destination was St. Johns, Antigua Island, British West Indies, where the crew landed without incident and on schedule.

Returning to Dobbins the 25th of January by way of Grand Turk, Aleuthra and Grand Bahamas Islands, the behemoth brought back another 8,000 pounds of freight. Aircraft commander on the return flight was Lt Col John E. Hayes, 128 Military Airlift Squadron Command Post Supervisor. By 10 March, the 128 Military Airlift Squadron had completed four such flights in the C-124 to Antigua.

The first significant flight made in a C-124 by the 116th took place on 21 March when a Joint Chief of Staff mission was logged to Spain. The Georgia Guard unit continued its schedule of three flights a month to Southeast Asia with its citizen-soldier crews, the commander said. "Actually, we have averaged more since December 1965."

A Georgia crew flying the Air National Guard's initial C-124 flight to Southeast Asia returned with praise for the huge aircraft. Lt Col Cleveland J. Perkins, Jr., commander of the 116th Military Airlift Group, Dobbins AFB, GA, spoke highly of the C-124's airlift capabilities as he compared the plane to the C-97. The recent flight also marked the first large step in the unit's conversion from the C-97 to the C-124.

"Except for not being pressurized, the C-124 is better in every aspect than the C-97 for our mission," said Col Perkins, who was aircraft commander on the 20,000 mile flight.

Col Perkins estimated that the C-124 had boosted the airlift capabilities of the 116th by a minimum of about 40 percent. "Also, we can transport just about any strategic material now," he explained, "whereas before we were limited to size of military cargo."

The 14 day flight, which began 1 April 1967 from Dobbins, carried some 21,000 pounds of cargo from Travis AFB, CA, to Da Nang AB, South Vietnam. The aircraft returned with an assigned

cargo of some 17,000 pounds, according to Col Perkins.

Crewmembers of the flight were: 1st Lt R.H. Burnette, co-pilot: Cpt A.J. Mandel, navigator; MSgt J.A. Edwards, 1st Flight Engineer; MSgt C.B. Cox, 2nd Flight Engineer, and MSgt H.D. Luke, Loadmaster.

In the early 70's, the 116th Military Airlift Group continued their worldwide missions in the C-124. Vietnam flights were now as much a part of their monthly routine as were Europe, South America, Greenland, etc. Many flights to Vietnam were now going beyond the primary air bases at Saigon and Da Nang to such locations as Cam Rahn Bay, Phu Cat, and Hue Phu Bai. By late 1972 the C-141 was becoming operational in sufficient numbers to handle the cargo formerly flown "lower and slower" by the C-124. The 116th MAG was getting ready for another conversion. This conversion would be a return to the fighter missions.

The airlift of 402 Georgia Army National Guardsmen, from their bivouac area deep in the pines of Ft. Stewart on 9 July 1968 to Dobbins AFB highlighted the two-week encampment of the Georgia Emergency Operation Headquarters. This mission involved the use of seven C-124 Globemaster aircraft of the 116th Military Airlift Wing's 116th and 165th Military Airlift Groups from Dobbins and Savannah. The airlift began in Savannah early on 9 July when convoys of trucks bearing military policemen of the 170th and 176th MP Battalions began arriving from Ft. Stewart. Four of the giant C-124's were loaded with 33 jeeps and two 2½ ton trucks. The remaining three Globemasters picked up the battle-ready Guardsmen and landed at Dobbins an hour and ten minutes later. At the conclusion of the exercise at Dobbins, Maj James L. VanZee of the Continental Army Command termed the exercise one of the best he has ever witnessed, including those of the active armed forces.

The 116th Tactical Fighter Wing completed a conversion program from the F-100 to the F-105G in September 1979 when C-3 was declared. The F-105G required two crewmembers to serve in an electronic defense suppression role. The relative complexity of the new mission, as compared to the single seat F-100 iron bomb mission, presented a training challenge of immense proportion. When no higher headquarters exercises were available, the unit built its own composite strike exercise and arranged for U.S. Navy destroyers and fast frigates to provide the electronic signals.



128 TFS F-100s on the ramp at Dobbins AFB. (ANG photo)

When the last F-100 left the runway at Dobbins AFB, 3 May 1979 it marked the end of an era for the 116th Tactical Fighter Wing and a venerable old war-horse. At the controls was Lt Col Darwin M. Puls, former commander of the 128 TFS and a veteran Super Sabre pilot. Lt Col Puls flew the "Hun" to Arizona where Air Force personnel were to strip the aircraft and place it in the boneyard.

The 116th Tactical Fighter Wing proposed and gained approval for many needed modifications to the F-105. The 116th Wing did not deploy for annual field training as a unit but continued the concept of mini-deployments. To accomplish a more realistic training deployment with the F-105G, the 9th Air Force IG conducted an Operational Readiness Inspection at Travis Field, Savannah, Georgia. The scenario was to deploy 15 aircraft to support a United States ally. Sorties were scheduled to Fort Stewart, Georgia, Fort Benning, Georgia, Pinecastle Range and Avon Park Range. The ORI was conducted jointly with a TAC/IG ORI and the 347th Tactical Fighter Wing. The grand finale of the inspection was a joint Army-Air exercise dubbed QUICK THRUST 80-1. The backbone of the exercise was the Air Guard's 129th Tactical Control Flight out of Kennesaw, GA. By use of sophisticated radar and communications, the air controllers of that unit were able to safely direct an abundance of varied aircraft through the crowded sky.

Aircrew and maintenance crews from the 116th Tactical Fighter Wing took advantage of two deployments in 1979 to obtain realistic training with their F-105s. A RED FLAG exercise at Nellis AFB, Nevada in March and the CORSAIR ROUGE exercise at England Air Force Base, Louisiana in

April. During both exercises the 116th performed "Wild Weasel" tactical and hunter-killer missions required of the aircrews. At RED FLAG, crews of the 116th flew missions with F-4, A-7, F-15, and the Harrier Throughout the CORSAIR ROUGE Exercise the 116 TFW flew missions with A-7 and F-4 and active duty Air Force units. Aircrews logged approximately 124 flying hours by participating in the two deployments. Also, four pilots and four electronic warfare officers achieved mission-ready status in the F-105.

The Wing continued its aggressive efforts toward more realistic training in the electronics warfare role. It upgraded its aircrew's capabilities through participation in higher headquarters and unit generated Composite Force Training (CFT) exercise such as QUICK THRUST, SENTRY, VOLUNTEER, SENTRY DESERT FLAG, SENTRY BAMA, NAVEX, and RED FLAG. The unit developed a monthly overnight deployment of six aircraft to Eglin AFB, Florida.

In keeping with the unit's goal of increasing complexity and realism in its local CFT exercise, GB XI generated 62 sorties three waves in a single day. The scenario enhanced the Wing Checkered Flag training program by conducting intensive flying and ground operations which typified initial tasking at their Checkered Flag base. It was the first wing planned exercise providing enhanced command and control utilizing the local command post and HF radio with AWACS on station during strikes to coordinate deployed forces operations. The eleven major units participating included airlift; aggressor navy, Marine, and Air Force fighters, as well as AWACS; an air refueling group; and a guided missile frigate. This exercise incorporated their ability to survive and operate exercises at home station which served to involve all wing support elements.

The 116 TFG faced many challenges with the F-105. One of the most significant concerned the late delivery of aircraft which seriously hampered unit efforts to achieve aircrew training goals. To compound the situation, the unit immediately experienced aircraft fuel cell problems which severely taxed the maintenance personnel. With no fuel cell repair facility available and inclement weather a severe limiting factor, the maintenance personnel replaced 55 cells and changed out the foam in 155 additional cells, requiring 11,700 man-hours.

116th Wing planning for NATO's DISPLAY DETERMINATION began early in 1980. Eight F-105s departed just after midnight on 26 September 1980 for Torrejon AB, Spain. The aircrews all arrived safely at Torrejon for 17 hours crew rest before departing for Murted AB. The F-105s arrived at Murted in the afternoon on 27 September. Brig Gen Ben L. Patterson, Jr., was the pilot of the first aircraft landing with electronic warfare officer Capt Bill Bryan in his back seat. More than 200 116th Guardsmen, including additional aircrews, maintenance and support personnel, were included in the deployment. Support personnel with all necessary equipment and supplies deployed aboard Military Airlift Command C-141s. Two weeks produced more than 100 sorties for the "Wild Weasel" aircrews and they all agreed it was a learning experience. The 116th Guardsmen arrived in Turkey shortly after a military coup. There were Turkish soldiers on the street corners with automatic weapons and military vehicles everywhere, but there were no problems. Living in tent city made many feel they were on the "MASH" TV set. The tents had plywood floors necessitated by the fine soil in this area of Turkey.

The Wing was evaluated during a Management Effectiveness Inspection conducted by the Inspector General, Headquarters Ninth Air Force, 18-22 September 1981. Of 182 areas inspected, 14 were found to be "Outstanding" with 94 areas found "Excellent." The overall evaluation was "Excellent." In a daylong operation 116th ground personnel faced sniper infiltration, crashed aircraft, unexploded bombs and nuclear contamination. A highlight of the exercise was the participation of a sophisticated Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft assigned to the 552 AWACW, Tinker AFB, OK. "AWACS", said Lt Col Don Hubbard, 116th exercise warlord, "made the exercise for us."

July 1982 the 116th Tactical Fighter Wing successfully executed a Composite Force Training exercise, SENTRY WEASEL. The Deployed CFT exercise was the result of six months of planning and coordination involving thirteen flying units and three services. SENTRY WEASEL was an exercise designed to test the 116 TFW's Checkered Flag Training program by conducting intensive flying and ground operations from a deployed location, Savannah Field Training Site. Two days of Chemical Warfare and Disaster Preparedness Training were conducted during the course of the deployment. The flying portion of the exercise was enhanced by an intelligence scenario written to closely simulate expected wartime conditions at our Checkered Flag location. SC; 159th Tactical Fighter Group, New Orleans NAS, LA. Aircrews flew combat-type missions, bombing railroad complexes, vehicle convoys, bridges, tunnels, airfields, SAM sites and industrial complexes, all while coping with communication jamming equipment and dodging surface-to-air missiles, anti-aircraft artillery and "aggressors" flying F-5s. The 116th Wing was praised for its command and control of one of the largest training exercises ever held. While providing prime unit management, the 116th flew 207 of the 2410 total exercise sorties to become the top unit in sortie production. Thirty-seven military organizations flying the following aircraft: F-100s, CF-104s, F-105s, F-5s, F-15s, F-4Ns, RF-4s, A-7s, A-10s, AV-8s, EA-6Bs, F-111s, O-2s, C-141s, C-130s, B-52s, FB-111s, HH-3s, and KC-135s participated in RED FLAG 78-1. Aircrews and ground crews alike agreed that they had completed the best combat training that TAC has to offer.

The 116th Tactical Fighter Wing completed a conversion program from the F-100 to the F-105G in September 1979 when C-3 was declared. The F-105G required two crewmembers to serve in an electronic defense suppression role. The relative complexity of the new mission, as compared to the single seat F-100 iron bomb mission, presented a training challenge of immense proportion. When no higher headquarters exercises were available, the unit built its own composite strike exercise and arranged for U.S. Navy destroyers and fast frigates to provide the electronic signals.

The 116th Tactical Fighter Wing proposed and gained approval for many needed modifications to the F-105. The 116th Wing did not deploy for annual field training as a unit but continued the concept of mini-deployments. To accomplish a more realistic training deployment with the F-105G, the 9th Air Force IG conducted an Operational Readiness Inspection at Travis Field, Savannah, Georgia. The scenario was to deploy 15 aircraft to support a United States ally. Sorties were scheduled to Fort Stewart, Georgia, Fort Benning, Georgia, Pinycastle Range and Avon Park Range. The ORI was conducted jointly with a TAC/IG ORI and the 347th Tactical

Fighter Wing. The grand finale of the inspection was a joint Army-Air exercise dubbed QUICK THRUST 80-1. The backbone of the exercise was the Air Guard's 129th Tactical Control Flight out of Kennesaw, GA. By use of sophisticated radar and communications, the air controllers of that unit were able to safely direct an abundance of varied aircraft through the crowded sky.

The Wing began the conversion from the F-105G "Wild Weasel" to the F-4D Phantom on 1 January 1983. The first F-4D for use as a maintenance trainer arrived at Dobbins in October from Korea. The first aircrews began training at McConnell AFB, Kansas in October, 1982.

Maintenance personnel also began attending training schools at this time. The first aircrews began upgrade training at McConnell AFB, Kansas in October and Homestead AFB, Florida in November.

In November the first local F-4 flight was flown. The last F-105G departed Dobbins in May 1983 for Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona and the "bone yard".

The Wing was graded "Excellent" during the 9th AF MEI in July 1983, but the first real test of the wing's combat capability in the Phantom came during its two-week deployment in August 1983 for annual training. The 116th Tactical Fighter Wing deployed to the Savannah Field Training Site with 14 F-4D's. During the first week low level and ground attack missions were flown to the Townsend Range for bombing and strafing. A number of Dissimilar Air Combat Training missions were flown against F-16's from Shaw AFB, A-6's from Cecil Field, and A-7D's from Ohio. "Clothestree", the 117th Tactical Control Group, provided GCI radar support. During this week the 116th Tactical Fighter Wing was declared C-3 in the F-4D. the real demanding missions were yet to come. On Sunday, 21 August, the wing's first Operational Readiness Exercise with the F-4D was initiated with the receipt of the Air Task order for the next day. The emphasis over the next five days was to surge realistic combat sorties under realistic combat conditions. Chemical defense procedures were exercised and quick turn operations were employed. Interdiction, Close Air Support and Air Defense missions were executed.

Interdiction missions were flown to the Eglin, Pinecastle and Avon Park ranges. Almost all were heavy weight, with each aircraft loaded with six 500 pound inert bombs, the gun and chaff. Upon recovery, all aircraft were quick turned and rearmed for the next go.

Close air support missions were also flown in the heavy weight configuration. Until given the launch order, the aircrew did not know where they would drop in support of the Army. Upon recovery, these aircraft were also quick turned to alert status. Aircrews flew up to three Close Air Support sorties per day from alert status. Air defense missions were also flown from alert status. Aggressor air was provided by 33 TFW F-15's deployed to Savannah from Eglin AFB, Florida. Engagements took place in W-157 under the control of "Clothestree", 117th Tactical Control Group. The 116th Tactical Fighter Wing completed its conversion from the F-105G Thunderchief to the F-4D Phantom aircraft on September 1, 1983.

Members of the 116th participated in twelve exercises or unit deployments during 1984. These deployments were conducted at Ft. Stewart and Moody AFB, Ga.; Patrick AFB, Fla.; Montgomery, Ala. And Myrtle Beach AFB, S.C.

The 116th Tactical Fighter Wing conducted a unit generated Operational Readiness Exercise at the Field Training Site in Savannah during May 19 to 25, 1984. Some 194 sorties were flown during this period for a total of 241 flying hours. An exercise evaluation team from Moody AFB, Ga., conducted and evaluated the six-day exercise. The Wing received their sixth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award during a ceremony at Dobbins AFB, April 14, 1984.

In 1985, the Wing completed another flying year without a major mishap. The 116th is one of only two Air National Guard units tasked to perform the complex Pave Spike mission, as well as Maverick employment which utilizes laser-guided bomb delivery and standoff target designation systems. The 116th was also selected as the only F-4D unit to carry and employ the captive AIM-9L missile. They also assisted the USAF Fighter Weapons School by providing Maverick and Pave Spike training.

Due to the lack of airspace locally, the 116th generated or participated in a number of demanding deployments during the year. Among these was a Ninth Air Force Operational Readiness Inspection carried out both at Dobbins AFB and at the Savannah Training Site. Eighteen F-4Ds deployed during the inspection. Many of the sorties were generated in the heat and humidity of South Georgia in July with ground crews clothed in full chemical defense gear.

Members of the 116th participated in five other deployments during the year; MAPLE FLAG XIV at Cold Lake, Alberta, Canada: participation in Dissimilar Air Combat Training at Davis-Monthan AFB, GREEN FLAG at Nellis AFB, and Pave Spike tactics at Hill AFB, Utah.

The Wing pursued every avenue to enhance combat training. The highlight of deployments in August 1985 was CORONET METEOR. This major deployment was the first time ANG units from different states were integrated as one unit and deployed to an overseas location to operate as a single unit. The 116th Tactical Fighter Wing, Dobbins AFB, Georgia and the 187th Tactical Fighter Group, Dannelly Field in Alabama, deployed 461 personnel in support of CORONET METEOR. Over 55 percent of the people deployed were Traditional Guardsmen. The deployment to Spangdahlem AB, Germany included a total of 22 F-4D aircraft with eight in-flight refuelings using four KC-10s and 12 KC-135s.

The 116th and the 187th deployed to Spangdahlem AB because neither had a CHECKERED FLAG Base to which they could deploy. The deployment proved to be a real learning experience for both the ANG and USAF. Firsts for the ANG units included hot pit refueling, Tab Vee integrated combat turnarounds, hydrant refueling in Tab Vees, and aircrew European theater indoctrination. During the surge days, the ANG surpassed a Spangdahlem record of 27 aircraft hot pit refueled on one hot pit in a day by refueling 47 aircraft in one day and 50 aircraft the next. In addition to deployments, the 116th Tactical Fighter Wing generated and hosted several local exercises.

The superior interface between the aircrews and maintenance personnel has resulted in increasing their mission capable rate average more than 20 percent. They are the only ANG unit to be mission capable in both the highly specialized Pave Spike and the Maverick Systems.

The 116th Wing generated and hosted several local exercises in which they sought out and coordinated the participation of Air Force, Air National Guard, Navy and Marine Units. These local exercises utilized all special use airspace and ranges in the entire southeast United States and provided outstanding training with numerous types of aircraft ranging from fighters to AWACS.

The 116th Tactical Fighter Wing, located at Dobbins AFB, GA, completed conversion to the F-15 in 1987. Flying the most sophisticated tactical fighter in the Air Force, the mission of the 116 TFW changed to offensive and defensive counter-air operations.

Despite shortages of experienced F-15 personnel and critical F-15 support equipment, the 116 TFW achieved Initial Operational Capability in less than a year, an unprecedented achievement in an Air National Guard unit. This accomplishment is further distinctive considering 39 of 40 pilots required formal F-15 flight training and 522 maintenance personnel were required to attend F-15 flight maintenance schools. The 116 TFW continues an impressive flight safety program logging over 11,000 accident-free flying hours.

Aircraft and personnel of the 116 TFW received significant training through participation in QUICK THRUST '87', a Ninth Air Force tactical joint force exercise held at the Savannah Field Training Site in January. The 128 Tactical Fighter Squadron conducted its first Air Superiority Alert exercise in March 1987 which called for eight F-15s to fly twenty-four turn-about sorties against adversaries in a period of less than nine hours. Other unit deployments and local exercises enabled the 116 TFW personnel to perform operational missions while receiving valuable training.

In 1988 three aircraft and 28 personnel of the 116 TFW deployed to Hickam AFB, Hawaii for SENTRY ALOHA. Designed to augment the alert status of the Hawaii Air National Guard during the unit's transition to the F-15 aircraft, the SENTRY ALOHA exercise marked the first time since 1960 that aircraft of the 116th were placed on alert status.

The 128 Tactical Fighter Squadron deployed to Boise, Idaho in April 89 to participate in an USAF Tactical Warfare Center Test Program, "Reconnaissance Evaluation 89-4". Sorties flown duplicated adversary employment techniques and tested responses. Over 100 personnel deployed to Nellis AFB, NV for a GREEN FLAG Exercise in July.

On 1 April, the 116 TFW deployed with ten F-15's and 110 support personnel to Nellis AFB, NV, in support of the Fighter Weapons School Dissimilar Air Combat Training program. The unit was scheduled to fly 80 demanding missions in the one-week period, and they were able to fly every sortie scheduled. The Wing also deployed to Panama for a month-long drug interdiction duty in

SENTRY NIGHT-HAWK.

In August 1990 the unit began intensive preparedness for possible mobilization for DESERT SHIELD. Persian Gulf Intelligence briefings were initiated in August and delivered to all Wing personnel on UTA's for the remainder of 1990.

In 1990 the 116th maintained its high state of combat readiness in all phases of operations through deployments, operational exercises and local training.

In 1991 the 116th Tactical Fighter Wing made a second fighter deployment to Turkey, this time in the F-15 Eagle. The wing had been assigned various CHECKERED FLAG bases in Turkey for over 10 years and had participated in a number of site surveys and smaller exercises there during this period.

The earlier deployment was to Murted AB, Turkey in the F-105G "Wild Weasel" in September 1980, just after the military coup. NATO's DISPLAY DETERMINATION 91 tasked the 116TFW/128 TFS to conduct fighter operations under control of 6 ATAF. Georgia Air Guardsmen spent two weeks in early October deployed to Balikesir AB located on Turkey's northeast corner near the Aegean Sea. More than a dozen other Turkish bases were participants in this exercise. In 1991 Germany and the Netherlands also sent forces to DD 91. The exercise had two major objectives for Georgia ANG pilots. The first was to become operationally proficient in the different procedures, conditions and tactics used by NATO and USAF forces. Secondly, it gave them the opportunity to fly with pilots of the Turkish Air Force in a variety of offensive and defensive air operations throughout the region.

Twelve F-15's deployed from Dobbins through Torrejon AB, Spain. The 116 TFW's support team of more than 260 departed Dobbins in a chartered jet for an 18-hour flight through Shannon, Ireland into Balikesir. For the next 15 days in October the Georgia ANG lived and worked in an elaborate "tent city" compound adjacent to the flightline. They gained valuable operational flight experience and a strengthened camaraderie and professional relationship with their Turkish hosts.

On 15 January 1992 the 116 TFW lost an F-15, as two F-15's collided on a training mission over North Carolina. One plane went down in a remote section of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park, while the other plane made an emergency landing at McGhee-Tyson Airport in Knoxville, TN. The downed pilot was recovered.

The National Guard Bureau ordered a mandatory stand down of all fighter aircraft and a complete revamp of training programs in January due to a series of aircraft accidents occurring Guard-wide. In early February the unit returned to flying, and to the conversion of its F-15's to MSIP capable.

Conversion rumors began early in 1993, but the good news was that the Wing continued to keep its proper perspective and took care of business. In February, six F-15's and 33 personnel

participated in READY OLYMPIAD 93-2, a NGB composite force exercise at the Savannah CRTC. The wing participated in a second READY OLYMPIAD in August. In April, 35 personnel and six F-15's deployed to the Volk Field CRTC for READY NORSEMEN 93-2. In June and July, fifty members of the Wing, along with ten F-15's, participated in AIM 120 Weapon System training at Savannah CRTC. The Wing felt direct effects of downsizing as its F-15's were reduced from 26 to 20, but those that remained were more combat capable. They had better missiles, better radar equipment, better defensive measures and a new darker gray paint scheme.

May 1993 was the official conversion announcement by the Department of the Air Force announcing that the 116th Fighter Wing would convert from its current weapon system the F-15 to the B-1B, and move from to Dobbins ARE, GA to Robins AFB, GA with a proposed official conversion date of 1 April 1996. An initial site survey in June 1993 discovered that the 19th Air Refueling Wing would be leaving Robins and the new 116 BW could occupy the old 19 ARW facilities.

The 19th's announcement to move quickly changed and the site survey team returned in July to look for alternate sites. By September, it was estimated that MILCON funds for a separate cantonment area would be approximately \$100 million. As the unit was making the adjustment and just as things were beginning to take place for the move, a one year congressionally imposed moratorium was sponsored by Congressman Newt Gingrich (Nov 93-Nov 94). With the conversion and move being delayed, the Wing pressed on with deployments in 1993 that concentrated on AMRAAM training, i.e., Jun, CRTC Savannah; Aug, CRTC for exercise READY OLYMPIAD; Nov, CRTC and in December, AMRAAM "Rainbow" training at Gulfport, MS.

In July 1994, the Georgia Guard experienced its largest mobilization for a natural disaster in the state's history. A severe storm dropped as much as 20 inches of rain on some areas of Georgia in less than a 24-hour period. As quoted from the Atlanta Journal/Constitution, "For victims of Georgia's worst natural disaster, the state National Guard represented the difference between life and death." The Wing was heavily involved in many aspects of the disaster relief to include Lt Col Tom Lynn as Commander of the Macon Task Force for the real world operation appropriately named CRESTED RIVER.

In early February 1995, the 116th Fighter Wing and 128 Fighter Squadron deployed six F-15 Eagles halfway around the world to Singapore in order to participate in COMMANDO SLING 95-4. The deployment required months of planning led by project officer, Capt Greg O'Conner. COMMANDO SLING detail planning began in September 1994. Unit representatives met to determine requirements for operations, maintenance, munitions, personnel, logistics, security, medical, etc. The exercise was designed to operate in two separate phases. Phase I was 6-25 February and Phase II was 25 February-14 March.

The Wing mission was to deploy six F-15 Eagles from Dobbins ARE to Paya Lebar AB, Singapore for mutual air combat training with the Singapore Air Force (SAP) F-16's. Enroute stops were at Hickam AFB, Hawaii and Kadena AB, Japan, with outgoing support personnel deploying aboard C-141 and KC-10 tankers which flew across the Pacific alongside the Eagles.

The COMMANDO SLING Exercise supports US Joint Defense Agreements in Southeast Asia. Singapore considers a US presence in the region as a post-cold war necessity to Asia-Pacific stability and was the first Asian country to offer the US access to logistical and other facilities after the Philippines decided not to renew the American lease on the base at Subic Bay. Singapore and the United States share a history of military cooperation through combined training and joint exercises involving both naval and air forces.

This status led quite naturally to an agreement in November 1990 to consider stationing a US fighter squadron in Singapore. Before this agreement was completed, US forces had undergone some serious cutbacks, and the final agreement called, instead, for periodic deployments of US fighters to Singapore. Lt Col Scott A. Hammond served as Detachment Commander for Phase I. Maj. Charles K. Janney was Maintenance OIC, with CMSgt Steven L. Poulos as NCOIC, and MSgt Rochelle I. Osbourn as deployed First Sergeant.

After a 24-hour delay departing Dobbins ARB, the outgoing deployment proceeded without any significant problems with aircraft arriving in Singapore on the 10th of February. The Eagles flew 16 sorties per day and exceeded schedule requirements as both USAF and SAP pilots gained new knowledge from this joint training opportunity. Phase I personnel left Singapore on the 25th of February on the same United Airlines commercial aircraft that brought in their Phase II replacements. The two-week cycle began again under Phase II Detachment Commander, Lt Col Richard A. Zatorski. Maj Cynthia Islin took over as Maintenance OIC with CMSgt Robert Gerard as NCOIC and SMSgt Don Paschal as deployment First Sergeant.

Valuable training and high sortie rates continued through Phase II as the 116th generated more sorties per day than any other unit had in a COMMANDO SLING Exercise. The 116th Fighter Wing was quick to acknowledge the strong support by the USAF 497th Combat Training Squadron which was stationed at Paya Lebar AB and hosted the deployment. They provided billeting, meals, and other services at the nearby Semoawang rsavai Facility which was located about a 45 minute drive from Paya Lebar AB. Billeting was mostly in 3 bedroom apartments in old renovated British quarters had been built long ago in a cleared mangrove jungle.

Billeting was exceptional, as were the service and food at the Eagle Club. Manning was such that air guardsmen were often free in the evenings and weekends for sightseeing, dining, or shopping in Singapore. Personnel were well-indoctrinated into Singapore "don'ts:" Don't buy or use drugs, don't spit, chew gum or litter, don't carry knives or read Playboy Magazines. Singapore was serious about their "don'ts," and Georgia Guardsmen respected and obeyed them. Sightseeing favorites were: the harbor tour, Japanese Garden, Chinatown, Merlion Park, Sentosa Island, Zoological Gardens, and the Raffles Hotel.

The Long Bar at the Raffles Hotel originated the "Singapore Sling." Most did some shopping or window shopping on Orchard Road. Orchard Road was to Singapore what Rodeo Drive is to Hollywood. Some 200 Georgia Guardsmen had the opportunity of a lifetime on this deployment and made the most of it.

In 1996, the 128, commanded by LTC Richard Zatorski, completed one of the most complex and difficult conversions in Air National Guard history from F-15's to B-1B. Not only was the entire mission of the 128 changed, the Squadron was uprooted from its home of fifty years and moved 130 miles to the south, Robins AFB. The 128 began a tedious task of rebuilding new aircrews to accommodate the change from a single seat fighter to a four-place bomber. While the Squadron's 68 aircrew were undergoing training, the remaining personnel moved to Robins. At Robins the Wing revamped the temporary facilities, wrote the flight training programs, and started flight operations.

After the Squadron members returned from training it became "Combat Mission Ready", 1 May 1997. The 128, then commanded by LTC Thomas Jordan, was the first bomb squadron to complete B-1B tactical formation training and now leads the bomber community in formation training and employment. The 128 also developed and implemented use of an airborne video tape recording system for the B-1B training/mission documentation. This has proven to be a valuable aircrew-training tool and has become the standard for B-1B operations. Currently, the 128 is commanded by LTC William Welsh.

The ability of the 116th Bomb Wing and 128 Bomb Squadron to turn difficulty into opportunity and their "never-say-die" attitude during their most recent conversion and relocation resulted in the units being awarded its most recent AFOUA. As the Squadron moves with uncertainty into the new millennium, the members of the 128 Bomb Squadron continue to serve this nation with the same pride and distinction as their ancestors.

For the new Bomb Squadron the move between 1996 and 1997 involved refurbishing facilities, and hiring and training 28 new pilots and 34 Weapon Systems Officers. In spite of these obstacles, the 128 Bomb Squadron was declared Combat Mission Ready (CMR) on 1 May 1997, and the Bomb Wing declared Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in the B-1 in December 1997, completing this monumental conversion/relocation on time.

In April 1997, the 128 Bomb Squadron deployed to Ellsworth AFB, SD for day-and-night mountainous low level training and live weapons delivery at Utah Test and Tactics Range (UTTR). With four deployed aircraft, the 128 flew a record six sorties per day, an exceptional sortie rate in the B-1 for the number of aircraft used. Also in April 1997, a tactical formation program was approved for the B-1 community. The 128 was the first bomb squadron to complete this training program on all assigned pilots. After one year, the 128 led the CAP in formation training and employment.

Later in the year, the unit participated in the NORAD exercise, AMALGAM WARRIOR at Eielson FB, Alaska with 279 personnel and seven aircraft deployed.

The 12th, the 16th and the 128 Airborne Command and Control Squadrons fly operational missions with the wing's 17 E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft, which are converted Boeing 707 airliners - radome/phased away (24 foot canoe in 40 foot housing.)

All three squadrons mobilize and deploy mission ready aircrews and supporting ground elements to a designated theater of operations to provide uninterrupted command, control, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in support of the Joint Forces Air Component Commander

Georgia Air, Army Guard Units Come Together for Training Members of the Georgia Air National Guard's 116th Air Control Wing and the state's Army Guard earlier this month combined their respective annual water survival training and extractions training in a first-time joint effort at Lake Tobesofkee in Macon, according to a wing release. An Atlanta-based Army UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter plucked Air Guardsmen from the water during the Aug. 4 training as the helicopter was en route to Fort Stewart, Ga., states the Aug. 8 release.

During each iteration, the Army helicopter crew provided a safety briefing to the airmen, practiced crew interaction, operated the helicopter's hoist, and flew the airmen to the side of the lake. The airmen were from the wing's 128 Airborne Command and Control Squadron at Robins Air Force Base. They are part of the force that operates the Air Force's fleet of E-8C JSTARS ground-surveillance aircraft. Officials with the squadron said the joint training was successful and the wing would look at ways to develop a formal course that incorporates it.

2013

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 29 Jul 2020
Updated: 1 Sep 2021

Sources

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