

128th AIR REFUELING WING



LINEAGE

362nd Fighter Group constituted, 11 Feb 1943

Activated, 1 Mar 1943

Inactivated, 1 Aug 1946

Redesignated 128th Fighter Group

Allotted to ANG (Wis), 2 Aug 1946

Extended federal recognition, 29 Jun 1948

Ordered to active duty, 1 Feb 1951

Redesignated 128th Fighter Interceptor Group

Inactivated, 6 Feb Relieved from active duty, returned to ANG (Wis), and activated, 1 Nov 1952

Redesignated 128th Air Refueling Group

Redesignated 128th Air Refueling Wing, 16 Oct 1995

STATIONS

Westover Field, MA, 1 Mar 1943

Bradley Field, CT, 22 Jun 1943

Groton Field, CT, 2 Aug 1943

Mitchel Field, NY, 19 Oct-12 Nov 1943

Worm-ingford, England, 30 Nov 1943

Headcorn, England, 13 Apr 1944;

Lignerolles, France, 2 Jul 1944

Rennes, France, 10 Aug 1944

Prosnes, France, 19 Sep 1944

Rouvres, France, 5 Nov 1944

Frankfurt, Germany, 8 Apr 1945

Furth, Germany, 30 Apr 1945

Illesheim, Germany, 3 May 1945

Straubing, Germany, 12 May-Aug 1945

Seymour Johnson Field, NC, 5 Sep 1945

Biggs Field, TX, 3 Dec 1945-1 Aug 1946

General Billy Mitchell Field, WI, 1 Feb 1951

Truax Field, WI, 16 Feb 1951-6 Feb 1952

Milwaukee, WI

ASSIGNMENTS

Ninth Air Force

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-47

KC-135R

Support Aircraft

C-26B

COMMANDERS

Col Morton D Magorfin, 1 Mar 1943

Col Joseph L Laughlin, 10 Aug 1944-1 Aug 1946

Col Paul Fojtik, 1951-Feb 1952.

Col Al Grams

LTC Kenneth G. Stasiewicz, Feb 1980

LTC Bailey

Col Eugene A. Schmitz, #1990

Col Fred Sloan, #1993

Col Ted Metzgar

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

American Theater

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Brest, France, 25 Aug 1944

Moselle-Rhine River Triangle, 16 Mar 1945

EMBLEM

Azure, a bend or between in chief, two barbs (triple pronged) of the last and a cumulo nimbus cloud proper issuing from base. Over all from dexter base, two parallel piles point to sinister

chief, gules, points, sable. (Approved, 21 Apr 1954)

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

SURSUM PRORSUSQUE—Upward and Onward

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Flew first mission, escorting B-24s that attacked V-weapon launching sites near Pas de Calais, on 8 Feb 1944. Until Apr 1944, engaged chiefly in escorting bombers that struck factories, railroads, airfields, and other targets on the Continent. Repeatedly attacked communications in northern France and in Belgium during Apr and May, in preparation for the invasion of Normandy. Escorted C-47's that dropped paratroops over Normandy on 6 and 7 Jun. Afterward, engaged primarily in interdiction and close-support activities, flying strafing and dive-bombing missions designed to assist the operations of ground forces. Moved to the Continent early in Jul 1944 and bombed enemy troops to aid the Allied breakthrough at St Lo later that month. Supported the subsequent advance of ground forces toward the Rhine by attacking railroads, trucks, bridges, power stations, fuel dumps, and other facilities. Received a DUG for a mission against the harbor at Brest on 25 Aug 1944 when, in spite of heavy overcast and intense enemy fire, the group attacked at low altitude, hitting naval installations, cruisers, troop transports, merchant vessels, and other objectives. Bombed and strafed such targets as flak positions, armored vehicles, and troop concentrations during the Battle of the Bulge, Dec 1944-Jan 1945. Received second DUG for action over the Moselle-Rhine River triangle: despite the intense anti-aircraft fire encountered while flying armed reconnaissance in close cooperation with infantry forces in that area on 16 Mar 1945, the group hit enemy forces, equipment, and facilities, its targets including motor transports, armored vehicles, railroads, railway cars, and gun emplacements. Continued operations until 1 May 1945.

1950 In November of 1950 the 128th Fighter Interceptor Wing was formed In January 1951 the 128th was activated and called to active duty for 21 months to serve in the Korean War. 1961

128th Fighter-Interceptor Group: Federalized ANG on 10 February 1951 as the 128th Fighter Group at Gen. Mitchell Field, WI, and assigned to 128th Fighter-Interceptor Wing; moved to Truax Field, WI, on 16 February 1951 as the 128th Fighter-Interceptor Group; inactivated on 6 February 1952.

The 128th completed construction of a new 33,000 square-foot aircraft maintenance facility.

The unit hosted a tactical response exercise for 50 local law enforcement officers from five agencies. Anti-terrorism Force Protection education programs also trained local area law enforcement agencies on national “hate groups” and related hate crimes.

The 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard, has had a long and illustrious record of service to the State of Wisconsin and the United States of America. From natural

disasters to service in the Korean War, Desert Storm, Restore Hope and Deny Flight, the men and women of the 128th Air Refueling Wing have responded to changing world events and tasking requirements with dignity, honor and courage.

1947 The Wisconsin Air National Guard was established in 1947. The first units were the 128 Fighter Group; 126 Utility Flight, Weather Station; 128 Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron; and Detachment A, 228 Service Group, all located at Mitchell Field, Milwaukee.

In January 1951 the 128th was activated and called to active duty for 21 months to serve in the Korean War.

1967 The 128th Air Refueling Group participated in a historic operation in a foreign land for a sustained period of time without a call up. The 128th, along with four other Air National Guard refueling units, stationed a contingent of its KC-97's at Rhein main Air Force Base, West Germany. It was designated Operation "Creek Party" and was destined to last for 10 years. This operation began on 2 June 1967, when 24 Wisconsin Air Guard members departed for Germany.

1979 In January 1979 the unit began the 24 hour per day Strategic Air Command (SAC) alert commitment. This commitment would be maintained for the next 12 years until President George Bush ended the SAC Alert Force in 1991.

1990 roared to a close with an announcement that the 128th was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period 1 Jul 88 to 30 Jun 90. The unit members felt that they really earned and deserved this award. Their record speaks for itself — an outstanding job accomplished through great effort and intense dedication.

A telephone call came to the 128th Air Refueling Group Commander in the middle of the night of 6 Aug 90 from the Command Structure at the NGB: "Put your volunteer aircrew members in crew rest and generate all your available aircraft ASAP". With very little warning or inclination about what is happening in the world, the 128th was dramatically thrust into the historic Persian Gulf. When the midnight phone call was relayed to our people through the chain of command, everyone responded with enthusiasm. Eleven hours after the call, our first aircraft departed Milwaukee for Moron AB, Spain at 1100 hours 7 Aug 90. This launch was the "first tanker" from the ANG, Air Force Reserve and active duty tanker fleet to deploy to a forward operating location. Furthermore, we were one of the first aircraft in the USAF to launch in support of Desert Shield. In all, 3 aircraft and 69 Operation and Maintenance "volunteers" deployed to a SECRET Forward Operating Location during this first wave. Most family members did not know where their loved ones were going nor for how long they would be gone. At Moron, 10 aircraft from the ANG Tanker community (Milwaukee, Chicago, Phoenix, Pittsburgh and Knoxville) formed a cohesive, efficient air bridge operation. They stayed in place until the requirement for this mission ended on 30 September. The deployed Unit Commanders took turns commanding this ANG task force with Milwaukee in charge 24 August to 10 September. The four (4) Milwaukee Tankers alone compiled an enviable record of 440 flying hours, 86 sorties, and 2,274,300 lbs of fuel offloaded as we performed our critical mission of deploying USAF

aircraft to the Persian Gulf. Our next assignment was to support the Tanker Operations at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Again many "volunteers" stepped forward to fulfill the taskings of air refueling the hundreds of fighter and support aircraft stationed in Saudi. The 128th supplied 2 aircraft, 2 crews and numerous maintenance support personnel continuously from 1 October to 18 December when our aircraft were recalled to home station by the NGB in anticipation of new directions from the President.

1990 A chain of events which had a spectacular effect upon the day-to-day operations of the 128th began in August 1990. On 2 August 1990 Saddam Hussein's Iraq invaded and occupied tiny, Kuwait. On 7 August unit aircraft and volunteer personnel deployed to a forward operating base in support of Desert Shield; the defense of Saudi Arabia. As time passed the crisis went unresolved and in fact became more acute: Desert Storm. On 20 December 1990 the 128th received orders for a partial activation. All aircraft, aircrews and a number of support personnel were dispatched to the newest forward operating base at Cairo, Egypt on 27-29 December 1990. They became the basis for the 1706th Air Refueling Wing (Provisional). Other unit personnel were mobilized for use as stateside "backfill" (replacing troops sent forward) or sent to overseas destinations.

1997 Soon after the summer flooding of 1997, portions of Southeastern Wisconsin were declared a federal disaster area by President Clinton. This opened the door for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to step in. Five unit members volunteered for the state activation in order to help process claims and checks to people whose lives were upended following the disastrous flash floods in the Milwaukee area.

1998 The 128 ARW was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period 15 April 1995 through 14 April 1997. This was the fifth time the unit has won this prestigious award. The previous awards were 5 June 1967 through 10 May 1968; 11 May 1968 through 31 December 1976; 1 July 1988 through 31 June 1990 and 1 September 1992 through 31 August 1994.

1999 On 30 April 1999, the 128 ARW was tasked for a Presidential Reserve Call Up due to the crisis in Kosovo. President William Clinton authorized the call up of 33,000 reserve personnel for up to 270 days. The 128 ARW and the 117 ARW (Alabama Air National Guard) deployed together to Europe to support Operation Allied Force.

The tankers of Milwaukee's 128th Air Refueling Wing are globetrotters by nature. They cruise the world's far-flung air corridors almost routinely, keeping the U.S. Air Force aloft and on task. So, when President Bush launched Operations Noble Eagle (homeland protection) and Enduring

Freedom (global war on terror), the nature of the tankers' work did not change — only the seriousness, and the operational tempo. As fighters swarmed into the sky like angry hornets on and after Sept. 11, 2001, the KC-135s from Milwaukee kept them company, cruising in refueling tracks to provide JP-8 jet fuel on demand. By Sept. 20, several of the 128th's aircraft and volunteer crews had already deployed across oceans to support Operation Enduring Freedom. On Oct. 1, approximately 50 members of the 128th Security Forces Squadron were called to active duty, swelling the ranks of MPs and security personnel being pulled into a nationwide full-court press in order to leave no valuable military assets unprotected. For the next 18 months, the 128th

security forces, like their counterparts from the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, would deploy repeatedly to numerous locations as needed by the Air Force. On Oct. 17, some 75 other members of the wing were called to active duty. The Air National Guard was settling in for the long haul, providing assets under the presidential reserve call-up authority in place of the more informal volunteer staffing that prevailed immediately after Sept. 11. From then until now, personnel and aircraft of the 128th Air Refueling Wing have been in constant motion to and from trouble spots, providing aerial refueling, force protection, and other essential services in the worldwide war on terrorism. As this issue of At Ease went to press, nearly 200 unit members were on active duty, fewer than 10 of them overseas. 2003

2005 In March 2005, the 128 ARW gained a new Wing Commander, Colonel Donald P. Dunbar.

2005 1 Sep

The 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin ANG, deployed fifteen personnel to Louisiana to support hurricane relief efforts.

2 Sep

Sixty personnel from the 128th Air Control Squadron, Wisconsin ANG, deployed in SAD to Louisiana to support hurricane relief operations.

Maintenance crews from the Milwaukee-based 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard, ushered in the first of three additional KC-135 refueling tankers on Nov. 10. The unit is receiving the additional aircraft as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure 2005, eventually bringing the wing's total number of KC-135s to 12. Lt. Col. Winston Hainsworth, the 128th's comptroller, said "the financial impact to our wing and community is quite impressive. With the additional aircraft the wing will add 41 full-time and 41 part-time jobs, and also result in an additional \$5.3 million above the current economic impact of \$71.7 million made to our community." On its way to the 128th, the first of three aircraft made a two-month stop at Kelly Field in San Antonio, Texas to receive KC-135R Block 40 aircraft upgrades. "The upgrades markedly improve the aircraft's avionics," said Maj. Todd Walton, KC-135 instructor pilot, "specifically the navigation and satellite communication systems." The remaining two additional KC-135s are expected to arrive by February 2011.

A \$4 million expansion at the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee that will make maintaining a larger fleet of stratotankers much more efficient is weeks away from completion. The project converts an airplane dock that previously could only accommodate the wings and forward portion of aircraft into a fully enclosed hangar that will allow for year-round painting and cleaning of KC-135R. According to Chief Master Sgt. Chris Chatham, 128th Air Refueling Wing maintenance operations flight chief, a detailed cleaning for stratotankers requires two days in an enclosed hangar. An isochronical inspection — fully reviewing, repairing and returning an aircraft to the flightline as mission ready — takes one month. Corrosion is the biggest problem for today's aircraft, Chatham explained. "It's always going to happen to these aircraft as they get older," he said. Deployments near salt water require constant corrosion repair, and an aircraft deployed for even 30 days requires corrosion maintenance, he said. Expansion began Sept. 13, 2010 according to Maj. Heath Duncan, 128th

Air Refueling Wing civil engineering squadron commander. The project is expected to wrap up on July 10. The project faced some challenges, such as winter's effects on the new foundation. "We had to figure out a solution to these problems, and then execute the solution," Duncan said. He praised KPH Construction and the architect and engineering firm Mead and Hunt for their continuing role in mitigating the construction challenges. "We wouldn't have done this without this team," he said. Dual hangars will greatly increase the 128th Air Refueling Wing's maintenance capability, Chatham said. The existing hangar is used to great effect, but it is also the site for on-base functions regarding community interactions, such as the Civic Dinner Dance, or training events, such as base-wide annual training. With the new hangar, the maintenance squadron can continue its mission without interruption while also serving the needs of the base's population. Furthermore, the 128th Air Refueling Wing will save money by reducing the amount of time spent maintaining each aircraft, Chatham said. This has become more important since the Wing acquired three new aircraft late last year, Chatham said. "[This expansion will] increase our efficiency by 40 to 50 percent," he said 2011

2011 Members of a Wisconsin Air National Guard unit based in Milwaukee have deployed for 90 days in support of Operation Unified Protector, the NATO led operation in Libya. Col. Ted Metzgar, commander of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, and a team consisting of a number of 128th ARW members and senior staff, departed Milwaukee on June 10 on a Kansas Air National Guard KC-135 supporting the same mission. Metzgar assumed command of the 313th Air Expeditionary Wing on June 17 from Brig. Gen. Roy E. Uptegraff, commander of the 171st Air Refueling Wing, Pennsylvania Air National Guard. The 313th AEW provides air refueling to NATO aircraft enforcing the no-fly zone over Libya. Operation Unified Protector, formerly known as Operation Odyssey Dawn, is a NATO operation enforcing United Nations Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973, which call for protecting the Libyan civilian population from the Libyan military. The resolutions impose sanctions on members of the Moammar Khadafi regime, authorize international embargos, a no-fly zone and all means necessary short of foreign occupation to protect civilians. The operation, which began on March 23, is supported by a coalition of 18 nations. Metzgar said his personal goal is to provide leadership opportunities for members of the 128th during this mission. "This experience will provide them with valuable lessons for future command positions in the Wisconsin Air National Guard," Metzgar said. "The 128th ARW will be in good hands when I depart after going through this field experience."

2011 Sixty-five Airmen and family members from the 128th Air Refueling Wing volunteered to help Habitat for Humanity renovate four houses on North First Street in Milwaukee on June 4. The Airmen placed drywall in the houses from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m., said 2nd Lt. Gregory Damask, the logistics readiness officer for the 128th Logistics Readiness Squadron. Damask has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in the past, and he organized a similar volunteer effort last year. "Let's find a way to get the 128th's name out there," he explained. "Let's give back to the very community that gives to us." Damask said the volunteer efforts were experiences that showcased the Wing's teamwork and willingness to come together. "It was a good feeling to know everyone volunteered their own time," he said. "The home owners were there, and they had nothing but compliments." The response from Habitat for Humanity has been very positive, too. "They asked for us to come back every month," he said. Airmen from the 128th Air Refueling Wing are going to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity in 2012, which will make the event an annual volunteer program that assists local Milwaukee citizens. "[Volunteering] is in

my nature,” Damask said. “I was brought up to give. I’ve been blessed with many benefits, and my personal belief is that if I have the ability to help others, I should.”

2012 Airmen, friends and family members welcomed home their commander and fellow wing members Oct. 14 following a four-month long deployment in Western Europe supporting Operation Unified Protector. Col. Ted Metzgar, commander of the Wisconsin Air National Guard’s 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee, deployed with a number of his staff and commanded active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Airmen. “It was an honor to have commanded a wing dedicated to the successful completion of its mission,” Metzgar said. “I was impressed with the professionalism and patriotism of our Airmen.” While deployed, Metzgar commanded the 313th Air Expeditionary Wing in Western Europe, providing aerial refueling to aircraft supporting Operation Unified Protector — a NATO-led mission enforcing a no-fly zone over the nation of Libya and providing humanitarian assistance to the Libyan civilian population, in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973. The 128th Air Refueling Wing is home to 12 KC-135R and more than 900 Airmen with a primary mission of aerial refueling.





Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources