

169 FIGHTER WING



MISSION

LINEAGE

169 Fighter Interceptor Group received federal recognition, 5 Sep 1957
Redesignated 169 Tactical Fighter Group
Redesignated 169 Fighter Group
Redesignated 169 Fighter Wing

STATIONS

McEntire ANGB, Eastover, SC

ASSIGNMENTS

South Carolina Air National Guard

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

F-16

Support Aircraft

C-130

COMMANDERS

Col Robert H. Morrell, Sep 1957
Col Robert S. Corbett, Sr., May 1960
Col Robert A. Johnson, Sr., Aug 1971
Col Stanley V. Hood, Aug 1980
Col Francis D. Rogers, Jr., Dec 1983

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The South Carolina Air National Guard was formed in December 1946 and today is made up of 1,200 members who train at McEntire Joint National Guard Base. The 2,400-acre base is located about 12 miles east of Columbia.

The 169th FW flies the F-16, The 169th flew the F-16A from 1983-1994, and in 1994 transitioned to the F-16C/Block 52. The SCANG also flies a C-130 for airlift support.

The SCANG has been called to active military service for five major contingency deployments in its 57-year history. In 1950, SCANG members were called to serve for the Korean War, and its members served at various installations in the United States and abroad. In late 1961, the SCANG was called to active duty during the Berlin Crisis, and the 169th Tactical Fighter Group was stationed at Moron, Spain. In late 1990, units of the SCANG were activated and deployed to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield/Storm, flying 2,000 combat missions and dropping 4 million pounds of munitions, while maintaining the highest aircraft mission capable rate in the theater.

In January 2002, aircraft and personnel of the 169th Fighter Wing were deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, directly participating in combat operations.

In February 2003, nearly 400 members of the 169th FW and all of its F-16s were mobilized and deployed to Southwest Asia as part of what became Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 169th was attached to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing, stationed in Qatar. The unit flew more than 400 combat missions, performing the Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) mission and flying numerous precision bombing missions over Iraq.

The 169th FW was also a regular participant in the Air Expeditionary Force, which patrolled the Iraqi no-fly zones. The unit has deployed for Operation Southern Watch (Qatar, 1996), to Operation Northern Watch (Turkey, 2000), and again to Southern Watch (Saudi Arabia, 2001).

The 169th FW was the first Air National Guard unit to deploy alongside active-duty Air Force units to comprise an AEF.

In 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission announced an expansion at McEntire Joint National Guard Base. In November 2006, five more F-16s arrived at the base to begin the execution of the BRAC recommendations.

2005 11 Sep The 169th Fighter Wing, McEntire Air National Guard Base, South Carolina ANG; the 145th Airlift Wing, Charlotte-Douglas IAP, North Carolina ANG, and the 165th Airlift Wing, Savannah IAP, Georgia ANG decided not to implement hurricane evacuation plans due to Hurricane Ophelia.

The 20th Fighter Wing at Shaw AFB, S.C., turned over responsibility for protecting the airspace in the southeast United States to the South Carolina Air National Guard's 169th FW at McEntire Joint National Guard Base, announced Shaw officials Monday. Shaw's F-16s performed the air sovereignty alert mission from Aug. 1, 2006, to May 9, 2011, after an earlier two-year stint right after 9/11, they said. "Shaw's role in the alert mission was to defend the Southeast Air Defense Sector and the 79 million American citizens within that sector from airborne threats," said Col. James Sears, commander of Shaw's 20th Operations Group. The South Carolina Air Guardsmen also fly F-16s. The ASA mission requires three dedicated, armed alert aircraft two primaries and one spare at an alert location, with two pilots and associated maintenance and support personnel on duty at all times. 2011

The SCANG's C-130 unit has a long and distinguished history. Whether they're providing lift support to the fighter squadron or disaster assistance, the C-130 and its crew are always on the go. Recently, they added "K-9" to their mission log when they assisted local law enforcement pick up two very special passengers. On Mar. 18, the crew assisted the Batesburg-Leesville Police Department pick-up two drug and bomb detecting dogs from the Military Working Dog (MWD) program at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. Lt. Col. "Buck" Shuler, command pilot for the C-130, said their primary mission that day was to deliver a trailer of two F-16 smoke missile generators to the Naval Air Station Ft. Worth Joint Reserve Base in Texas.

But when a support request came in from the Batesburg-Leesville Police Department, Shuler said they were more than willing to lend a hand. The B-L Police Department procured the dogs through the Department of Defense's Military Working Dog School where dogs are trained and donated to qualified law enforcement agencies. Police Chief Wallace Oswald, who also is a First Sergeant in the S.C. Army National Guard, flew out to pick up the animals accompanied by one of the department's dog handlers, Senior Airman Nick Carver, who serves in the 169th Security Forces Squadron. "We are a unique asset as the only cargo aircraft in the South Carolina Air National Guard," said Shuler. "We not only provide mission essential lift capabilities for repairs to keep the F-16s flying, we're ready to support whenever and wherever needed." Oswald, who has served in the B-L Police Department for over 30 years, said they did not have any drug or bomb dog assets, as they recently lost one to old age and the other to cancer.

He said the department was very grateful for the S.C. Air National Guard's quick response and assistance in getting the dogs and supporting the community. Carver, who has been a dog

handler with the B-L Police Department for over two years said his new partner will be Sisko, a two year old, 79 pound German Shepherd. His duties will include patrolling and drug and explosive detection. "Although they received training at the school the training never stops with a patrol and detection dog," said Carver. "You have to work with them every day, provide different scenarios and keep them interested."

Carver said Sisko will be with him on the job and even live at his home. He said when a dog joins the police department, they are treated like a police officer and even receive a badge. The B-L Police Department also picked up a two year old 49 pound black Labrador Retriever named Kkaplan. He is from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) puppy program at Lackland. The doubled first two letters in the spelling of a dog's name is the unique indicator of a TSA trained dog. "Kkaplan is not only going to be a drug and bomb detection dog for the department, but also our community relations dog who travels to schools," said Oswald. "The kids just love when we visit and bring one of our dogs along." Sisko and Kkaplan immediately warmed up to their new teammates, Oswald and Carver, with lots of enthusiastic tail wagging and generous licks to their hands.

After loading the C130, the K9s quickly settled in their crates for the ride home. "You can read a dog when you work with them for so long," said Carver. "These dogs have a lot of energy, which will make them good to train because they have that special drive." The MWD program trains over 800 dogs at a time for all Department of Defense and government law enforcement agencies. Not every dog is going to meet all of the mandates in their rigorous 120 day initial training.

The dogs they determine would perform better with more one on one and consistent interaction are adoptable by approved outside law enforcement agencies. "Sisko and Kkaplan will get the first few days off to get acclimated," said Carver. "But after this it's going to time for them to step up and start earning their keep." Carver said the relationship between a dog and his handler gets so tight, the dog eventually just knows when it's a work day and when it's not. They routinely work 12 hour shifts and rotate every two weeks for day and night hours. "I had one dog who knew when it was a day off as he'd still be asleep when I'd look for him," said Carver. "When it was a work day, he'd be up and ready to go as soon as he saw me."

A U.S. Air Force F-16C Fighting Falcon assigned to the 169th Fighter Wing from McEntire Joint National Guard Base, S.C., launches for an afternoon mission as the third and final week of air operations continue in support of Arctic Challenge Exercise 2019 at Kallax Air Base, Lulea, Sweden, June 3, 2019. ACE 19 is a Nordic aviation exercise that provides realistic, scenario-based training to prepare forces for enemy defensive systems. U.S. forces are engaged, postured and ready to deter and defend in an increasingly complex security environment. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Edward Snyder)

KALLAX AIR BASE, Sweden (AFNS) --

U.S. Airmen, equipment and F-16CJ Fighting Falcon aircraft assigned to the South Carolina Air National Guard's 169th Fighter Wing successfully finished the three-week Arctic Challenge Exercise 19.

ACE 19 is a biennial Nordic aviation exercise that serves to amplify scenario-based defensive training and interaction between countries across northern Europe.

“Training exercises like ACE 19 are critical because this region is full of potential adversaries with a robust air threat. And the way that threat will be dealt with is by all the partner nations coming together. Interoperability is what we sought to work on and grow,” said Col. Akshai Gandhi, 169th Fighter Wing commander.

The South Carolina Air National Guard deployed nearly 200 Airmen and a dozen F-16s from McEntire Joint National Guard Base to Sweden. During the exercise, U.S. forces trained with eight other militaries including Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

In addition to the South Carolina Air National Guard forces at Kallax Air Base, the Massachusetts Air National Guard’s 104th Fighter Wing sent Airmen and F-15C Eagle aircraft to Bodø, Norway. The Iowa Air National Guard’s 185th Air Refueling Wing and the New Jersey Air National Guard’s 108th Wing deployed Airmen and KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft to Orland, Norway. Lastly, the U.S. Marine Corps sent Marines and F/A-18 Hornet aircraft from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing to Rovaniemi Air Base, Finland, and a Tactical Air Operations Center and Marines from the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing to Jokkmokk, Sweden.

All in all, 140 aircraft and 4,000 military personnel from nine nations participated in ACE 19. Swedish Air Force Lt. Col. Tobias Wikstrom, wing commander flying at Kallax Air Base, stated approximately 1,600 sorties were flown for ACE 19. During some flight missions, as many as 100 combat aircraft were in the exercise airspace simultaneously. The Arctic Challenge Exercise provided participating countries a unique opportunity to plan and execute a large multinational air operation. The exercise concept was based on a United Nations mandate to operate a large international stabilization force against a highly-skilled, near-peer competitor. All facets of air operations were tested, including offensive and defensive scenarios consisting of both air-to-air and air-to-ground missions.

One of the reasons the South Carolina ANG was invited to participate in this year’s exercise was to demonstrate to partner nations their ability to suppress enemy air defenses, in a realistic training environment. “I think they’ve learned quite a bit about the unique mission of the suppression of enemy air defenses, SEAD, which the 169th FW jets have provided. SEAD was not a mission set that they were overly familiar with. They really didn’t see it in action until we arrived. The last ACE exercise in 2017 did not have any Block 52s (SEAD capable F-16s) partake. That was something we brought to the table this time which was different,” said Maj. Shaun Hoeltje, the South Carolina ANG’s ACE 19 project officer.

In addition to partner nations learning more about SEAD, the South Carolina ANG also learned some things during ACE 19. “One of the things we’re learning is how to operate in the arctic region. It is a challenging environment and it is a good bit different than some of the desert environments or the typical climate in the United States. We’re also learning what some of their capabilities are. We’ve learned that they’re all very professional air forces with slightly different approaches. We’re bridging those gaps so we’ll be a more effective fighting team if that day ever comes,” Gandhi said.

During their TDY, 169th FW maintenance personnel and pilots had numerous opportunities for professional exchanges with their Swedish Air Force counterparts. The F-16 pilots interacted closely with the JAS 39 Gripen pilots with both hands-on inspections of aircraft as well as orientation flights. And the maintainers got to learn more about how each other’s shops do business. “Participating in an exercise like ACE 19 is really important to the South Carolina Air

National Guard because it allows us to further grow relationships with our partner nations. As we bring our aircraft and our systems into play during this exercise, they are learning how to best utilize these capabilities and how to best integrate what we bring to the fight,” Gandhi said.

South Carolina Air Guard Deploys to Poland Air Guard Block 52 F-16s from the 169th Fighter Wing at McEntire JNGB, S.C., deployed to Lask AB, Poland, on May 28, as part of a training deployment to support Operation Atlantic Resolve. The deployment will pair 169th FW F-16s crews with their Polish Air Force counterparts to conduct bilateral training events from Lask, as part of US Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa's allied reassurance initiatives. The US and Poland agreed to establish a permanent aviation detachment at the airfield back in 2012, the first full-time USAF presence in the country, and the location has served as a hub for rotational training 2015

South Carolina Air Guard Wraps Poland AvDet Visit Aircrews and maintainers of the South Carolina Air National Guard's 169th Fighter Wing recently wrapped up a month-long bilateral training rotation to USAF's aviation detachment at Lask AB, Poland. The 100 Air Guardsmen from the 169th FW partnered with Active Duty airmen from the 480th Fighter Squadron to train with the Polish Air Force's 32nd Tactical Air Wing in F-16 operations. The rotation, part of expanded training and engagement activities in Europe connected to Operation Atlantic Resolve, marked the first AvDet rotation to include USAF Active Duty and Air Guard F-16 units in Poland. During their stay at Lask, the crews and maintainers participated in a series of events, such as Exercise Saber Strike, Exercise Baltic Operations 15, Eagle Talon, and Ramstein Guard allowing airmen to participate in air, land, and sea tactical training events with high-end simulated threats. 2015

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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