

122 FIGHTER WING



MISSION

LINEAGE

Organized, Oct 1950
122 Fighter-Bomber Wing
122 Fighter Interceptor Wing
122 Fighter Wing, 15 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Indianapolis, IN
Baer Field, Fort Wayne, IN, 24 May 1951, **1954**

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

F-16
A-10

Support Aircraft

C-26

COMMANDERS

Col Allison Maxwell, 1950
BG Herbert J. Spier, Jr., #1993
Colonel Jeffrey A. Soldner
Colonel David L. Augustine, January 8, 2011
Col Michael D. Stohler

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



In 1964, the Adjutant General of the State, MG John Anderson, would present LTC Petercheff a new unit flag bearing Colonel Farmer's prizewinning emblem. The emblem carries the motto "We Respond", a statement of the readiness to answer country's or state's call to duty. There is the white wing of a dove on a blue background to denote a desire to maintain peace, a nuclear symbol signifying a capability for unleashing devastating retaliatory power and a bolt of lightning for the ability to strike forcefully and quickly. Also on the emblem are white stars arrayed in the order of the Constellation of the Northern Cross, brightly visible in the Northern Hemisphere akin to the bright distinction of the Indiana Air National Guard among other members of their peer group

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 122 Fighter Wing was authorized and organized in Indianapolis, in October, 1950. Colonel Allison Maxwell was named the Wing's first commander with an organizational structure as follows:

122 Fighter Wing

122 Fighter Group

113th Fighter Squadron

113th Utility Flight

122 Air Base Group

113th Weather Flight

It was becoming more evident that Stout Field was not adequate to support the number of units and the increasing number of personnel assigned to them, however, action on the subject could be deferred indefinitely as more important matters had made an appearance on the horizon. On 24 May of 1951, the 122 Fighter-Bomber Wing was transferred to Baer Field at Fort Wayne, Indiana

New units were added to the Hulman Field family in 1955. Lt Colonel John Earle brought his 122 Air Base Group from Indianapolis, comprised of the 122 Food Service Squadron under Major Jim Davis, Major Lloyd Smith's 122 Communications Squadron, Jim Franklin's 122 Air Police Squadron and Lieutenant George Mahler's 122 Installation Squadron. The Air Base Group was joined by the 122 Tactical Hospital under Lt Colonel William Sandy. Late in the year Lt Colonel Ralph E. Spencer would leave his full-time position as the Ft. Wayne Base Supply Officer and assume similar duties at Hulman Field.

New leadership led the troops back to Alpena for the 1957 version of annual training. But first, the troops were led to Terre Haute's Union Station and placed on trains while Terre Haute's F-86s met the Ft. Wayne "Sabres" at a designated rendezvous, thus heading all units of the Wing for the northern tip of upper Michigan. Major Fred Campbell, Jr. was the new C.O. of the Air Base Group. Lt Frank Walker headed up the Installations Squadron. Both Lt. Walker and Lt. Louis Wailley, boss of the 122 Food Service Squadron were Army National Guard transplants, as were Captain Wesley Farmer and Sgt Jack Harden. Lt Jim Kissel led the Air Police Squadron and Lt. Colonel Arthur Hirschy took the helm of the 122 Tactical Hospital.

February of 1958 saw some of the members of our fighter-interceptor squadron leave for Travis Field in Savannah, Georgia. Major McMillan, Captains Taylor and Higbie, along with Lieutenants Coffey, Maxim, Krings, and Francis were accompanied by ten support and specialty ground crews, namely: Knecht, McFarland, Terry Mills, Gus Sipes, Skaggs, Virgil Streeter, Don Westerfield, John R. White, and Art Wright. While these folks were in Savannah, the recently appointed Adjutant General, Brigadier General John McConnell, announced the 122 Wing would become a Fighter-Bomber Wing (Special Delivery) which to Richard Bach in his book "Strangers to the Ground", meant learning about the "Device" and carrying the "Shape". The 113th would soon be accepting the F-84F, which, as the local newspaper reported, meant the unit would be equipped with an atomic bomber.

A new dimension in annual training was introduced for the 1958 edition of annual training when the Indiana Air National Guard announced the opening of an Air to Ground gunnery range at Camp Atterbury, near Edinburg, Indiana. Fifty square miles of once artillery range was handed over from the "gravel grinders" to the "boys in blue" and the first full-time range crew, headed up by First Lieutenant Chester "Pete" Carey, reported to the range with Bob Smith, Bob Woods, and Don Caldwell. The plan was thus. Major Petercheff would lead half of the 113th and 163rd Fighter-Bomber Squadrons to Alpena and perform air-to-air training and the support units would get their ancillary training (weapons firing, records checks, etc) out of the way.

Major Bob Hormann, the 122 Fighter-Bomber Group Commander would command at both Hulman Field and Atterbury Range and supervise air-to-ground training with the other half of both unit's aircraft and aircrews. Captain Higbie would schedule operations at Alpena while Captain Hettlinger would perform the same chores at Hulman Field. Then at mid-term of the exercise, the aircrews would switch bases.

The unit was again federally activated from October 1961 to August 1962, assigned to the 17th Air Force at Chambley, France, during the Berlin Crisis.

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Two more outstanding achievement awards came to individuals and the unit in this year. The 122 Tactical-Fighter Wing (Special Delivery) (a new name given with the assignment of an additional mission: assisting in our air defense reaction to an attack on the United States) and all of its squadrons (including a new addition to the Wing, the 112th Tactical Fighter Squadron located in Toledo, Ohio) was presented the Continental Air Command Flying Safety Award for 7,000 hours of accident free flying from 1 April through 30 September of 1958.

The Wing deployed a composite force of eighteen aircraft from all three flying units. Under the command of the Wing Director of Operations, Lt. Colonel Ervin Bucher, with a manning allocation of sixty support personnel, the Indiana unit received an overall "outstanding" rating from the USAF Inspector-General, which opened the door for all Air National Guard units to participate in future live fire power missions. "Times over target were within plus or minus ten seconds and all targets were destroyed. The display of precise timing and accuracy of weapons delivery was indeed commendable." so read the IG report. The Wing expended fifty-nine 500 pound bombs, fifty-six napalm fire bombs and 382 rockets in 219 flying hours, all deliveries being live demonstrations.

The decade of the 60's began with a streamlined 122 Tactical Fighter Wing. The three Tactical Squadrons, 163rd at Fort Wayne, 112th at Toledo, Ohio and our 113th became self-sufficient mobile fighter units, capable of deploying with enough non-tactical support personnel to sustain a tactical commitment anywhere in the world. The 113th would absorb most of the total personnel assigned to the former non-tactical units at Hulman Field. Unit commanders would become staff officers to the commander of the 113th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Major Richard Petercheff. The 122 Air Base Group made up of the Air Police, Operations, and Installations Squadrons along with the 122 Tactical Hospital would be directed to move their unit designations to Baer Field at Fort Wayne. The 122 Communications and 122 Food Service Squadrons were eliminated as organizational entities while the 113th Weather Flight remained in place at Terre Haute.

Good bye, old 513! Hello, 093! A song title? No, but crew chief Norm Cook was whistling a happy tune! Although he lost his C-47, a faithful companion on many a journey, he gained a C-54. Two more engines than the "Goon"; our flying crew chief would enjoy many comfortable hours of cross country flying in the bigger bird.

The entire unit was pumped up from the most intensive summer camp flying programs ever attempted. An one day sortie record was set on the Wednesday of the second week of this July encampment. Averaging almost four missions (sorties) per aircraft, the twenty-one aircraft available for flying that day turned in a total of seventy sorties breaking the sixty- eight sortie mark set by the 122TFW. To describe the activity, work, planning, cooperation and emotional levels of this particular camp is beyond the capability of this writer but the 0400 to 2200 flight line work day set the schedule and tone for unit support personnel from refuelers, weather watchers, cooks, cops and ops types to those who were there just to help in whatever way they could. Everything fell into place and to say the unit flew nearly 600 hours at annual training just doesn't tell it all.

Fiscal Year 1994 saw the 122FW participate in various humanitarian relief efforts throughout the world. Members of the base Hospital participated in Operation Sea Signal, which is the Air National Guard's effort to support the refugees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In support of the Humanitarian Civic Aid Program, our Civil Engineering Squadron helped construct a fire station in Taos, New Mexico and a medical clinic in Pacara, Argentina. Members from various sections of the unit rotated through the Persian Gulf Region and volunteers worked daily throughout the continent to eliminate the country's drug problems.

From 31 August 1995 to 30 August 1997, the Racers participated in a humanitarian deployment to Romania; and deployed to Al Jabar AB, Kuwait on two separate occasions in support of Operation Southern Watch. Based on the excellent combat readiness and professionalism displayed by the unit, the Wing was again recognized for an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in April 1998.

During FY07 the 122 FW had over 70 people deploy in support of Operation JUMP START, aiding in seizure of more than 450,000 pounds of illegal drugs and using Air Force specific technology to assist the US Border Patrol in apprehending numerous illegal aliens. The 122 Fighter Wing deployed over 300 members to the 332d Air Expeditionary Wing in Balad, Iraq, on September 12, 2007, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit deployed fighter pilots, maintenance personnel, and support personnel. In FY07 the Wing also had more than 130 people deploy in support of Green Flag West 07-03, performing Close Air Support Missions with multi-service forces. While there, they employed multiple live weapons drops supporting the training of Joint Terminal Attack Controllers. During Fiscal Year 2008 the 122 Fighter Wing deployed over 200 people to more than 15 different locations throughout the world. Members were tasked with backfilling units here in the United States, participating in an F-22 training exercise, supporting Silver Flag and numerous deployments in support of the War on Terror. At the end of Fiscal Year 2008, the 122 Fighter Wing was recognized for having achieved more than 60,000 hours of accident-free flight in the F-16

2009 The Indiana Air National Guard's 122 the Fort Wayne International Airport, Fort Wayne, Indiana, completed a challenging and rewarding year. The 122 Fighter Wing's mission is to develop a world-class community-based defense force. To accomplish this goal, the unit successfully completed a number of combat and military operations, deployments and community programs. Colonel Jeffrey A. Soldner, Wing Commander said, "The 122 Fighter Wing will continue to support war efforts in a variety of ways. Our personnel have remained focused on the task at hand during FY 09 while completing a challenging conversion from the block 25 to the block 30 F-16. We will continue to do a great job of flying the unit assigned aircraft safely and professionally, and to maintain all deployable personnel at the required skill level to carry out all assigned taskings." Although the 122 Fighter Wing did not deploy a large aviation package in support of an Air Expeditionary Force, the unit still deployed close to 150 members to over 25 locations within the United States and abroad and successfully completed numerous training exercises. Fifteen aircraft maintenance personnel from the 122 Fighter Wing deployed Tuesday Feb, 17, 2009, to Misawa Air Base, Japan, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom for 30 days to provide backfill for the 35th Aircraft Maintenance Unit. While there they performed routine maintenance, as well as safety and preparation inspections on the aircraft to ensure the jets were safe to fly. Close to 20 maintenance personnel from the 122 FW volunteered to deployed to Balad, Iraq, in May, 2009, to provide support for other Air Guard units during their AEF rotations. While there they provided routine maintenance support. The 122 Fighter Wing hosted a Radiological Major Exercise Response which entailed a simulated Radiological Dispersal Device explosion on May 12, 2009. Members of the 122 FW worked with the Fort Wayne Fire Department and HAZMAT, and the 53rd Civil Support Team out of Indianapolis during the exercise, which is a yearly requirement by the Department of the Air Force. During the July Unit Training Assembly, the wing conducted an Operational Readiness Exercise on base that tested personnel's ability to handle emergencies such as terrorist activity, force protection changes and medical emergencies. The exercise is an annual requirement that is essential in preparing Airmen for situations they might come in contact with during deployments.

The Indiana Air National Guard's 122 Fighter Wing at Fort Wayne will replace its F-16s with A-10s over the course of several years, reports News Channel 15. Rep. Mark Souder (R), who announced the news Friday, said the change from Vipers to Hogs would keep the 122 FW alive. The wing has been converting from Block 25 F-16s to Block 30 (flying its last Block 25 last week, according to a unit release but the A-10s the unit will receive have a longer life span. Col. Jeff Soldner, 122 FW commander, told News Channel 15, "It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out this was a good deal."

6/11/2009 - Fort Wayne IAP, IN -- The 122 Fighter Wing's heritage jet will take its final flight today at the 122 Fighter Wing before it is given to the Air Force Museum and subsequently kept on base as a static display. Not only is this the final flight for the jet, but it is also the Wing's final flight of the Block 25 F-16s, which will complete the 122 Fighter Wing's conversion to the Block 30 F-16s. This particular aircraft has served at the 122 Fighter Wing since July, 1991, however, it first saw combat during the Gulf War while assigned to Hahn Air Base, Germany. Since becoming part of the Fort Wayne Air National Guard, it has also served with distinction in

support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, flying 124 combat sorties, accumulating over 580 hours of combat flight time, and expending over 10 tons of munitions during hostile action.

"The heritage jet was painted to honor the 122 Fighter Wing's parent unit, the 358th Fighter Group, also known as the 'Orange Tails,'" said Col. Jeffrey A. Soldner, 122 Fighter Wing commander. "We are pleased that it will remain at our unit as a symbol of service and heritage."

Above the constantly pounding eight-foot waves of the North Shore and the tranquil rustle of the palm trees blowing in the Trade Winds of Oahu, Hawaii, another sound was suddenly heard as the engines of the 122 Fighter Wing's F-16s ignited, ready for take-off. As the pilot, crew chief and maintenance crew prepared the eight F-16s to take to the runway on November 2, 2009, the 122 FWs "competition," F-15s from the 154th Air Wing, Hawaii Air National Guard, taxi by, fully prepared for their air to air encounters with 122 FW. A 21-member Advanced Echelon departed Fort Wayne, Ind., on October 28 and 29, 2009, followed by the main body of 76 members, October 30, 2009.

Commercial Aircraft and four C-130s were used to transport members of maintenance, logistics, expeditionary contingency package and some F-16 pilots to Hickam. Pilots flew the eight F-16s, refueling several times along the way. According to Staff Sgt. Laura Geimer, Small Air Terminal NCOIC, Logistics Readiness, "it was tough keeping the cargo weights under the acceptable limits set by the airlift unit but successes were seen in the experience and flexibility of this unit in making pallets and re-making them in order for it all to work out." November 2, 2009, started the F-16 operations and maintenance schedule.

Most days were filled with two missions a day and flights were scheduled 11 of the 15 days the unit was deployed. The 122 FW pilots flew Red Air - aggressors in the air-to-air combat arena. According to Lt. Col. Kevin "Buzz" Doyle, 163rd Fighter Squadron Commander, 122 Fighter Wing, the unit did quite well against the F-15s. Colonel Jeffrey Soldner, 122 Fighter Wing Commander said, "we have not been to Hawaii since 1965 when we took our F-84s down there to prepare the 25th ID to spin up for Vietnam. We have been trying to get this mission for 10 years or longer. We gave the F-15 unit fairly difficult training scenarios and flew 101 out of 102 sorties, giving them plenty of air to air pictures to train on.

It's nice to say that everything I ever imagined doing as a unit with the F-16 has now been done. As the last mission for our F-16s, this opportunity was icing on the cake." As the 154 AW and their Hickam Active Duty counterparts get set to transition into the F-22 Raptor, their first plane arriving June 2010, and the 122 FW looks forward to a projected conversion to the A-10 Warthog, both units seem capable and confident on the future flying missions. The 154 AW is the lead unit in this transition for Hawaii, both Air National Guard and Active Duty, to their new aircraft. They have the unique responsibility to demonstrate their capability to the active duty component at Hickam AFB who is scheduled to see their first F-22 Raptor soon after.

The 154 AW was supportive and welcoming to the 122 FW during the short deployment and Lt. Col. Lawrence "Grinder" Otto, Supervisor of Flying 154 AW, complimented the members of the 122 FW on their professionalism and sense of duty, as well as the flying ability of our seasoned pilots. Many of the 122 FW members were able to introduce themselves to their 154

AW counterparts and find out a little about how their respective jobs are done on the island. On their off time however, work was not foremost on their minds as they took in the sites and sounds of Hawaii. Many members went to some popular destinations such as Hanauma Bay, the North Shore, Diamond Head, luau's and others. Some opted for the road less traveled and went on excursions such as scuba diving, sky diving and sail boarding. Most members took advantage of the opportunity to visit Pearl Harbor. Veterans Day took on an entirely new meaning when bearing witness to the lasting memorial honoring those who paid the ultimate price, ushering us into World War II. Whatever their adventure, the sights and sounds of Hawaii will leave lasting memories of accomplishing a safe and effective mission while enjoying a destination some only dream of.

The Indiana Air National Guard's 122 Fighter Wing flew its last F-16 sortie Sept. 11, according to a Journal Gazette report. The wing, which has flown Vipers for the past 19 years, learned in early 2009 that it would transition to the A-10, which Indiana elected officials believe will keep the unit viable for a longer time. The 22nd FW's F-16s are destined for the boneyard at the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. According to the Journal Gazette, the conversion to the A-10 will take about three years, with the first of the Hogs flying out of the wing's Fort Wayne facility later this year. 2010

2010 The Indiana Air National Guard's 122 Fighter Wing, the Blacksnakes, located at the Fort Wayne Air National Guard Base, Fort Wayne, Ind., completed a historical year marking the end of an era with the F-16 Fighting Falcon and the start of a new mission with the A-10C Thunderbolt II. The 122 Fighter Wing's mission is to develop a world-class community-based defense force. To accomplish this goal, the unit successfully completed a number of combat and military operations, deployments and community programs. Former Wing Commander, Col. Jeffrey A. Soldner, said, "The personnel at the 122 Fighter Wing have once again proven their commitment to excellence throughout FY 10.

After completing the block 25 to block 30 F-16 conversion in FY 09, they pushed forward in FY 10, beginning the A-10C conversion. The Wing's dedication to safety is evident in the 67,034.3 hours of accident-free flying in the F-16." Throughout the conversion process, the personnel of the 122 maintained required skill levels and training requirements, and were ready to fulfill all assigned taskings. The unit deployed 240 members to 19 different locations within the United States and abroad and successfully completed numerous training exercises in fiscal year 2010. Fiscal year 2010 started off with the final deployment for the 122 Fighter Wing's F-16s, Sentry Aloha.

The Wing deployed approximately 90 personnel to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, between Oct. 30, 2009, and Nov. 15, 2009. While there, the pilots of the 122 flew Red Air, aggressors in air-to-air combat, against the F-15s of Hickam. "We gave the F-15 unit fairly difficult training scenarios and flew 101 out of 102 sorties, giving them plenty of air-to-air pictures to train on," said Col. Jeffrey A. Soldner, 122 Fighter Wing commander. From Feb. 5, 2010, to Feb. 13, 2010, the 122 provided 25 maintenance and fighter squadron personnel to provide dissimilar adversary support for a class at the A-10 Replacement Training Unit, Barksdale Air Force Base, La. Pilots from the 122 flew sorties in support of the air combat maneuvering, air combat training portion of the class syllabus.

The 122 Fighter Wing recently completed Operation Guardian Blitz during a two-week joint training exercise at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, which included air-to-air refueling, training alongside Navy rotary assets and joint terminal attack controllers.

The team of over 200 Airmen and 10 A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft were able to take advantage of the favorable weather conditions and ability to work with other units at MacDill AFB, and were afforded opportunities to practice close air support, forward air control and combat search and rescue.

“My favorite part of training here at MacDill (AFB) has been the combined force training operations that we don’t have an opportunity to do at home,” said Lt. Col. Joshua Waggoner, 122 Fighter Wing Operation Guardian Blitz detachment commander. “We are here training with our A-10 aircraft, two Navy MH-60S helicopters and refueling tankers overhead. During missions we are on station for over two hours integrating with all these assets while also coordinating with JTACs on the ground. The opportunity to work with these other agencies to accomplish missions has been invaluable.”

Operation Guardian Blitz was unique in allowing the different branches and squadrons to integrate with a synergy not typically found during an average joint training exercise. “The ability to have helicopters out of Virginia, tankers out of Niagara, and A-10s out of Fort Wayne all operating in the same sortie and off the same ramp is something you usually don’t get elsewhere,” said Waggoner. “Even at Snowbird or other trips in the past, we’ve never been collocated with all our other assets. Here at MacDill (AFB) for Guardian Blitz, we’re all located in the same place and able to interact face-to-face on a daily basis. It’s a luxury you just don’t get anywhere else.”

“We were able to match our objectives with the other unit’s objectives to make it all happen at the same time,” said Waggoner. “This is by far the most aggressive training schedule we have set, and it never would have been able to happen at home this time of year due to weather and other circumstances.”

Air Force Unit Histories

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Sources

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