

138th AIR CONTROL SQUADRON



LINEAGE

138th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron

Redesignated Tactical Control Flight, 5 October, 1988

Redesignated 138th Tactical Control Squadron, 15 October, 1988

Redesignated 138th Air Control Squadron, 16 June, 1992 – 1995

STATIONS

Greely ANGS, CO

Buckley, CO

Boulder, CO

Buckley ANGB, CO

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Cpt Phillip Harris, Mar 1947

Maj Prod Emrich

Maj Harry A. Beck

Maj Charles Parker, Mid-1952

Maj Stanley Pollack, Jan. 1953

LTC John R. Mack, Mid-1953

LTC Richard E. Saltmarsh, Jan 1956

LTC William G. Miller, Sep 1966

LTC Clifford A. Baker, Jun 1971

LTC George A. Fisher, Jr., Sep 1976

LTC Roy C. Chase, May 1980
LTC Gary P. Morgan, Sep 1966
LTC Richard V. Stair, Dec 1987

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The primary mission of the 138th Tactical Control Squadron (TCS) is to provide a forward extension of the tactical radar system. In the forward areas the forward air control post (FACP) provides early warning to both airborne and ground forces, control of offensive and defensive air operations, and gap-filler capability within its area of responsibility. The unit is designed to meet worldwide contingency requirements.

Aircraft control and warning squadrons at the University of Colorado, University of Denver and NAS Denver had radar equipment to detect and locate approaching aircraft and to vector defending fighters to them. In late 1948, a \$50,000 radar training building for the 138th AC&W Squadron was put in operation in south Denver at a site leased from the University of Denver.

Maj. Harry A. Beck commanded the 138th AC&W Squadron when activated. Upon arriving in Rapid City, S.D. in the summer of 1951. the major received orders from the 31st Air Division to begin operations as soon as possible. Although unit personnel began with no facilities and very little equipment, within a month's time they had acquired a building, received some radar and communication equipment and were on the air 24 hours a day.

The parent unit of the 138th TCS, the 159th Aircraft Control and Warning Group, was activated in 1947 at Denver Naval Air Station (Buckley Field), Cob. Elements of the group were located in Denver, Colorado Springs, Boulder, Pueblo and Fort Collins.

On May 1, 1951, all group units were called to active duty for the Korean War. Attached units were given East Coast Air Force assignments; the 159th Group Headquarters, 137th Aircraft Control Squadron (ACS) and the 139th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron (ACWS) were

assigned to the newly activated 33rd Air Division, Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.; the 138th ACWS was assigned to the 30th Air Division with specific location at Rapid City AFB, S.D. Many unit personnel were assigned to separate AC&W squadrons from Texas to South Dakota and throughout the Midwest.

Upon completion of its 21-month activation, all unit designations (with the exception of the 138th's) were retired to USAF archives. The 138th was reassigned as a Colorado ANG unit on Feb. 1, 1953, with a Tactical Air Command mobilization assignment to the 162nd Group of the California ANG. The unit consisted of a headquarters, two early-warning flights and a target-director post. All except the target-director post were moved to Boulder in 1954.

During their entire tour at Rapid City. the unit experienced only one major radar breakdown, a significant maintenance achievement. The 138th AC&W Squadron was returned to state control in early 1953.

From 1953 to 1956, the 138th possessed three TPS-1D (two were mobile) radars and a TPS-100 height finder. The target director post had two SP-1M radars. Training was conducted in conjunction with the 140th TFW, Colorado ANG.

The move was begun in April 1953. Relocation efforts consisted of the disassembly of all equipment, moving, reassembly and installation, building modifications, construction of a new concrete building and landscaping the area. Work was completed the following August, when an open house was held during the month's unit training assembly.

July 1956 138th AC&W Squadron GCI station begins operations at Buckley.

In February 1957, the 138th AC&W accepted a full-time ADC mission and moved back to Buckley, expanding their technician force from 12 to 80 in the process. Much work had to be accomplished to develop school facilities and curriculum. Equipment was relocated, eight World War II buildings were rehabilitated for full-time operation, and new search and height-finder radars were installed.

1 July 1957. Air National Guard technicians at two units — Salt Lake City, Utah's 130th Aircraft Control and Warning Flight and Denver, Colorado's 138th Aircraft Control and Warning Flight began operating and maintaining radar sites around-the-clock, seven days a week at each location. The ANG sites were integrated into the Air Defense Command's radar network.

All technicians doubled as either instructors or students and, above all, construction men, The 138th phased into the 34th Air Division system on an eight-hour-a-day, seven-day-per-week basis on June 1, 1957. Additional information about the unit's roots as one of the 34th AD's foremost detection sites appears in the 1950s decade history of Colorado Pride.

In early 1960, 138th technicians began modifying and moving into the Navy Enlisted Men's Club at Buckley. For the first time all of the unit's equipment and operations facilities were under one roof, an improvement which greatly enhanced operational efficiency. The GCI station remained under the jurisdiction of the 34th until being gained by the 29th AD in 1959.

The year 1961 climaxed with an overall second place finish in "William Tell," the Air Force worldwide interceptor weapons meet at Tyndall AFB, Fla. The high finish served as ample evidence that an Air Guard team, comprised of people from several states, could hold its own with active duty forces. Colorado's participants were Capt. Edmund Morrissey and TSgt. William Stombaugh, both assigned to the 138th ACWS. Their ground control intercept team was also joined by 1st Lt. Gary Hunt and SSgt. Joe Eastwood, both of the 130th ACWS, Utah ANG. Their combined efforts provided a perfect score for their segment of the meet.

In May 1963, two new radar towers, one 75 feet, the other 70 feet, were erected on a site three miles east of Greeley. They became operational the following month.

The squadron won ADC's "A" Award in 1964. Every operational unit in the ADC was eligible for the 'A" Award. But to win, a unit had to demonstrate an outstanding degree of mission effectiveness for a 12-month period. The 138th's 24-hour-a-day, 365-days-a-year radar surveillance fit the criteria. They became the first ANG ground environmental organization to receive the coveted command citation. After receiving an "outstanding" rating on their 1964 Operational Readiness Inspection, the 138th sent weapons directors to the 1965 ANG team competing in "William Tell." The ANG team emerged victorious over active duty competitors

In August 1965, the unit was presented the ADC "A" Award by MG William B. Keese, ADC chief of staff. In late 1965, the unit was nominated by 10th Air Force for the General Thomas A. White award for outstanding professional achievement. The Air Force Association presented the 138th ACWS with its Citation of Honor" award for outstanding operational ability in March 1966.

Undertaking a strenuous upgrading program for weapons controllers and associated technicians in 1966, the unit qualified five officers and eight NCOs for the ADC skill rating of "expert." At that time it is believed the unit possessed more individuals with the expert rating than any comparable ADC organization. BG John E. Frizen, ADC director of communications and electronics, presented the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA) to the 138th at their 20th Anniversary celebration on 31 Mar 1967.

In Aug 1967, four squadron weapons controllers were modification and radar-coverage surveys — it was decided to move the Army Guard unit to Fort Collins, allowing the 138th ACWS to move into the Greeley facility.

In October 1968, the unit became known as the 138th Electronics Engineering Installation Agency (GEEIA). The unhandy title was later changed to 138th Electronics Installation (EI) Squadron. The unit's new mission was to install, make major repairs, and dismantle large electronics equipment for the Air Force Communications Service (AFCS).

Late 1971 138th Tactical Control Flight (TCF) formed at Greeley ANG Station.

In late 1971, the 138th's mission was restructured as a control and reporting center (CRC) under the tactical air control system (TAGS), reporting once again to TAC as the 138th Tactical Control Squadron. Through exceptional efforts, the unit was able to retrieve the 138th numerical

designation before it reached the archives. Once again the unit was back in the AC&W business, only with a mobility mission. The FPS-8 was converted to an MPS-11, the radar used until 1979.

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138th has served in its state role many times. They gave aid during Denver's 1965 flood, a 1974 flood in Kersey, Colo., and with their generator units have helped small communities restore power after natural disasters.

In April 1976, the unit was redesigned as a forward air control post-heavy organization and redesignated as the 138th Tactical Control Flight. The unit received another AFOUA for outstanding performance from January 1977 to June 1978.

In early 1981, the 138th joined more than 21,000 active and reserve component troops in "Border Star '81," a U.S. Readiness Command exercise held in the desert near El Paso, Texas.

In June 1982, the 138th TCF successfully participated in the first ever five-phase operational readiness inspection, the first time any tactical control flight, or any COANG unit, had been tested in all five ORI phases. They received an overall satisfactory evaluation and several "Best in TAC" observations.

The 138th received their third AFOUA for the period from February 1981 to February 1983.

Also in June, the 138th TCF set off for "Central Enterprise '88," a JCS exercise in Turkheim, West Germany. Under the operational control of the German Air Force, more than 100 Colorado Air Guardsmen directed NATO aircraft.

In January 1983, the unit deployed to Honduras for "Ahaus Tara" ("Big Pine I"). The unit received praise from both Gen. Charles A. Gabriel, USAF Chief of Staff and Maj. Gen. John B. Conaway, USAF Director of the ANG, for their humanitarian efforts in Honduras. In addition to admirably performing their tactical control duties, the 138th collected and distributed more than 3,000 pairs of shoes to Miskito Indians of Honduras and Nicaraguan refugees as part of "Operation Silver Slipper." The operation was generously supported by the citizens of the Greeley-Fort Collins area. In recognition of their efforts, the president of Honduras presented his flag to the unit.

Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron

Colorado ANG

Allotted: 24 May 1946 to ANG

Assigned: Rapid City AFB, South Dakota 1 June 1951 as

159th AC&WG

Relieved from active duty: 1 February 1952 and returned to control of Colorado

Tactical Control Flight

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Air Force Order of Battle
Created: 12 Oct 2010
Updated:

Sources