

## 139<sup>th</sup> AIRLIFT WING



### LINEAGE

**139th Air Transport Group was allotted to the state of Missouri, 14 April 1962**

Redesignated 139th Military Airlift Group on 1 January 1966

Redesignated 139th Air Refueling Group on 6 September 1969

Redesignated 139th Tactical Airlift Group on 1 October 1976.

Federal recognition was extended on 16 October 1976

On 31 May 1991, the 139th Tactical Airlift Group was consolidated with the 139th Military Airlift Group which had been inactivated on 5 September 1969.

Redesignated 139th Airlift Group on 8 April 1992.

Redesignated as the 139th Airlift Wing on 1 October 1995

### STATIONS

St Joseph, MO

### ASSIGNMENTS

### WEAPON SYSTEMS

### COMMANDERS

Col John John B. Logan

Col. Wilby W. Lee

Col Robert G. Urquhart

Col Kenneth O. Gabriel

Col Robert L. Biehunko

Col Michael A. Pankau

Col Michael McEnulty

### HONORS

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**

### **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

MSgt Jerry W. Sylvester, age 34, NCOIC of Food Services, was killed on 7 January 1965 in a ground helicopter accident at the airfield in Ft. Leavenworth. MSgt Sylvester was a ground crew mechanic servicing the helicopter when it suddenly tipped over on its side catching him with a rotor blade.

Air traffic records for Rosecrans Field were broken again in April 1966 with a recorded 12,298 landings and takeoffs. The increase is largely due to business-corporate-private flying in and out, TWA pilot training programs, and ANG operation.

In August 1966, we celebrated our twentieth anniversary. Statistics revealed that during this 20 years we had reached an annual payroll of \$1,106,650; local purchases had amounted to \$116,000; buildings and construction amounted to \$3,208,000; and runway improvements amounted to \$2,447,000. Our unit had completed 4,202,280 miles of flying over a total of 65,000 flying hours, which included 310 overwater flights. In twenty years, 2,266 airmen and 288 officers had served with this unit.

An era ended in the latter months of 1969 for Missouri Air National Guardsmen at St. Joseph. Col. Wilby W. Lee, group commander, was notified the unit's long airlift mission would end and be replaced by an aerial refueling mission.

They had flown to Africa and to New Zealand, to Turkey and Vietnam, to the Philippines and Kwajalein, to France, Germany and England, to Okinawa, Korea and Taiwan in 452 overwater flights without accident.

But in July, 1969, crews began qualifying with the KC-97L and later that year, command headquarters of the St. Joseph units was changed to the 126th Air Refueling Wing, Illinois Air National Guard

In late 1973, the energy crunch hit. In response to state policy outlined by Gov. Christopher Bond, Major General Charles M. Kiefner, the State Adjutant General, asked for a 14 percent reduction in the consumption of energy. At the order of Colonel Logan, office temperatures were set at 68 degrees and shop and warehouse temperatures were set at 65 degrees. Around the

Christmas holidays we were ordered to suspend flying until further notice to conserve fuel. The order to curtail training flights came from Washington as a fuel conservation measure.

On 10 February 1974, Major General Charles M. Kiefner presented the Outstanding Unit Award to Colonel Robert G. Urquhart at a ceremony at Rosecrans Field.

In October of 1974, Colonel Robert G. Urquhart was appointed as Base Commander of the MoANG at Rosecrans Field. Construction was completed on the Aircraft Engine Inspection and Repair Shop at a cost of \$420,000.

In July, Colonel Robert G. Urquhart, on behalf of the entire 139th, was presented the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for exceptionally meritorious service from 1 August 1974 through 17 July 1976. This was the second presentation of this award and was for our contribution to "Operation Creek Party."

In March of 1978, over 450 officer and airmen of the 139th Tactical Airlift Group under the command of Colonel Robert G. Urquhart deployed to Gulfport, Mississippi, during "Operation Pony Express South." The purpose of the deployment was to improve the combat readiness of the 139th by accelerating flying and airdropping capabilities, small arms qualifications, and general military training facets of the mission. The Increased tempo of the mission was necessitated by the recent change in mission from air refueling to tactical airlift.

POL loaded 162,700 gallons of JP-4 fuel onto eight C-130A, plus provided thousands of gallons of fuel in support of non-flying training. In terms of material to support the mission, Supply moved eight 463L pallets of aircraft spare parts weighing some 17,483 pounds.

The attitude and support put forth by all 450 members was very evident and resulted in a highly successful operation. All in all, a great Summer Camp.

139 GROUP LOST TWO C-130 AIRCRAFT; ONE SOLD AND DELIVERED TO CHAD, AFRICA; THE OTHER REASSIGNED TO CHANUTE AIR FORCE BASE (AFB) IL TO BE USED FOR MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTION. GROUP DEPLOYED TO TRAVIS AFB CA AND ELMENDORF AFB AK FOR ANNUAL TRAINING.1984

Mulex 1990 This joint service exercise involved a three day exercise called the largest ever held in Missouri. Ground operations included Missouri Army and Air Guard, the Iowa Army Guard, and the Air Force and Marine Reserves. Aircraft from both active and guard units around the country flew to the exercise for both simulated air-to-air warfare and live air-to-ground firing at ranges in Missouri and Arkansas. More than 2,500 airmen, soldiers and Marines from twelve states participated in Mulex '90. Entrenched in the second of a series of springtime thunderstorms, navigators had to plot over, and around and sometimes through the storms. On board the aircraft were 15 reporters, videographers and photographers from civilian news media. For many it was their first flight and for some their last voluntarily in a thunderstorm.

Three hundred eleven personnel from the 139th Tactical Airlift Group were federally activated on 28 December 1990 for six months. The first contingent left St. Joseph, Missouri on 2 January

1991 for Al Ain Air Base, United Arab Emirates. At Al Ain Air Base, the 139th TAG joined two National Guard units from Texas and West Virginia and two active duty C-130 squadrons from Germany and Korea to form the 1630th Tactical Airlift Wing Provisional. The 1630th was also named the First Desert Airlift Wing or "1st DAWG." On the 22nd and 23rd of March, the 139th TAG deployed to Al Kharj Air Base, Saudi Arabia. Al Kharj is about 40 miles southeast of Riyadh. Deploying from the United Arab Emirates to Saudi Arabia brought the 139th TAG personnel under the strict Moslem culture. Morale, which had been very high at Al Ain, was stressed at the new base in Saudi by the cultural shock and the constantly changing rotation dates for redeployment home. The 180th Tactical Airlift Squadron deployed seventy-seven aircrew members with the eight C-130Hs belonging to the 139th TAG to Al Ain Air Base. The 139th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron personnel at Al Ain employed desert procedures with normal aircraft maintenance to obtain a fantastic 98% in-commission rate. The work schedule was seven to seven for two days and then twenty-four hours off, but maintenance personnel were always on twenty-four hour call. Al Ain Air Base became a closed base soon after the 139th TAG arrived. 139th CAM personnel generally worked on their own aircraft, but the shared equipment, parts and expertise with the other guard and active duty maintenance personnel at Al Ain. A popular spare time activity at Al Ain was the construction of patios, sun decks and porches, The base civil engineers provided building material and loaned tools for these projects. Various team sports such as basketball, volleyball and baseball also provided recreation during free time. After Al Ain became a closed base, the perimeter walk became a popular event. This walk took several hours since the base perimeter was about ten miles. One of the 139th's members did have a complaint, his "Desert Diet wasn't working." Breakfast and dinner were hot meals and lunch was supposed to be a MRE (meals ready-to-eat), but lunch turned out to be a catered affair from the local Hilton hotel. There was also a Pizza Hunt, Hardee's hamburgers, and Kentucky Fried Chicken available, if so desired. Food was plentiful and good, just like home.

"We were lucky" is the common feeling among the St. Joe Air Guard members who deployed for OPERATION DESERT STORM. The 139th Tactical Airlift Group was federally activated 28 December 1990 for a six months deployment to the Persian Gulf. This call to duty was answered professionally. The 139th Tactical Airlift Group did not suffer any casualties or battle damaged aircraft during the 100 Hour War in the Persian Gulf. Luck, in the military flying business, reflects the quality of training, team efforts and individual initiatives. A better way of saying "We Were Lucky" is "We Were Ready."

**2005 1 Sep** One C-130 assigned to the 139th Airlift Wing, Missouri ANG, flew an Aeromedical evacuation mission to NAS New Orleans.

**28 Oct** A C-130 assigned to the 139th Airlift Wing, Missouri ANG, airlifted seventeen members of the 156th Aerial Port Flight, Puerto Rico ANG, to NAS New Orleans to participate in hurricane relief operations. The 156th Aerial Port Flight deployed to New Orleans to fulfill their two-week annual training requirement.



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Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources