

158 AIRLIFT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

351 Fighter Squadron constituted, 29 Sep 1942

Activated 1 Oct 1942

Inactivated Oct 1945

Reconstituted and redesignated 158 Fighter Squadron and allotted to the GA NG, 24 May 1946

158 Fighter Squadron (SE) extended Federal Recognition, 13 Oct 1946

Redesignated 158 Fighter Squadron (Jet), 1 Aug 1948

Redesignated 158 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1 Nov 1950

Redesignated 158 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 10 Jun 1952

Redesignated 158 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1 Dec 1952

Redesignated 158 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 1 Jul 1955

Redesignated 158 Air Transport Squadron (Heavy), 1 Apr 1962

Redesignated 158 Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1966

Redesignated 158 Tactical Airlift Squadron, 10 Dec 1974

Redesignated 158 Airlift Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Mitchel Field, NY, 1 Oct 1942

Richmond AAB, VA, 7 Oct 1942

Norfolk AAFld, VA, 23 Oct 1942

Millville AAFld, NJ, 16 Feb-27 May 1943

Goxhill, England, 8 Jun 1943

Metseld, England, 5 Aug 1943

Raydon, England, 14 Apr 1944-11 Oct 1945

Camp Kilmer, NJ, 16-18 Oct 1945

Mitchell Field, NY

Camp Kilmer, NJ

Chatham Field, Savannah, GA

Hunter Field, Savannah, GA, 31 Mar 1949
George AFB, CA
Garden City, GA

ASSIGNMENTS

353 Fighter Group, 1 Oct 1942-18 Oct 1945

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-47

P-51

P-47, 1947

F-80, 1948

F-84, 1951

F-51, 1952

F-84, 1953

F-86, 1959

C-97, 1962

C-124, 1967

C-130, 1974

Support Aircraft

L-5, 1947

B-26, 1947

T-6, 1947

COMMANDERS

Maj Earl C. Brushwood

Cpt Ralph G. Kuhn

LTC William Jacobsen

Maj Herman F. Guffey

Maj Irvin L. Potts

Maj Donald H. Smith

Maj Philip E. Colman

Maj Sheftall B. Coleman

Maj Ben L. Patterson

Maj Kenneth R. Davis

Maj Ben L. Patterson

LTC Harold T. Newton

LTC Paul A. Jarrett

Maj Kenneth R. Davis

LTC Charles W. Taylor

LTC William Scott

LTC Joseph G.C. Adams

LTC Douglas M. Padgett
LTC Robert Odum
LTC Joseph Brennan
Maj Ron Tidwell
LTC Henry A. Smart, Jr., #2000

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe
Air Combat, EAME Theater

United Nations Summer

Fall Offensive

Second Korean Winter

Korean Summer Fall 1952

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Holland, 17-23 Sep 1944

EMBLEM



351 Fighter Squadron



158 Fighter-Bomber Squadron emblem: The "Coon Dog" insignia was submitted to Headquarters, USAF, for approval as the 158 Fighter-Bomber Squadron emblem around July 1951. We do not have any evidence of the insignia's formal approval, however it was used for several years. The significance of the coon dog baying at the harvest moon was, in terms of the squadron's history and mission, threefold. These factors combined, form the basis of the squadron slogan which was "The Hunters". The first point was that the squadron was commanded from September 1948 to May 1951 by LTC Ralph G. Kuhn (pronounced "Coon") and was brought to active duty on 10 Oct 1950 under his leadership. Secondly, the squadron, when in an Air National Guard status, was stationed at Hunter Air Force Base, GA. The dog is symbolic of the founding of the squadron at "Hunter". Thirdly, the mission of the unit while on active duty was air defense of northern Japan. In that role they were required to "hunt" the enemy wherever he may have been found. The moon refers to the alert status of the unit and depicted that they were standing by for a scramble before dawn and after dusk. The red border of the emblem, in addition to being the squadron recognition color, was symbolic of the unit's attachment to the Far East Air Forces. It represented the outer edge of Japan's "Rising Sun" and signified, in effect, "the 158 in Japan".

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Air defense prior to overseas duty. Combat in ETO, 9 Aug 1943-25 Apr 1945.

29 Sep 1942 when the 351st Fighter Squadron was constituted. The 351st Fighter Squadron was one of three squadrons assigned to the 353rd Fighter Group. The units were activated on 1 Oct 1942 at Mitchell Field, NY.

The 351st Fighter Squadron became the 158 Fighter Squadron and was federally recognized and assigned to the 116th Fighter Group on 13 October 1946, and stationed at Chatham Field,

Savannah, Georgia. Thus begins the current history of the 158 continuing the rich history of its mother squadron.

The 158 Fighter Squadron was originally equipped with the P-47D. Major Earl C. Brushwood was the first commander. Major Ralph B. Kuhn, who assumed command in 1948, succeeded Major Brushwood.

Not only did the unit fly airplanes, but on 25 October 1948 was assigned a P-166 crash boat. Commissioned on 1 November 1948, the boat carried a crew of two with an officer in charge. The speed of the boat was listed as 23 knots per hour was 42 feet long and weighed 11.8 tons. The stated purpose of the boat was to provide protection of lives and aircraft of the unit as well as for the Second Bomb Wing at Chatham Air Force Base.

On 15 January 1949, units of the U.S. Air Force occupied Chatham Field, home of the 158. This resulted, through the cooperation of the city officials of Savannah, in the 158 being assigned at Hunter Field. The change in station started on 1 February 1949 and was completed on 31 March 1949 with a minimum of delay and confusion.

On 10 October 1950, the squadron was called to active duty and ordered to George AFB, California. The unit was assigned to the 116th Fighter Group from Atlanta. The group was among the first of four like units called up during the Korean emergency.

After nine months of training at George AB, California during which time the F-80s were replaced with the new F-84, the units were ordered to Misawa Air Base on the northern island of Honshu, Japan. Personnel were transported by buses to Oakland, California where, on 10 July 1951, the first elements sailed aboard the aircraft carrier "Sitkoh Bay", the balance following two days later on the carrier "Windham Bay". The carrier arrived at Yokosuka, Japan where the aircraft were unloaded and taken to nearby Kiserazu for cleaning and readying for one-time flights to Misawa. Some of the personnel stayed behind at Kiserazu while others were sent ahead by train to Misawa to receive and inspect the F-84s as they arrived. By August 1951, the 158 was in operation at its new home in Misawa. After several months of schools and training, the group took over the dawn-to-dusk alert for the air defense of northern Japan. Later, in addition to the air defense task, the squadrons were rotated to K-2 Airbase, Taegu, Korea, for tactical ground support combat missions.

While in Japan, the 158 was one of the first F-84E units to use the new probe and drogue tip-tanks for air-to-air refueling in combat. Many tip-tanks were used as many a aircraft returned to base with probes bent back, telescoped, etc. Missions were flown from Misawa to Korea and back utilizing the new probe tip-tanks, refueling from KB-29.

Return to the states came at the end of twenty-one months. Squadron members were gradually replaced by other reservists and active duty personnel until on 10 July 1952; all members were back home.

Following their release from active duty for the Korean Campaign, the squadron returned to the control of the State of Georgia and was stationed again at its old home, Travis Field. The unit was designated as the 158 Fighter Interceptor Squadron and equipped with F-51D and F-51H. Major Irwin L. Potts assumed command at this time.

In mid 1953, the unit underwent yet another aircraft conversion, receiving F-84D under the command of Major Donald H. Smith.

The 116th Wing began an Air Defense Command runway alert at Travis Field. The alert plan involved the immediate readiness of two F-84s. On 1 October 1956, the alert was discontinued at Travis when a similar alert was established at Dobbins AFB.

The 158 and 128th Fighter Interceptor Squadrons of the 116th Wing participated in a nationwide call-up of the Air National Guard tactical squadrons. They were able to place 26 aircraft over their designated target areas within two hours after they were alerted by Air Defense Command on 25 October 1955. This exercise was known as operation STOPWATCH.

In January 1957 General Hearn, The Adjutant General, grounded Georgia's F-84Ds. A few months later F-84Fs were arriving on the Travis Field ramp. During summer camp, 1957, the 158 Fighter Interceptor Squadron concentrated on becoming more proficient in their F-84F.

Major Coleman assumed command in December 1955. Major Coleman commanded the 158 Fighter Bomber Squadron, as it was known during this period, until 10 July 1958 when the 165th Fighter Interceptor Group was activated. Equipped with F-86L, the 158 Interceptor Squadron was then assigned to the new 165th Group. Colonel Ralph G. Kuhn, earlier a commander of the 158, became the first commander of the newly formed group. The 158 converted to F-86 in 1959.

Conversion from a Squadron to a Group brought with it an expanded recruiting drive and building program. The Savannah Morning News ran a full page story on the new Group and told the story of the unit's new mission, gave the particulars concerning the new buildings that were to be built and pictured the key officers in the new Group. More than 300 spaces for new airmen became available. Top recruiters among the unit's personnel received free Miami vacations and other cash awards as incentives.

Based at Travis Field, Savannah, GA, the 158 FIS flew F-84F until late 1958 when F-86Ls began to arrive with the unit. The first such aircraft were assigned from McClellan AFB on 10 Dec 1958. The last Sabre arrived in June 1959. The squadron's parent organization, the 165th Fighter Group, had been federally recognized on 10 July 1958.

On 1 April 1962, the unit took over a cargo-hauling role, and on the same date became the 158 Air Transport Squadron. It then began to receive C-97F, but the last Sabres did not leave until July. Most went to Davis-Monthan for storage, but a few were ferried to Wright-Patterson AFB on 5 May 1962, where they were declared excess and donated to local towns.

Placed on alert 1 Jan. 60, combat qualified pilots of the 158 are on duty shifts for 14 hours a day, seven days a week, to supplement the air defense of the South Atlantic Coastal area. Some 21 similar alert crews are on duty with ANG squadrons throughout the nation. The Savannah alert team consists of two regular members, Captains Peter J. Calamas and Kenneth R. Davis. They are relieved by 10 to 14 other squadron pilots who are placed on short tours of active duty from their civilian jobs after volunteering for alert duty. The alert is under the supervision of Major Sheftall B. Coleman, 158 commander. Armed with "hot" rockets — the jets carry 24 2.75 rockets in a pod beneath the fuselage the Saber Jets can be airborne within five minutes after any order to "scramble" by the 32nd Air Division, based at Dobbins AFB, Ga. Colonel Ralph G. Kuhn, commander 165th Fighter Group, said the pilots — already "garbed to go" — would only have to leap into their aircraft as the crew chief started the engines.

Having been equipped with fighters and bomber type aircraft since its beginning, 1 Apr 1962 marked a major change in the history when underwent an aircraft conversion, receiving C-97 transport aircraft and being assigned a strategic airlift mission. Reorganization came in 1962 when the unit transitioned from a fighter mission to an airlift mission The 158 Fighter Squadron became 158Air Transport Squadron assigned to the 165th Air Group. They performed worldwide airlift missions with new aircraft, the C-97.

On 20 Mar 1964, the unit flew its first trans-Pacific flight. The plane was piloted by Maj Phillip D. Hamilton and Maj Kenneth R. Davis, and the destination was Japan. The crew carried 22.7 tons of cargo on this initial flight.

Hurricane Dora swept across the coast of Georgia early in Sep of 1964. When it became evident that the storm might hit the Savannah area, the unit's C-97s were evacuated to Nashville, TN. Personnel of the sqn were dispatched to the Towne's Nursing Home in Savannah Beach and evacuated the patients to the Chatham Nursing Home at the request of Civil Defense authorities. On the 9th of Sep, Civil Defense authorities requested that provisions be made to take care of 68 families living at Travis Field. Food and supplies were secured and paid for by the Red Cross, but it was members of the sqn who set up the Group Headquarters Building with 225 cots and blankets for the distressed citizens of Travis Field.

Members of the 165th Military Transport Group were called on to fly a vial of life-saving serum to a Savannah child who was close to death. Brig Gen. Paul S. Stone, assistant Adjutant General of Georgia was aircraft commander on a 165 MAG C-97 that was making practice approaches to Bush Field Airport in Augusta, Georgia, 16 November 1967, when he was notified of the emergency in Savannah. He was asked to proceed immediately to Charleston AFB, South Carolina, to pick up the serum and rush it to Travis Field where he had taken off an hour earlier. Arriving at Charleston five minutes before the South Carolina State Patrol arrived with the serum, the crew took off immediately and was cleared direct to the Savannah airport at minimum altitude and maximum speed. Having the airport cleared for emergency traffic, the crew landed in minimum time on a downwind runway in order to transfer the serum to an awaiting Coast Guard helicopter. The helicopter flew the serum to Savannah's Memorial

Hospital and it was administered immediately to an eighteen month old girl. It had taken only one hour and five minutes from the time General Stone received the information until he had delivered the serum to the helicopter. The child was reported later to be in fair condition. The C-97 was co-piloted by LtCol. Sheftall B. Coleman and its flight engineers were Sgt. Henry Hall and Sgt. Lyndon T. Walker. The crucial relay system was coordinated by Air National Guard personnel at Travis Field by radio and telephone, after receiving the emergency call from the Savannah hospital.

Georgia lost its first ANG aircrew personnel, since the Air Guard began flying worldwide transport missions in 1961, when a C-124 of Savannah's 165th Military Airlift Group crashed into a volcanic mountain near Cold Bay, Alaska, about 10 p.m. on 26 August 1970. Killed were Maj. William G. Goggans, aircraft commander, Lt. Bobby R. Bowen, co-pilot, Maj. Paul R. Jones, navigator, TSgt. Charlton L. Cohen, MSgt. Wesley E. Vaughn, MSgt. Carl J. Worrell, and SSgt. Thomas Fogle. Cohen and Vaughn were flight engineers, Worrell was aircraft mechanic and Fogle was loadmaster. The C-124 was loaded with 17,000 pounds of satellite tracking equipment. An Air Rescue Service aircraft from Pease AFB, MH located the wreckage on 30 August. The site was identified as 8,215 foot Mount Pavlou, an active volcano which was covered with snow at the 8,000 foot level where the aircraft struck.

On 19 Sep 1974, the sqn had the distinction of flying the last two C-124s in the Air Force inventory to the storage center at Davis Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ.

With the decision to retire "Old Shakey", C-124s, it appeared for a time that the sqn would be required to convert from a transport mission to a tactical air support mission. Although the unit would have converted from eight C-124s to 24 O-2 which were used by forward air controllers to direct tactical air strikes, there would have been a loss of nearly 20 of its full time personnel since the small aircraft required less maintenance. This, and the fact that the tactical air support mission was "less exotic" than the airlift mission, caused local officials to seek reversal of the planned conversion. Led by Col William H. Kelly, Base Detachment Commander, the local officials contacted Governor Jimmy Carter and through his assistance and that of Senator Sam Nunn and many others, a decision was made to convert to the tactical airlift mission of the C-130. In Dec 1974 the conversion to C-130s began and the unit was designated the 165th Tactical Airlift Group and received C-130E manufactured in 1962.

On 8 August 1975, the first of the C-130E, came to the City of Savannah at the international airport to replace the older C-124's. While the C-124's were being retired from the Air Force inventory, the C-130's were arriving at the 165th Tactical Airlift Group. Currently, the unit now flies C-130H aircraft received directly from the Lockheed Factory during September and Oct 1981.

In 1976 it was awarded its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for 'the way it excelled in conversion from C-124 to C-130 and the corresponding tactical airlift mission.

In 1987 the unit deployed to Korea in support of Team Spirit 87. In 1989 the 158 Airlift

Squadron deployed with the 185th Airlift Squadron, 137th Airlift Wing, for a first ever major command combined Operational Readiness Inspection at Pope Air Force Base. This exercise demonstrated that two National Guard units could deploy and operate together in a combat environment. Additionally, the squadron flew Special Forces elements to Thailand in support of Operation Badge Torch in October 1989.

During the squadron's 1990 Alpina deployment, Iraq invaded Kuwait. The 158 Airlift Squadron volunteered aircrews as the vanguard of an Air National Guard Airlift Wing stationed in the United Arab Emirates in support of Operation Desert Shield. Additionally, the squadron flew more than 198 Desert Shield and Desert Storm sorties in support of the Gulf War.

During September 1992 the unit flew missions supporting humanitarian airlift to Homestead Air Force Base after the devastating Hurricane Andrew struck south Florida. Additionally, the unit supported other humanitarian missions to St. Croix, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas. Guinea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Djibouti, and Senegal.

As part of Operation Southern Watch, the SQN flew missions in Southwest Asia during April and May 1993, basing out of Dhahran Air Base, Saudi Arabia.

In 1993 the unit was called upon to fly important humanitarian airlift missions into war torn Bosnia-Herzegovina in support of Operation Provide Promise. With the onset of winter, the squadron delivered food, clothing, and heating oil to Sarajevo Airport. Additionally, the unit provided airdrops to Bosnians suffering from starvation and exposure. The airlift and airdrop missions were constantly hampered by the threat of hostile fire and poor weather. Because of the units Self Contained Navigational System, 158 Airlift Squadron aircraft were allowed to airdrop without AWADS aircraft support resulting in keeping innocent civilians alive during the harsh winter months.

The humanitarian airlift extended to the unit's own backyard with operational support to the victims of the 1994 floods in Southwest Georgia. The unit provided airlift of personnel and relief supplies during Operation Crested River, earning members of the 158 Airlift Squadron the Humanitarian Service Medal.

In September of 1994, the squadron deployed to Uganda in support of Operation Support Hope. The unit was stationed at the famous Entebbe Airport and flew humanitarian airlift support to Rwanda and Zaire. This effort directly contributed to halting the massive numbers of refugee deaths due to starvation and disease. Additionally, in September 1994, 158 Airlift Squadron aircrews supported airlift missions to Haiti in support of Operation Uphold Democracy resulting in the restoration of democracy in Haiti.

From January to March 1996, the 158 deployed members in support of a variety of missions to include Southwest Asia, Southern Watch, NATO forces, Coronet Oak in Panama, Operation Joint Endeavor and Implementation Force (IFOR). The wing deployed to Gulfport, Mississippi, during October for an Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE). In 1998, the 158 participated in

Operation Joint Forge as the lead unit with all the deployment responsibilities for this 90-day mission. Other deployments were in support of Southern Watch, Airlift Rodeo competition, Bright Star, and an ORE in Alpena, Michigan. The wing received its eighth Outstanding Unit Award.

In May 1996, unit personnel and aircraft responded to our nation's call by deploying to Germany for Operation Joint Endeavor, the resupply of U.S. forces in Bosnia.

During 1996 the unit supported three major operations. In January 1996 elements of the unit deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Southern Watch. In May 1996 the Squadron deployed to Germany in support of Operation Joint Endeavor. The unit flew important airlift support missions to NATO Forces located at Tasar in Hungary, and Tuzla and Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Finally, from July to August 1996 the unit supported the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. Task Force 165 provided Security and Intelligence support to the 1996 Olympic Yachting Venue held in Savannah Georgia.

In May 1998 the 158 Airlift Squadron was instrumental in moving Operation Cornet Oak from Panama to Muniz ANG Base, Puerto Rico. The squadron deployed in October 1998 to Ramstein Air Base Germany as the lead unit for Operation Joint Forge. This important mission was tasked to support Stabilization Forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The 158 successfully managed more than 1,080 sorties, moving more than 10,500 personnel, and transporting over 3,550 tons of cargo, resulting in a reliability rate of 97%. Again in February 2000, as a member of the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF-6), the unit returned to Germany in support of Operation Joint Forge. Additionally, the unit deployed to Curacao in support of Operation Senior Scout.

1999 Feb saw an end to an era with the end of Volant Oak in Panama at Howard AFB. The 165th had participated in that operation since 1977, carrying supplies and other cargo throughout Central and South America.

In January 2000, the 158 began with two deployments to Curacao for drug interdiction work. General Charles T. Robertson, Commander of Air Mobility Command, visited the wing later in January. The wing participated in Air Expeditionary Force rotation 6, deploying to Ramstein AB, Germany, for Operation Joint Forge

The year of 2003 saw the first large-scale activation of troops since the Korean War. In March, about 250 members received orders to report to active duty to deploy to the desert in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In July, some of the troops returned with the rest returning in August. In early October, about 60 members and three C-130s redeployed to the desert for 45 to 60 days rotation tours.

In 2004, we continued to see airmen from the 165th deploy to Iraq and other sites throughout the world. The 165th Airlift Wing has operated out of following Bases: Masirah AB, Oman, Tallil AB, Iraq, Ali-Al Salem, Kuwait, and Karshi-Khanabad AB, Uzbekistan (K2). The unit is involved in the following Operations: Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Horn of

Africa.

The Georgia Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Wing began recapitalizing its C-130H fleet with newer airframes that incorporate more modern avionics, according to a unit release. "With the replacements we are gaining enhanced navigational capability, electronic flight instrumentation, whereas before all of our gages were analog, and improved autopilot system," said 165th AW pilot and inspector general Lt. Col. Jonathan Drew. "These upgrades will significantly contribute to how the 165th AW executes our state and federal missions and allow us to be better prepared for worldwide contingencies," added 165th AW Commander Col. Rainer Gomez. The newer C-130H2.5/H.3s are on average 15 years newer than the wing's current fleet. The first of the eight newer airframes-previously assigned to the 302nd AW at Peterson AFB, Colo.-arrived at Savannah Hilton Head Arpt., Ga., Oct. 15. The fleet swap-out should be complete by the end of 2016. 2015

USAF Unit Histories

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Sources

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