

# 188<sup>th</sup> FIGHTER WING



## LINEAGE

188<sup>th</sup> Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 15 Oct 1962  
Redesignated 188<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Group, 18 Apr 1972  
Redesignated 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, 16 Mar 1992  
Redesignated 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1995

## STATIONS

Ebbing ANGB, Fort Smith, AR

## ASSIGNMENTS

131<sup>st</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing

## WEAPON SYSTEMS

RF-84  
RF-101, 1970  
F-100, 1972  
F-4C, 1979  
F-16, 1988  
A-10

## COMMANDERS

Col Hugh B. Correll, 1960  
Col Edward Schneider, 1964  
Col Charles W. Harris, 1977  
Col B. J. Strang, 1984  
Col Robert R. Handy, 1989  
Col Philip R. Bunch, 1997  
Col John R. Dallas, 2001  
Col. Thomas I. Anderson  
Col. Mark W. Anderson 14 Apr 2012

## HONORS

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

#### **EMBLEM**

VIDERE SCIRE EST adopted 18 Oct 1962

VIGILIAS AGIMUS adopted 4 Oct 1976

#### **MOTTO**

VIDERE SCIRE EST—To See is to Know

VIGILIAS AGIMUS—We are the Guard

#### **NICKNAME**

#### **OPERATIONS**

In its 2005 BRAC Recommendations, DoD recommended to realign Fort Smith Municipal Airport Air Guard Station, AR. DoD would distribute the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing's F-16s to the 144<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Fresno Air Terminal AGS, CA (seven aircraft) and retire the remainder (eight aircraft). As part of a larger recommendation that would also realign Luke AFB, AZ, DoD claimed that military value, coupled with homeland defense, was the predominant reason for these recommendations.

**2005 2 Sep** Thirty-eight Civil Engineer personnel assigned to the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, Arkansas ANG, and the 166<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Delaware ANG deployed to Gulfport CRTC to help rebuild the base. Twenty-one ANG Services personnel also deployed to Gulfport to augment the four Services personnel already onsite.

**9 Sep** Forty-one Security Forces personnel assigned to the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, Arkansas ANG, returned to their home station at Ft Smith Airport, Arkansas. They had deployed to Ft Chaffee, Arkansas.

A stream of tears gave way to a flood of emotions as their loved ones boarded a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 bound for Afghanistan. Hands waved vigorous goodbyes, some wielding American flags as the aircraft rolled down the runway and minutes later thundered into the transparent blue distance. Approximately 50 Airmen from the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing deployed to Afghanistan as part of the unit's Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) rotation. The Airmen departed the 188<sup>th</sup> 4 Jan to begin a four-month rotation in Afghanistan, where they will join the 175<sup>th</sup> Wing, based in Baltimore, Md. The 188<sup>th</sup> and 175<sup>th</sup> will each deploy A-10C to facilitate the rotation's mission. The 188<sup>th</sup> will deploy approximately 300 personnel to Afghanistan during the entire AEF rotation. The remainder of the 188<sup>th</sup> personnel, approximately 250, will begin its portion of the rotation in Mar 2010, when the 188<sup>th</sup>'s official rotation begins. "This is what the 188<sup>th</sup> has trained for and what we work so hard to prepare for," said Col Tom Anderson, 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing commander. "The 188<sup>th</sup> has received the best training possible and we have the utmost confidence that we will be an asset to the mission." While the 188<sup>th</sup> prepares year-round for its mission, it has conducted intense training over the past six months in preparation for

its AEF rotation. The 188<sup>th</sup> deployed approximately 300 operations, maintenance and support personnel along with 13 of the unit's 21 A-10s to Operation Snowbird at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 25 Jul-8 Aug 2009. The deployment to Davis-Monthan furnished the 188<sup>th</sup> with the opportunity to conduct training and gain operational experience in a mountainous, desert terrain, which closely mimics the climate and conditions in Afghanistan. The 188<sup>th</sup> flew 186 sorties totaling 437 hours during its deployment to Davis-Monthan. The 188<sup>th</sup> deployed approximately 200 pilots, maintenance and support personnel to Green Flag West at Nellis AFB, NV, 9-23 Oct 2009, for additional training. The 188<sup>th</sup> deployed 10 A-10Cs to Nellis. The primary motive of Green Flag was to duplicate warfare conditions currently found in Iraq and Afghanistan. Aircrew engaged in battle exercises that furnished training in which they worked closely with joint terminal attack controllers (JTACs) to protect nearly 6,000 Soldiers and 400 armored and support vehicles from an opposing enemy force in a 1,000-square-mile combat environment. While at Green Flag, the 188<sup>th</sup> dropped a diverse array of munitions and bombs, including GBU-38 JDAMs, GBU-12 LGBs, MK-82s (inert), MK-66 rockets and AGM-65 Mavericks as well as firing 30 MM rounds from the A-10's GAU-8/A seven-barrel Gatling gun. All of that training was to prepare the 188<sup>th</sup> for what it will encounter in Afghanistan. "The A-10 is the best platform for close-air support, which will be our primary task in Afghanistan," Anderson said. "The A-10 has surgical capabilities and can destroy pinpoint targets, which is vital when attempting to eliminate collateral damage." The impending deployment marks the first AEF rotation for the 188<sup>th</sup> as an A-10 unit. The 188<sup>th</sup> officially transitioned from the F-16 to the A-10 14 Apr 2007. The 188<sup>th</sup>'s last AEF deployment transpired in 2005 when the unit deployed 267 Airmen and 10 F-16s to Balad Air Base, Iraq, while sharing a four month rotation. In 2005, more than half of the 188<sup>th</sup>'s 1,000 personnel deployed in some capacity in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. "We've been to war before and deployed Airmen into battle, just in a different aircraft," Anderson said. "I appreciate all the service of all of our Airmen and their families. We have a great support system in place to ensure that each member of our unit and their families are taken care of during this deployment." While many 188<sup>th</sup> Airmen were logging their first deployments, others were making a return trip to the Middle East, though to a different location with a different aircraft and saddled with a much different family dynamic. "Before when I deployed, I was just a single guy picking up and moving," said Tech Sgt. Shawn Thorne, a crew chief with the 188<sup>th</sup>. "Now I'm a husband and a father and it's a much different feeling when you're leaving a wife and children behind." 2010

More than 200 members of the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing returned to home station Monday following an Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) deployment to Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan. A World Airlines DC-10 packed full of Guardsmen touched down at Fort Smith Regional Airport at 11:55 p.m. 17 May 2010. More than 50 members of the 188<sup>th</sup> left 8 Jan 2010, and spent the entire four-month AEF rotation in Kandahar. An additional 225 Guardsmen joined them in early March for the 188<sup>th</sup>'s official two-month portion the rotation. The remaining personnel, approximately 50, and the 188<sup>th</sup>'s deployed A-10C will return later this week. The AEF mission was the 188<sup>th</sup>'s first combat deployment as a unit with A-10s since it received its first Warthog 14 Apr 2007. The 188<sup>th</sup> shared the four-month AEF rotation with the 175<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, an A-10 Air National Guard unit based in Baltimore, Md. While in theater the 188<sup>th</sup> was attached to the 451<sup>st</sup> Expeditionary Wing at Kandahar Airfield. "We're certainly glad to have our Airmen back home safe," said Col Tom Anderson, 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing commander. "It was an important mission and the 188<sup>th</sup> made key contributions to the effort. The 188<sup>th</sup> has a rich history of

performing well under pressure and this deployment was no different. Everyone put in a lot of hard work to ensure each mission was successful.” The A-10 mission in southern Afghanistan is to fly close-air support in response to ground troops who may be in contact with the enemy, or to escort convoys in particularly hostile areas. When not supporting ground troops, A-10s patrol designated sectors and provide aerial reconnaissance on locations of interest to ground commanders. While in Kandahar, the 188<sup>th</sup> consistently flew 12 to 16 sorties per day with each flying mission averaging two to five hours. “We had 12 aircraft that we were responsible for and our A-10s were airborne [nearly] 24/7,” said Cpt Jim Garvey, 188<sup>th</sup> maintenance officer. “Our job was to ensure that we met a flying mission every day to support troops on the ground. The pilots did that with great zeal and determination. The maintenance group worked hard to ensure that we did not miss a single mission in the entire 60 days we were there.” While the deployed 188<sup>th</sup> members maintained and repaired A-10s, flew countless sorties, conducted numerous inspections and marched to the cadence of a 24-hour operations tempo, the families made many contributions in their Guardsman’s absence. And on Monday, the Guardsmen and their respective families gave each other their thanks for a job well done. “I’m so glad to be home and to see my family,” Garvey said. “We have such a proud, supportive community and this reception is a reflection of that.” Despite the near midnight arrival, more than 1,000 family members and friends of the deployed Airman gathered at the 188<sup>th</sup> to welcome them home. It was an emotional moment as the deployed members were reunited with their families at the 188<sup>th</sup>’s Consolidated Maintenance Facility. “I’m very proud of each and every member of the 188<sup>th</sup> for all of their dedication,” Anderson said. “I’m also very thankful for all of their wonderful families and the sacrifices they made while their loved ones were deployed.” Before this mission, the 188<sup>th</sup>’s last AEF rotation was in 2005 when the unit deployed 267 Airmen and 10 F-16s to Balad Air Base, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

More than 200 members of the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing departed Fort Smith Monday, 8 Mar bound for Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. More than 800 individuals, which included the deploying Airmen and their families, filled the 188<sup>th</sup>’s Consolidated Maintenance Facility to enjoy their final moments together before the deploying Guardsmen were transported to their awaiting airlift on the taxiway. The Airmen will be deployed for more than two months as part of the 188<sup>th</sup>’s Aerospace Expeditionary Forces rotation. The deploying Airmen will join approximately 75 members of the 188<sup>th</sup> already in Afghanistan, where they will be attached to the 451<sup>st</sup> Expeditionary Wing. “We’ve prepared long and hard for this moment,” said Col. Tom Anderson, 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing commander. “We have some of the most highly trained, dedicated and capable personnel and I know they are focused on making this mission a success. I have confidence they will make us all proud.” This is the first combat deployment for the 188<sup>th</sup> as a unit since receiving A-10 on 14 Apr, 2007. The 188<sup>th</sup>’s last unit AEF rotation transpired in 2005 when 267 Airmen and 10 F-16 deployed to Balad Air Base, Iraq, while sharing a three-month rotation with another Air National Guard unit in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Approximately 50 members of the 188<sup>th</sup> deployed Jan. 4 and will be gone for the entire four-month rotation, which the 188<sup>th</sup> is sharing with the 175<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, an A-10 unit based in Baltimore, Md. The 188<sup>th</sup> has deployed pilots, maintenance and support personnel over the past two weeks to bolster continuity between the 188<sup>th</sup> and the 175<sup>th</sup>. “We have overcome many obstacles to reach this point and now we’re ready to put all of our hard work and training to use in a combat environment,” Anderson said. The 188<sup>th</sup> surmounted myriad impediments following the Base Realignment and Closure Committee’s 2005 decision to

strip the 188<sup>th</sup> of its flying mission and its subsequent about-face, which designated the unit for an A-10 assignment. According to Anderson, much toil and labor went into the successful aircraft conversion from the F-16 to the A-10A, and later an upgrade to the A-10C. The modified C models feature significant leaps in capability. The 188<sup>th</sup>'s ability to meet critical training requirements for its aviators was severely hampered in Oct 2008 when 168 of the Air Force's 356 A-10s were grounded because of issues with wing cracks. The 188<sup>th</sup> found intuitive solutions and shifted into high gear to meet maintenance and pilot training requirements, ensuring the March 8 departure. "The amount of training that occurred in that timeframe is absolutely incredible," Anderson said. "It wasn't easy. We had many obstacles along the way. But time and again the 188<sup>th</sup> stepped up. The 188<sup>th</sup> didn't make excuses; they made it happen even when the odds were stacked against us and our backs were against the wall. We not only met the requirements, we exceeded them." While the 188<sup>th</sup> prepares year-round for its mission, it has conducted an intense training regimen over the past nine months in preparation for its AEF rotation. The wing deployed approximately 300 operations, maintenance and support personnel, along with 13 A-10s, to Operation Snowbird at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 25 Jul-8 Aug 2009. The deployment to Davis-Monthan gave the 188<sup>th</sup> the opportunity to conduct training and gain operational experience in a mountainous, desert terrain, which closely mimics the climate and conditions in Afghanistan. The 188<sup>th</sup> flew 186 sorties totaling 437 hours during its deployment to Davis-Monthan. The wing also deployed approximately 200 pilots, maintenance and support personnel, and 10 aircraft, to Nellis AFB, NV, 9-23 Oct 2009, for additional training as part of the Green-Flag West exercise. While there, aircrews engaged in battle exercises simulating conditions in Afghanistan. While at Green Flag, the 188<sup>th</sup> dropped a diverse array of munitions and bombs, as well as firing 30 MM rounds from the A-10's seven-barrel Gatling gun. "Our primary mission is to provide close-air support for the Army," Anderson said. "I know it's not easy for the families as their loved ones venture into a combat mission. We understand that it's not only the 188<sup>th</sup> members who make the sacrifice but the families as well and we'll all await their safe return." McConnell said that many of the efforts to assemble the tents were mustered prior to the earthquake as part of an exercise that was slated for February. "We had the earthquake in January so the exercise they were supposed to have turned into the real McCoy," McConnell said. "We geared up for the possibility of migrants right about the time we were rotating out. They were talking about setting up about 1,400 tents before we left." For the 188<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron, it was an experience they won't soon forget. "We got to be around a lot of history while we were there and whether or not the place closes down eventually or it doesn't, we know we were a part of that history," McConnell said.

Nearly 300 members of the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing from Fort Smith deployed in early March to begin their portion of an Air Expeditionary Force rotation as a component of the 451<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group. The Arkansas unit is fulfilling the second two months of a four month rotation that was begun by a sister A-10 unit from the Maryland Air National Guard. The current rotation will last through May. This is the first deployed AEF rotation overseas for the "Flying Razorbacks" since the unit made its conversion from the F-16 to the A-10 in April of 2007. But from all indications the unit members, aircraft and crews were ready. "We had a good train up before coming here, both at Davis Monthan AFB, AZ and at the Green Flag exercise in Nevada, so we were ready to be doing exactly what we are doing here in southern Afghanistan," said LTC Mark Anderson, one of the 188<sup>th</sup> A-10 pilots. The A-10 mission in southern Afghanistan is to fly close-air-support in response to ground troops who may be in contact with the enemy, or to escort convoys in

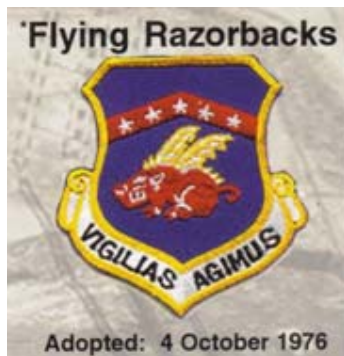
particularly hostile areas. When not supporting ground troops, the aircraft will patrol designated sectors and provide aerial reconnaissance on locations of interest to ground commanders. "We fly 12 to 16 sorties a day, around the clock," Anderson said. "Sometimes we get to do some low level shows of force. And they always result in the enemy breaking contact with forces on the ground." Anderson's comments were made just days before the 188th's opportunity came knocking with a call for low level support to a Marine unit pinned down on the outskirts of a village near Marjaf. Two of the 188th's pilots fired approximately 250 rounds each with their Warthog's .30 mm Gatlin guns. After completing two passes over the battle, the Airmen received the 'all clear' from the Marines on the ground. Typically, flight missions range from two to five hours. Pilots will either be tasked to support specific ground units and operations, or they will be on patrol checking sectors with one to 10 points of interest for reconnaissance. At any time during a patrol a weapons system controller may divert them to assist ground forces as necessary. From a maintenance perspective things also seem to be going well for the 188th as Master Sgt. Justin Likens, an aircraft crew chief, points out. "The aircraft have done very well since we got here despite the dusty conditions. You see the minor, normal stuff, but no major system or equipment failures," he said. Fellow crew chief, Master Sgt. Jay Greer echoed the upbeat sentiment of the deployment. "Most of the guys I have talked to are glad to be here," said Greer. "[It] makes us feel like we are contributing to the fight to make sure those planes are ready to go for each and every mission. If our guys on the ground need the air cover, it's our job to make sure they are ready to fly." The 188th is currently one of three units from the Arkansas National Guard that is working in southern Afghanistan. In addition there are approximately 200 members of the 1037th Route Clearance Company of the 875th Engineer Battalion from Jonesboro and another 60 Soldiers and Airmen with the Arkansas Agriculture Development Team.

The Arkansas Air National Guard's 188th Fighter Wing logged its final night mission with the A-10C in late January. The wing is transitioning to an MQ-9 Reaper mission, according to a Feb. 2 release. Maj. Patrick Coggin flew tail number 188 and Lt. Col. Toby Brallier flew tail number 216 on the final sortie. The pilots conducted a flight lead upgrade certification near Whiteman AFB, Mo., before returning to the 188th's Det. 1 Razorback Range at Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center, Ark., for additional close air support training on Jan. 29. "As we get closer to June, we will experience a lot of historical moments at the 188th," said Col. Mark Anderson, 188th Fighter Wing commander. "It's bittersweet in that we're losing our aircraft but we're excited about the future of our wing and the cutting-edge mission with which the Air Force has entrusted us." The wing, which has been divesting two Warthogs per month since September 2013, currently has nine A-10Cs on station. Two more are scheduled to leave this month, states the release.

The Air National Guard's 188th Fighter Wing at Ebbing ANGB, Ark., will temporarily host seven F-16C Falcons and 40 maintenance, operation, and support personnel from the Oklahoma Air National Guard's 138th Fighter Wing. The aircraft and airmen will remain in Arkansas until mid-June when runway and taxiway construction at the 139th FW is slated for completion, states an April 7 release. "The 188th is no stranger to F-16 operations and we're happy to share our facilities with our Air National Guard brothers and sisters from the 138th," said 188th FW Commander Col. Mark Anderson. The F-16s will be housed in former A-10 shelters vacated during the wing's conversion to an "intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance, space-focused targeting and remotely piloted aircraft mission," states the release. The last of the 188th FW's A-10s are slated to leave on June 7, states the release. 2014

Arkansas Air National Guard pilots flew the final A-10 training sortie from Ebbing ANG Base before the 188th Fighter Wing's conversion to intelligence and remotely piloted aircraft missions, announced the unit. "I'm going to miss flying over Arkansas and seeing it through the cockpit canopy for sure," said 188th Operations Support Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Marty Dahlem after the ground-attack training sortie on May 16. "As a wing, we've been flying manned aircraft for 60 years," said Col. Mark Anderson, the unit's commander. "While we're sad that our A-10s had to go, we're getting a cutting-edge mission that will feature a substantial intelligence and RPA mission," he said in another release. "It's definitely bittersweet," added Anderson when the unit's first A-10 departed for Moody AFB, Ga., last September. The Fort Smith unit converted to A-10s in April 2007, and marked its largest-ever deployment with the jets to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, in 2012. The unit's last three A-10s are slated to depart Fort Smith by early June. 2014

The last two A-10C ground-attack airplanes assigned to the Arkansas Air National Guard's 188th Fighter Wing left Fort Smith for good, ending the wing's manned flying mission, and ushering in its new mission, which includes operating MQ-9 remotely piloted aircraft. "Seeing a manned airplane leave, knowing it was for the last time, was kind of hard to watch," said 188th FW Vice Commander Col. Peter Gauger at the unit's conversion ceremony on June 7 at Ebbing ANG Base, reported KFSM News of Fort Smith. "I was a little emotional and sad, to be honest with you," he added. During the ceremony, the 188th FW got a new designation: the 188th Wing, and officials inactivated the wing's former maintenance and operations units. The wing simultaneously redesignated the 184th Fighter Squadron the 184th Attack Squadron, for transition to operating the RPAs. Officials likewise christened the new 188th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group, 153rd Intelligence Squadron, 223rd Intelligence Support Squadron, and 288th Operations Support Squadron to support the new mission set. 2014





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

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.  
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.  
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.  
Unit History. *AR ANG 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: 1953-2003.*