

189 AIRLIFT WING



MISSION

The 189 Airlift Wing is an Air Education and Training command-gained Formal Training Unit charged with effectively training and qualifying C-130H air crew in all crew positions, to perform combat airlift operations.

LINEAGE

189 Tactical Reconnaissance Group organized, Sep 1962
Redesignated 189 Air Refueling Group, 1 Jan 1976
Redesignated 189 Tactical Airlift Group, 1 Oct 1986
Redesignated 189 Airlift Group, 16 Apr 1992
Redesignated 189 Airlift Wing, 1 Oct 1995

STATIONS

Little Rock AFB, AR

ASSIGNMENTS

Arkansas Air National Guard

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

RF-101, 1965
KC-135, 1976
C-130, 1986

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

Col Drew F. Holbrook, Aug 1962
Col Lawrence O. Savage, Oct 1969
Col Joe A. Caple, May 1974
MG Herbert L. Wassell, Jr., Feb 1978
Col Jerry W. Cook, Jul 1979
BG Charles R. Linz, Aug 1983
Col William R. Canino, Jun 1987
BG Shelby G. Bryant, Nov 1988
Col Danny R. Smith, Jul 1999
Col Riley P. Porter
Col Dean B. Martin
Col Travis Balch

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 189 Tactical Reconnaissance Group was placed under command of Colonel Drew F. Holbrook. The flying element of the 189 TRG, the 154th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, was placed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence O. "Doc" Savage. The 189's personnel numbered 334 and its flight element included fourteen RB-57 Canberra reconnaissance-bombers and a single C-47 transport. The unit's first drill would take place on the weekend of October 20-21, during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Twenty F-101C Voodoo aircraft arrived at the base July 1, to replace the RB-57's operated by the AANG. Pilots and ground crews of the 189 were retrained to operate the new plane through the rest of the summer. These aircrews were put to work stripping the fighters of armor and installing photographic equipment, thereby converting the aircraft to RF-101C standard. The first F-101C Voodoo, piloted by Colonel Robin Olds arrived at LRAFB on July 1, 1965, and was operated by the 189 TRW AANG.

When the intelligence-gathering ship *Pueblo* was captured by North Korea in 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson called 14,000 Reservist airmen to active duty. The 154th TRS and the 123rd TRW prepared to join the 189 TRG (AANG) in Southeast Asia. These groups would be stationed at Adams Field in Little Rock due to crowding problems at Little Rock Air Force Base. Future AANG flight crews received extensive Sea Survival School training at Homestead Air Force Base in Florida.

Meanwhile, a half-dozen RF-101's from the 189 along with nine two-man flight crews and dozens of support personnel were sent to Bergstrom Air Force Base in Texas for combat training. The "shake-and-bake" training schedule was completed by the end of April. Two months later, the 154th TRS began deploying to Itazuke Air Base in Japan. Over the next few weeks, 316 personnel and 200 tons of cargo were airlifted to Itazuke by C-141. The 154th's twenty RF-101 Voodoos arrived shortly after that. During their deployment at Itazuke, the 154th TRS shot 240,249 feet of film over North Korea to check on Chinese advances. The 154th was soon joined by the 192nd TRS out of Reno, Nevada. The 192nd was also part of the 123rd TRW, and began taking over the 154th's operations on November 4. The 154th returned to Little Rock Air Force Base on November 20, and deactivation from combat status began. The 189 was ceremoniously demobilized on December 20.

189 ARG was awarded the Air Force's Outstanding Unit Award for 1983. During that year, the 189 flew 1,579 sorties over 6,216 flight hours and delivered 10,095,200 pounds of fuel to thirsty aircraft the world over.

At home, the 189 ARG was re-designated as a Tactical Airlift Group on October 1, and the unit's 154th TATS began taking on 24% of Phase I C-130 training for new Air Force flight crews at Little Rock Air Force Base. The remainder would still be trained by the 16th Tactical Airlift Training Squadron of the 314th. Along with the re-designation, the 189 switched affiliations from SAC to MAC. The last KC-135 sortie was flown September 26, and the last Stratotanker departed the base on October 1.

Approximately 40 patients displaced to Arkansas from Louisiana by Hurricane Gustav made their way back home 14 Sep from Little Rock with the help of the Arkansas National Guard. A C-130 from the 189 Airlift Wing provided quick transport of evacuees with sensitive medical conditions back to healthcare facilities near their homes. Over 270 people were evacuated from facilities in Louisiana via the National Disaster Medical System process, and have been cared for at medical facilities across Arkansas since 29 Aug. The mission was flown in a state active duty status under the direction of Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe, and was requested through the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management. The Arkansas National Guard provided the aircraft as an expedient and safe method of transportation for the patients, who would otherwise have had to endure long hours of ground transportation. Medical care, monitoring and patient assistance was handled by volunteer nurses from the Arkansas Department of Health and paramedics from the Metropolitan Emergency Medical Service (MEMS) ambulance service. Getting him ready to go – Arkansas Air National Guard Master Sgt. Stanley Bee of the 189 Airlift Wing's Aerial Port manifests a Hurricane Gustav medical evacuee before the man is

loaded into a C-130 for quick transport back to healthcare facilities in Louisiana. Approximately 40 patients with sensitive medical conditions were airlifted September 14 under the direction of the governor as part of a state active duty mission. On the ramp – Ambulances line up to deliver Hurricane Gustav medical evacuees to a waiting Arkansas Air National Guard C-130 September 14 for quick transportation from Little Rock back to healthcare facilities in Louisiana.
2008

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 12 Oct 2010
Updated: 17 Jan 2021

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
Unit history. Little Rock AFB, AR. *Heartland, The History of Little Rock AFB*. Timothy Burford and Stephanie Burford. WireStorm Publishing. Las Vegas, NV. 2002.