

## 196 RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

411 Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine constituted, 25 May 1943  
Activated, 15 Aug 1943  
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945  
Redesignated 196 Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine and allotted to the ANG, 24 May 1946  
Organized, 12 Sep 1946  
Extended federal recognition, 9 Nov 1946  
Re-designated 196 Fighter Squadron, Jet, 1 Jun 1948  
Federalized and placed on active duty, 10 Oct 1950  
Redesignated 196 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1 Nov 1950  
Released from active duty and returned to California state control, 10 Jul 1952  
Redesignated 196 Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, 1 Oct 1952  
Redesignated 196 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1 Jan 1953  
Redesignated 196 Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, 1 Oct 1965  
Redesignated 196 Tactical Air Support Squadron, 8 Mar 1975  
Redesignated 196 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Oct 1982  
Redesignated 196 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 1 Jul 1990  
Redesignated 196 Reconnaissance Squadron, 16 Mar 1992  
Redesignated 196 Air Refueling Squadron, 1 Oct 1993  
Redesignated 196 Reconnaissance Squadron, 1 Nov 2006  
Redesignated 196 Attack Squadron, 2016

### STATIONS

Westover Field, MA, 15 Aug 1943  
Blackstone AAFld, VA, 22 Oct 1943  
Richmond AAB, VA, 15 Feb-14 Mar 1944

Woodchurch, England, 5 Apr-27 Jul 1944  
Tour-en-Bassin, France, 30 Jul 1944  
St-James, France, 20 Aug 1944  
Reims, France, c. 29 Sep 1944  
Le Culot, Belgium, c. 24 Oct 1944  
Venlo, Holland, 15 Mar 1945  
Lippstadt, Germany, 23 Apr 1945  
Illesheim, Germany, 20 May-Jul 1945  
Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 4 Aug 1945  
Seymour Johnson Field, NC, 20 Aug 1945  
Mitchel Field, NY, 28 Sep-7 Nov 1945  
Norton AFB, CA, 1946  
Ontario, CA  
March ARB, CA, 1982

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

373 Fighter Group, 15 Aug 1943-7 Nov 1945.

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

#### **Mission Aircraft**

P-47, 1943  
P-51/F-51, Feb 1947  
F-80, Jun 1948  
F-84, Apr 1951  
F-51, Oct 1952  
F-86, Mar 1954  
F-102, May 1965  
TF-102  
O-2A, 1975  
F-4, 1982  
F-4, 1987  
RF-4, 1990  
KC-135, 1993  
MQ-1

#### **Support Aircraft**

**T-33**

### **COMMANDERS**

Maj Ansel J, Wheeler  
LTC Edward Hoffman  
LTC Randall R. Ball  
LTC Robert Balslev  
LTC Charles W. Manley, II 1998 - 2002

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation

Rhine River, 20 Mar 1945

French Croix de Guerre with Palm

Aug 1944

Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army

1 Oct-17 Dec 1944

18 Dec 1944-15 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

### **EMBLEM**



Over and through an ultramarine blue disc, marked at each extremity of the vertical and horizontal axes with a small, white, five-pointed star border yellow, a large, white shooting star with exhaust trail graduated from yellow to red toward sinister base, in flight over a small, dark green and light blue replica of the world and a small, white, decrescent moon in dexter base; star equipped with light blue bubble canopy, jet units, and wing tanks, emitting light blue vapor toward rear. Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The stars represent all directions within air space. The shooting star over the globe symbolizes air defense of the world and throughout the skies.

On a disc Azure and within an annulet, issuant from sinister base a bendwise contrail Or, terminating in a large slightly elongated bendwise shooting star Argent, bearing a bubble canopy, two jet units and two wing tanks emitting two bendwise vapor trails all Celeste, at cardinal points four diminished mullets of the third, issuant from dexter base a terrestrial globe with a crescent

moon above its sinister side Proper, all within a narrow border Black. Attached above the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "GRIZZLIES" in Black letters. Attached below the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "196 RS" in Black letters.

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

Grizzlies

## **OPERATIONS**

The 196 Reconnaissance Squadron (196 RS) is a unit of the 163 RW and the CA ANG. The squadron conducts operational missions and formal training. The Formal Training Unit (FTU) has instructed Mission Control Element (MCE) operations and Launch and Recovery Element (LRE) operations since 2009. This FTU was created to relieve some of the training pressure from the 432 WG at Creech AFB as the Air Force expanded RPA operations. The FTU is administratively part of the 196 RS, but operationally reports directly to the 163 OG. The LRE launches aircraft from a detachment at Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville, the former George AFB. The instructor pilots and sensor operators for the FTU are assigned to the 196 RW.

Training began at Westover Field, in September 1943, and was continued at Blackstone Army Air Base, Virginia, where the unit moved on 22 October, 1943. The P-47 was the assigned weapon system.

In February 1944, training skidded to a standstill while the squadron prepared for overseas departure. On 23 March, 1944, the unit sailed from New York aboard the HMS Duchess of Bedford, bound for its new station at Woodchurch, Kent, England. Another month was spent preparing for combat missions.

On 8 May, 1944, a short nine months after its inception, the 411th flew its first combat mission a fighter sweep over the coast of France. No opposition was encountered and all planes returned safely. Overall, during the month of May 1944, the unit completed more than 50 combat missions including its first dive-bombing mission, a strike against a railway bridge in the vicinity of Rouen.

These missions prepared the unit for the tremendous task it was to undertake the following month. On 6 June, 1944, fourteen missions were flown on D-Day when it patrolled the beaches and provided top cover for other outfits in dive-bombing attacks against enemy targets. In the days succeeding the establishment of the Normandy beachhead, the fighters swept behind enemy lines and attacked motor convoys, troops, transportation facilities, and other targets of opportunity.

Although the 411th was primarily concerned with ground support and interdiction, there were engagements with the enemy in aerial combat. On 29 June, 1944, while providing top cover for a

dive-bombing strike against rolling stock in the Le Mans-Tours area, they encountered seven ME-109 . At the battle climax only two ME-109 remained.

On 1 August, 1944, Lt, Col, Donald T. Bennink replaced Lt. Col, Wheeler as commander of the 411th. It is recorded that Colonel Bennink was lost in action on 27 August, 1944, presumably while attacking the fortifications at Brest. Command passed briefly to Major Harry L. Downing and then to Major John W. Gaff.

August and September found this unit continuing its air attacks in support of the allied armies and in particular, the front line elements of General Patton Third Army, Late in October the squadron moved to Le Culot, Belgium, where it was located when, on 16 December, the Germans began their historic breakthrough which resulted in the famous Battle of the Bulge. From 19 to 23 December, allied airpower was bound down by unfavorable weather. On 24 Dec, the 411th along with other units were back in the air, flying attack after attack in support of our beleaguered ground forces.

20 March, 1945. The squadron pilots, along with the 410th and 412th Fighter Squadrons, destroyed or damaged 119 enemy aircraft on the ground. In the words of Colonel James C. McGehee, Commanding Officer of the 373rd Fighter Group, "Our boys got tired of waiting for the Krauts to come up and fight so they went down and got the Boche on the ground."

The 411th Fighter Squadron was inactivated on 7 Nov, 1945, at Mitchel Field, New York, a little over three months after returning to the state on 1 Aug, 1945. The unit was redesignated as the 196 Fighter Squadron and allotted to the California Air National Guard. The 196 was extended Federal Recognition at San Bernardino Army Air Base, California (later known as Norton Air Force Base) effective 9 November, 1946, and it was assigned to the 146th Fighter Group. It is of interest to note that the 146th Fighter Group was reconstituted from the 373rd Fighter Group to which our predecessor unit the 411th was assigned during World War II.

At the same time that the 196 Fighter Squadron was extended Federal Recognition, two other units joined the ranks of the California Air National Guard, They were the Utility Flight of the 196 Fighter Squadron and the 198th Weather Station.

At the time of Federal Recognition, the 196 Fighter Squadron had a compliment of 12 officers and 28 airmen and no airplanes. Captain Donald L. Frisbie was one of the 12 officers present that day at San Bernardino. He was later to serve as commander of the 196 and the 163rd with the rank of Colonel. The following month witnessed the assignment of two L-5Gs and two T-6s. The unit grew rapidly in size and received the P-51D in February 1947. In the meantime, a C-47 and a B-26 were assigned

The facilities at Norton found Operations in an abandoned Fire Station and Supply in the old Pre-World War II Civilian Hangar. The rest of the unit was in an old ramshackle "bare bones" building. Motor Pool and the Dispensary were the only "lucky" sections, inheriting facilities that had been used for this function. There were abandoned but good club facilities and better mess halls than

anything the unit was to have until our present mess facilities were finally constructed in December 1962, The Weather Flight also enjoyed the use of the Weather facilities in the west side of Norton, all which had been nearly abandoned.

One of the more memorable incidents occurred shortly after the formation of the unit. In April of 1947 disaster struck the port city of Texas City. Texas, when a ship moored in the port caught fire and exploded, causing great damage. In response to the disaster, the assigned C-47 was dispatched to that city carrying relief supplies.

Because of the lack of a field training site during 1947, annual field training was not scheduled, a mini-training period of five days was held in early November.

January 1948 was the dawn of a new era for the 196 and the California Air National Guard. The squadron received official word that jet fighters would be assigned in the near future! Planning and preparations were made in anticipation of receiving the new jet fighters. Pilots were scheduled and assigned temporarily to Williams Air Force Base, Arizona, for training in jet fighters. Another five day training period was conducted for the squadron in late March in anticipation of receiving the new jets.

25 June, 1948, stands out as the red letter day in the history of the 196. That was the day the F-80C were received. These F-80s were brand new, just off the production line and one of the first jets assigned to the Air National Guard. Two other units of the Air National Guard also received the model of the F-80 at approximately the same time. They were the 158th Fighter Squadron, Georgia Air National Guard, and the 159th Fighter Squadron, Florida Air National Guard. Transition into the P-80 was made directly from the P-51 into the single seat fighter without the luxury of the two place T-33 and the simulators that modern day pilots take for granted.

Recruiting was the priority of the 1947 Era, Each officer applicant had to recruit and have sworn in two enlisted men prior to their own acceptance. Also 60% enlisted men attendance was required before officers could get paid, so pilots would stop by the houses of men to hurry them to drill. "Drill" (currently known as unit training assembly) was held on Monday nights and Sunday mornings. The pilots stayed and flew Sunday afternoons and also on Saturdays.

The first full fifteen day summer encampment, since Federal Recognition in November 1946, occurred during the last half of August 1948. The unit strength was 25 officers and 200 airmen. Training was conducted at home station, Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino, California. LTC Nester E. Cole (Air Instructor) in his comments about the third day of encampment said, "Much confusion started this day with officers on K.P. in the 196 Mess Hall." Apparently some of the officers had volunteered to perform K.P, because recruits receiving schooling in the basic training course were being detailed for K.P

In spite of the anxieties and initial confusion, the encampment progressed satisfactorily with some aircraft deploying to Santa Maria as part of an alert exercise. Of the approximately 200 airmen assigned, 120 were basics participating in the basic training program, The basic training program

was effective. Lieutenant Moorman commanded the basic training program with SSgt. Robert L. Martinez acting as First Sergeant, In summary of the first encampment, Lt. Col.

During the ensuing year, the last of the F-51 were phased out and the F-80 were truly the primary aircraft of the unit. In March 1949, approval was given for the 196 Fighter Squadron "Shooting Star" insignia. Lieutenant Doug Fortner, a member of the unit, is credited with designing the insignia.

Field training for 1949 was held at Victorville (George) Air Force Base during the first part of August, The Base had been abandoned from World War II. The plumbing in the mess hall was plugged, refueling systems would not work, and the barracks and BOQ were piled with dust from several years of desert windstorms. It was all good experience for the younger troops and "old hat" for the many World War II people that were in the unit.

Emphasis on combat readiness was the keynote for 1950. Gunnery training in Phoenix was conducted in May with 19 pilots participating. Some of the pilots were: Captains Arthur Bridge, Frisbie, Warren and Rew; Lieutenants Moran, Van Salter, Vautherot and Vassar.

Field training was in August; the training site was Santa Rosa. The site was an abandoned Navy Base. The unit had about 300 men assigned. Transportation to Santa Rosa was provided by several C-46. By this time the Korean situation was deteriorating, and in anticipation of possible mobilization for Federal Service, combat tactics, gunnery, and dive bombing were stressed to attain the highest proficiency possible.

The unit was ordered into active military service on 10 October, 1950.

The 196 Fighter Squadron and Detachment were ordered into active military service 10 October, 1950, for a period of twenty-one months. The organization stayed at Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino, California, from date of activation until November, 1950, at which time the unit was transferred to George Air Force Base, Victorville, California. At that time the 196 Fighter Squadron and Detachment were assigned to the 116th Fighter Bomber Wing. The 116th Fighter Bomber Wing, Groups, and one fighter squadron were from the Georgia Air National Guard, The other fighter squadron was from the Florida Air National Guard, Training as a Fighter Bomber Wing was started immediately in F-80C of which all three fighter squadrons were equipped in 1948.

Request for air defense in support of Operation Greenhouse was received by the Wing Commander in January, 1951. Operation Greenhouse was the testing of the Atom Bomb on Eniwetok Atoll in the Pacific. Six F-80C and eight pilots were specified as the detachment to be sent TDY to Eniwetok. Major Arthur H. Bridge was appointed detachment commander. Three pilots and eight key airmen from the 196 were chosen as part of the detachment to participate in Operation Greenhouse. This detachment received a commendation from General Quesada for the excellent support provided. Colonel Bridge recalls: "The mission of Greenhouse was supposedly air defense but the most useful thing we did was to fly out seventy-five miles or so and give honor escort to transport aircraft with VIP on board. We watched the explosion of four nuclear bombs,

one type of which was used the following year to trigger the first H bomb."

The detachment returned from TDY in June, 1951, and rejoined the squadron. During the spring months of 1951 the squadron primary type aircraft was changed to F-84E. The F-84 were ferried from the Republic Factory, Farmingdale, New York, to George Air Force Base by members of the squadrons. Colonel Bridge relates the experience at George AFB as a frustrating one. "We watched the combat efficiency deteriorate. We had constant levies on both our pilots and mechanics. The unit was scarcely recognizable when we finally got our; overseas shipping order."

Overseas orders were received in July, 1951, and the aircraft were flown to Oakland, California, where they were loaded aboard aircraft carriers for the Far East. The majority of the personnel were also taken on the carriers but, some embarked from San Francisco on a troop transport. The overseas movement orders were received approximately one week before the sailing date; all equipment and aircraft arrived on schedule for sailing. Up to the receipt of these orders, the organization was scheduled for the European Theater and a number of aircraft and personnel were in the port of New York processing aircraft for shipment to Europe.

Arrival at Misawa Air Force Base, Japan, was 25 July, 1951. The 196 Fighter Squadron stayed with the Wing and Fighter Group at Misawa until 1 September, 1951, at which time the 196 was transferred north to the island of Hokkaido and established operations at Chitose Army Base. Again the 196 was to operate as a single unit, away from its Group or Wing and be responsible for its own base and support functions. The 196 was augmented by elements of all the supporting units of the 116th Wing at Misawa and operated as the Base Air Force activity at Chitose. Lt. Col. Arthur H. Bridge was Air Force Base Detachment Commander. The primary mission of the squadron at this time was air defense of northern Japan. Fortunately for the unit there was no actual fighting in this Air Defense role, for although the F-84E was an excellent ground support fighter it was no match for the MIG fighter of that day. The secondary mission included testing of mid-air tip tank refueling in conjunction with "Operation Hightide." The 196 Squadron was the first tactical organization to use mid-air refueling on actual combat missions from northern Japan to Korea and return to Japan. The refueling consisted of making two insertions of receiving probes on the front of each, tip tank into a cone that was on the end of a long hose trailing behind a KB-50. There were no boom operators on these converted bombers to assist the fighter pilot. Colonel Bridge goes on to say: The year spent on Hokkaido was an interesting experience. In spite of the loss of Guard personnel and heavy influx of new personnel, including commanders, the unit stuck together and did a fine job. For many of us Southern Californians the northern Japan winter with problems of snow plowing runways and parking ramps were novel. There were so many new Air Force people that it became policy for all of the maintenance people to have tool boxes and when a requirement came up for a high commission rate, all the old Guard mechanics rolled out their "Dog Houses" and worked through the night on the aircraft, regardless of their assigned position. This was very disconcerting to the "Supervisors" that we had received from the Air Force, and at times downright rebellion was threatened on the part of the Air Force "fillers." The old Guard attitude and respect was much in evidence. One senior AF type remarked once that the former Guard units could always be counted on doing an especially outstanding job on the weekends, a hangover from the pre-activation days.

Captain Dick Donahue relates the following account of his near fatal mid-air collision while serving in Japan with the 196. "It was Valentine Day, 1952, and I was the element leader of a flight of four F84E , We were returning from a routine training mission, completing & crossover maneuver when another aircraft and my own became involved in a mid-air collision. While the other aircraft exploded instantaneously, my ship, which had caught fire and lost a wing, began descending rapidly in a spin. I ejected at the extremely dangerous altitude of 600 feet hitting the ocean with tremendous force. A person can survive in this area of the ocean for a maximum of two minutes. Fortunately a nearby fishing boat had witnessed the collision and hurried to my rescue and pulled me from the water. Once the boat beached I was taken by ambulance to the Air Force Hospital at Misawa, where I was for the cold and some minor injuries."

The 196 Squadron was moved TDY to Korea to fly combat missions in October and December 1951. These missions were flown from Tague and consisted mainly of interdiction and ground support. The last period of TDY extended into January 1952. These exercises were accomplished completely by air movement and were excellent training in mobility for all concerned.

The 196 returned to California Air National Guard State status on 10 July, 1952, after completing twenty-one months of active duty. During the period of active duty this organization had five pilots killed, one in combat and four during normal flying training.

Prior to the return of the 196 Fighter Squadron from its assignment at Chitose Air Base, Japan, the 8196 Air Base Squadron was organized in February 1952 in anticipation of the return of the 196 on 1 July, 1952. It was commanded by Captain Glen A. Woodfin of Ontario and later by Lt. Cecil L. Sanders. The 8196 was a temporary unit. Its purpose was to prepare facilities for the return of the 196 and to provide a media for enlistments to replace individuals who would not be returning upon release from duty with the Air Force.

Because of over-crowded conditions at Norton Air Force Base, the decision was made to assign the 196 Fighter Squadron at the Ontario International Airport. It was to occupy the former facilities of the 149th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, currently on active duty at Ellington Air Force Base.

The 196 Fighter Squadron was welcomed home on 20 July, 1952, to the strains of 562nd Air Force Band and a fly-by of Twenty F-51 provided by two other Air National Guard units, the 195th at Van Nuys, California, and the 194th at Hayward, California. Lt. Col. Arthur H. Bridge commanded the 196 Fighter Squadron and later became Commander of the 163rd Fighter Group.

The unit settled down to the business of recruiting and assignment of aircraft. Recruiting virtually had to start from scratch. Personnel had been released from active duty on an individual basis. Many had stayed on active duty in Japan and Korea and others had scattered to their civilian pursuits. Through the ensuing months, these people were tracked down and many rejoined the unit. Talent was sought from many sources, transfers from other Guard units, a few former World War II people who had missed the Korea "fun" came forth. A training detachment was established

for the airman basics entering the unit. In preparation for flying activities at Ontario, nearly two million dollars was programmed for improvement of the base. This figure, of course, included the existing structures that had been constructed in 1950 and added such facilities as a \$600,000 hangar, aircraft parking apron, 100,000 gallon fuel storage site and an 800 foot extension to the existing runway.

The first aircraft received were the T-6 and the F-51H. During 1953, a T-33 was assigned as a preliminary to eventual conversion to jet fighter aircraft. Initially the F-51 and T-6 were located on the north side of the airport pending completion of the new hangar, on which construction had begun in December 1952 and completed in February 1954. During this time supporting maintenance equipment for the F-51 was limited. Stories reflect using a forklift for removal and installation of aircraft engines as opposed to utilizing a crane designed for such engine changes. Such ingenuity was typical of the Guard. Another story comes to mind to exemplify the ingenuity of the unit. A new flag pole had been raised in front of the administration building when it was discovered that the ornamental ball from the top was missing. The tallest ladder available would reach only half-way. The solution came when someone thought of placing a forklift on the bed of a 1½ ton truck, a ladder on the forks of the lift and Sergeant Charles A. Redd atop the ladder. Result the new flag pole complete with ornament.

Outstanding in the memory of those early days at Ontario were the winds. When we moved to the 149th old location, the place was nothing but sand dunes. As they were cleaned up they were almost immediately blown back. Aircraft and motor vehicles suffered and required constant wheel and brake maintenance. Our training tent was blown to shreds several times. The farmer instinct of the Base Detachment Commander came to the fore and the thousands of trees that are still on the base were planted. Also at that time the lawns and the "honeysuckle fence" up the east side of the base were established. The portable runway material was scrounged and fastened to the fence to also help slow down the Santa Ana winds.

The first of seven consecutive summer field training encampments was held at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, in the summer of 1953. The F-51 along with the T-6 and C-47 were flown to Gowen Field. The main body of troops were flown by commercial chartered aircraft. During this time the unit was assigned to the 146th Fighter-Bomber Wing. Other units assigned were the 115th and 195th from Van Nuys and the 197th from Phoenix. Records fail to indicate the activities of this first encampment, but it can be presumed that considerable training took place, from peeling spuds to flying gunnery.

In late 1953 came word that the 196 would once more be converting from the F-51 to jet fighters. In March 1954, the first of the F-86A were received. The F-86A remained as the primary aircraft until May 1958

With the assignment of the F-86A, the unit became engrossed with the phasing out of the F-51 and the receiving of new support equipment for the F-86A . The training program went into high gear in preparation for the field training deployment to Boise. Twelve F-86 , two T-33 and three T-6 made the flight to Gowen in the summer of 1954 followed by the main body of troops in five

commercial airliners.

Based at Ontario, CA, the 196 FIS had flown the F-86A since March 1954. Conversion to the F-86D began in late September 1958 (although a small number of F-86Ds had been assigned the previous May) and these aircraft were a mixture of F-86D-36 and -41 Sabres. Delivery was completed in October, and the last F-86As left the squadron late in 1958. This initial delivery of F-86Ds to the 196 FIS came entirely from overhaul at McClellan AFB.

24 July, 1954, witnessed the first annual Ricks Memorial Trophy Race originating in Ontario and ending in Detroit. Fourteen Air National Guard pilots from across the country participated with Major Robert J. Love representing the 196. Lt. Charles Young of Ft, Dix, New Jersey, flew the course distance of 1960 miles in three hours, 27 minutes and 13 seconds. Love was forced out of the race because of brake trouble on his F-86. The 196 hosted the Ricks Race again in 1955

In 1955, the 196 along with other guard units participated in "Operation Minuteman," a nationwide recall exercise in observance of the 180th anniversary of the midnight ride of the first minuteman, Paul Revere. This unit responded with 22 officers and 266 airmen present after the alert was sounded.

The years 1955 through 1957 were spent in refining the art of aerial warfare in the F-86A. Emphasis during field training stressed aerial gunnery, pilot proficiency, aircraft maintenance capability, and other support functions. Frequent weekend deployments of the F-86 and maintenance personnel to Yuma AFB were made to supplement training. This project developed under the direction of Major Don Frisbie and Captain James Rohrer and was instrumental in upgrading the quality of the unit.

During these years, the unit had grown to a personnel strength of 500 officers and airmen.

During the latter part of 1957, the announcement was made that the unit would expand to an Air Defense Group and that the authorized strength would nearly double, Lt, Col. Arthur H, Bridge said, "The local squadron will receive a number of F-86D within the year. The changeover from a squadron to a group and the use of rocket-bearing planes will not change our mission, Our job is still to defend the southern California area against any air attack."

A ceremony on 12 May, 1958, marked the beginning of the 163rd Fighter Group. Lt. Col. Arthur H. Bridge assumed command of the group. Taking his place as commander of the 196 Fighter Squadron was Major Robert J. Love. New units assigned to the group at this time were the 163rd Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commanded by Major Rafael Galcerin, the 163rd Air Base Squadron commanded by Captain William H. Warren, and the 163rd USAF Dispensary commanded by Major Daniel J. Rothenberger. At the same time twenty-five F-86As came under the Air Defense Command for call in the event of an emergency. At approximately this same time the unit started converting from the F-86A to the F-86D. This model was retained until February 1961. By late summer or early fall, the unit assumed the Air Defense Command alert commitment. "ADC Runway Alert" comprised two aircraft on five minute status and two on fifteen minutes

standby. Pilots volunteered for active duty status for periods up to fifty-nine days. The alert program was scheduled for fourteen hours a day, seven days a week. The "five minute scrambles" simply defined that the pilot has five minutes to get his airplane airborne from the time the alert call is received. It is interesting to note that the "ADC Runway Alert" program was later expanded to twenty-four hours a day and is still in effect today.

At this time, the 163rd Fighter Group was reassigned from control of the 146 Tactical Fighter Wing located at Van Nuys and reassigned to the 144th Air Defense Wing headquartered at Fresno, California,

In June 1959, a large number of F-86D were passed to the 196 FIS from the 111th FIS at Ellington, TX, and this allowed the former to get rid of all the F-86D-36s and some of the D-41s concurrently. Thus, the squadron was able to briefly standardize on the F-86D-41 and the logistics support of these aircraft was considerably simplified.

1959 was a year of expansion for the Air Guard facilities at Ontario. A 1200 foot extension to the existing 7200 foot runway was begun on 1 June at a cost of \$348,931. The aircraft parking ramp was expanded and a 10,761 square foot addition to the administration building was made.

In addition to its military role, the unit has supported community projects and humanitarian endeavors. For a number of years, the 163rd sponsored an Air Explorer Squadron, a senior division of the Boy Scouts of America. Adult leadership was provided by MSgt. J. R. Meaard, Lieutenant Thomas R. Jennings, CMSgt. James D. Rodgers, and MSgt. Dan Lyman.

The Ontario ANG Base hosted many explorer units for C-47 orientation flights. Probably the most memorable experience for the 196 Air Explorer Squadron was a deployment to Stead APS (Reno) for one week survival training course. Max Clover (base photo) did a documentary film on the Stead trip that was in demand for years. Track of the young men in the Explorer Squadron has been lost; several of them eventually joined the Air Guard, one became a Marine Helicopter pilot and another worked for the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

Another incident took place in 1959 when Lt. Col. Donald L. Frisbie flew the "City of Ontario" (the assigned C-47) loaded with clothing, food and medicines destined for the Navajo Indians at Houck, Arizona. At one time the "City of Ontario" made hay drops to starving cattle trapped by deep snows in Arizona and New Mexico. These are only examples of many involvements in community projects that the Group pursues today.

1959 was the last of seven consecutive summer encampments at Gowan Field, Boise, Idaho. The men of the Group each year looked forward to the field training exercises at Gowan, but because of budget limitations this was to be the last of the deployments for a number of years,

Re-equipment with the F-86L was a far smoother affair all aircraft were assigned to 196 FIS in February 1961 from the 128th FIS at Dobbins AFB. In the first week of March 1961, the last F-86Ds were ferried out to Davis-Monthan for storage. The F-86Ls were finally replaced by F-102As in

early 1965. The 196 FIS was the last ANG F-86D/L squadron.

National Guard F-86Ds were gradually phased out in 1960, the 196 FIS California ANG flying on with the "Dog" until March 1961, having received F-86Ls in the previous month.

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1961 was ushered in with the assignment of a later model aircraft, the F-86L. The F-86L served as the primary aircraft during the four ensuing years. Maintenance crews worked diligently to bring the new models to peak performance and reliability. The 183rd Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron has a well established reputation for outstanding aircraft maintenance. Eventually twenty-five P-86L were assigned,

The 1961 annual field training was performed at Ontario Air National Guard Base. Because of the lack of a dining hall, improvisation was made by erecting a large circus tent to provide dining facilities for the 800 officers and airmen in attendance. This was a decided improvement over cooking on the black top south of the fire house and eating on the hangar floor, as we had been doing since 1953. Wherever we were, WO Art Smart and his crew always put out excellent meals. Training emphasized proficiency in the various aspects of the Air Defense Mission. In July, the unit went on 24 hour ADC alert, seven days a week. Up to that time the Group was performing a 14 hour per day alert.

A new concept of field training was inaugurated during 1962. The "Texas Plan", increment field training or year-round field training as it is sometimes called, is a program where an individual may attend field training for a few days at a time throughout the year until he has attended a total of fifteen days. This concept still prevails today. An exception to this plan occurs when the unit deploys to another base for field training.

The year 1964 was devoted not only to the training of assigned officers and airmen, but to some of our allies as well. Members of the Thai Air Force, the Philippine Air Force, and South Korean Air Force were attached for training and operation of the weapon control system of the F-86L. All in all 27 members of our allied military forces, including Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea and Iran passed through the training program provided by the 163rd Fighter Group.

In February 1965, the highest peacetime award, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, was presented by Major General William B. Keese, Chief of Staff, Headquarters, Air Defense Command. Colonel Arthur H. Bridge, Commander of the 163rd Fighter Group accepted the award on behalf of the officers and airmen. It is second only to the Distinguished Unit Citation Award for extraordinary heroism during wartime. The citation reads: By order of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award is awarded to the 163rd Fighter Group for exceptionally meritorious achievement in support of military operations from 1 July, 1962, to 31

May, 1964. During this time period, the outstanding professional ability and devotion to duty of the members of the 163rd Fighter Group resulted in an outstanding rating in an operational readiness inspection and an accident free flying record.

The 196 became the last unit to operate the F-86L, converting to F-102s in the summer of 1965.

In the latter part of February 1965, the first of the century series aircraft, the F-102 was assigned to the Group. The F-102A is still, in 1973, the primary fighter assigned to the 163rd Fighter Group. Once again, the challenge to convert to a new aircraft was present. The tremendous job of qualifying pilots in the F-102 and the training of maintenance crews in the varied and complex systems was paramount. In the traditional fashion, the guardsmen overcame these hurdles to become a viable air defense fighter unit in a relatively short time. Throughout the years of 1965 and 1966 the activities of the Group were pretty much confined to proficiency training in the various functions and phases to support the Air Defense mission.

12 November, 1967, marked the 21st Anniversary of the unit since its Federal Recognition in 1946 as an Air National Guard unit. The occasion was celebrated by a base open house which featured F-102 displays and base tours. Music was provided by the 561st Air Force Band from Van Nuys ANG Base, California. Visitors that day numbered between 8,000 and 10,000.

1968 began with something new being added! Thanks to the efforts of Major Bronco Aleksich and CMSGT. Elbert H. Wright, the F-102 were sporting a new and distinctive tail insignia. The design, four white stars on a strip of blue. The first change of command occurred on 14 July, 1968, when Lt. Col. (later Colonel) Donald L. Frisbie succeeded Colonel Arthur H. Bridge, who had been in command since the Group inception in 1958. The ceremony was marked by Colonel Bridge inspection of the 800 officers and airmen and a pass in review for the new commander, Lt. Col. Frisbie. It was at this time that Colonel James Bradford of the National Guard Bureau, presented the Missile Safety Award to the Group. During the presentation, Colonel Bradford said, "The accomplishments of this tactical organization required a high degree of dedication and proficiency and reflects excellent supervisory, coordination and maintenance support, The effective accident prevention efforts of the 163rd Fighter Group perpetuate the highest traditional and standards established for the award,"

"Operation Cool Side" plucked the unit from its familiar home base and set down 2,200 miles away in Alaska marked the first mass deployment since 1959, It was the first full scale deployment out of the contiguous United States. The following account of the deployment was written by Sergeant Mike Murphy of the 163rd Fighter Group and appeared in the December 1968 issue of the Guardsman Magazine: "Aerospace Defense Command-affiliated flying units of the Air Guard are, in their unique peacetime mission, pretty well tied-down to 'Home Plate' by responsibility for protection against manned enemy bombers. But they also must be geared to pack-up and move every man, every plan, every bit of equipment and function promptly from distant base.

"So it was good experience when the California Air National Guard 163rd Fighter Group pulled its feet out of the concrete of Ontario ANG Base, so to speak, last August, and was transplanted 2,200

miles North to unfamiliar Alaskan terrain, Not only was it the first time since 1959 that the Group had pulled field training away from home it was the first mass deployment by a complete Air Guard Air Defense unit outside the contiguous United States.

It was also good experience for the Alaskan Air Command and the officers and men of the Regular Air Force 317th FIS of the 21st Composite Wing, who were excellent hosts, in that they were able to work alongside a brother F-102 outfit and share in the experience provided by the Guardsmen of an outstanding ANG/ADC unit.

"Officers of the parent 144th Air Defense Wing had dreamed-up the idea sometime ago, 'liaised' with the Alaska Air National Guard, Alaskan Air Command, ADC, the National Guard Bureau and others, and laid-on the venture. A primary reason was to take advantage of the almost unlimited wild blue yonder over the Northernmost State, in contrast to the cramped Southern California skies. At the same time, of course, it would (and did) test the Group capability to load and to establish an operational base as early as possible after arrival. And coincidentally it gave a change of pace and of scene to all hands, bringing a fringe benefit of sharpened interest, esprit and morale. It had the unit planning and moving as a unit a change from the pattern of year-round field training by individuals and small clumps of individuals.

"It was no small trick to pull-off the move in an immobilized peacetime status. It meant getting 709 officers and airmen and 101,422 pounds of cargo, in addition to the Group F-102 Interceptors and T-33 Trainers, to their new environment, drawing an array of equipment and supplies, settling-in on a strange Base, operating and getting home again.

COOL RIDE was the code name for the exercise, and an apt one it proved to be, "Initial planning for a deployment by the 163rd Fighter Group was begun in early January. At that time only a partial deployment was suggested, but four months of planning saw it grow into a mass deployment. Things jelled in June when a contingent from the 163rd met with host commanders of the Alaskan Air Command, 21st Composite Wing, U. S. Army and the Alaska Army and Air Guard. "The deployment began 30 July when an advance party was flown to Alaska to prepare the assigned billets at Camp Thomas P. Carroll, located on Ft. Richardson, adjacent to Elmendorf AFB. The detachment was responsible for receiving all expendable supplies, equipment and vehicles from the training site commander in addition to cargo airlifted from Ontario. Five C-97 from the 146th Military Airlift Wing carried more than 50 tons of cargo during the week preceding the deployment. On 2 August, most of the Group F-102 and two T-33 departed Ontario enroute to Elmendorf via Comox Royal Canadian Air Force Base, Vancouver, BC, and White Horse, Yukon Territory. A command post was established at White Horse, Yukon Territory, to maintain control of aircraft movement. An HC-97 rescue aircraft from the 303rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq., AFRes, March AFB, Riverside, California, provided airborne rescue stand-by in the vicinity of Biorka Island for the deployment to and from Alaska. The main body mustered at the Ontario Base, 3 August. The troops were loaded on ten C-97 from the Guard 146th MAW at Van Nuys and the 151st and 161st Groups from Salt Lake City, Utah, and Phoenix, Arizona, respectively. Ahead lay an eleven hour flight. By early next day Sunday - most personnel were settled-in at the Army Guard Camp. Location posed one problem, for it entailed providing bus and taxi service 18 hours a day to

get 500 officers and men to and from Elmendorf. There, they trained alongside Regular Air Force counterparts, supporting units of the 21st Composite Wing. To do this, vehicles assigned to the Group logged 50,000 miles during the 15-day exercise. At Camp Carroll, primary support services were provided by Personnel, Motor Pool, Supply, Fire/Rescue, Communications, Security Police, Food Services, Civil Engineering, Special Services and USAF Dispensary Sections. An estimated 600 men were processed through records check by personnel staff. Group training NCO conducted general military training classes in code of conduct, first aid, disaster control, accident prevention, security, firearms, and range firing. The Dispensary provided routine and emergency medical aid including instruction of first aid classes. Airmen in the section also worked with personnel at the Elmendorf USAF Hospital. The whole purpose of 'COOL RIDE,' was to put interceptors into the air on realistic missions and there were plenty of those. The Group 37 pilots, operations people and maintenance crews were melded-in with the 317th to fly tactical missions at the keystone of America air defense network. Under supervision of the Alaskan NORAD Region, the California pilots flew their Delta Daggers' on 158 sorties in seven flying days. They did those not only from the Elmendorf Base, but from smaller fields at King Salmon, Fairbanks (Eielson AFB) and Galena, accumulating about 273 flying hours. Departure saw the Group F-102s refueling at Come; the T-33 and TF-102 at White Horse. The same comradely airlifters who flew the troops North plus two Tennessee ANG C-124 hauled them home. From the Commander viewpoint, Lt. Col. Donald L. Frisbie concluded: The deployment was satisfactory and beneficial in all respects. The experience we have gained will be a definite asset to us in case of mobilization and deploy, And at the Indian level, the consensus was similar. Specifically, several section chiefs said it provided an opportunity for their men to observe and receive training that they couldn't have had under ordinary circumstances: in fact, some went so far as to state that where Air Guardsmen worked alongside Active Air Force people, the Guardsmen performance was equal or even superior to that of their career counterparts.

In April 1969 came the announcement that the 163rd Fighter Group would move to Norton Air Force Base by 1971, and become an associate unit of the military Airlift Command. This meant converting from the F-102A to the C-141 and participating in worldwide missions as scheduled by the Military Airlift Command. By October 1969, the National Guard Bureau announced a change in policy which set aside the controversial "Associate" unit concept, The 163rd was to continue the Air Defense mission and retain the F-102.

Kingsley Field, Klamath Falls, Oregon, was the site of the field training exercises for 1971. In some ways, logistics for this deployment were more difficult than the 1968 Alaska deployment. Kingsley was simply not prepared to handle the total needs of the 700 men involved in the deployment. To alleviate some of the problems two C-119 were dispatched from Hayward ANG Base to Paso Robles, California, to meet a team headed up by Major Giles R. Miller to load cots and mattresses borrowed from Camp Roberts, California. A C-130 from Van Nuys ANG Base was dispatched to Gowan ANG Base, Idaho, to transport required bedding to Kingsley. It was commented that if anyone had stubbed his toe during this particular segment, there could have been individuals sleeping on the floor with or without blankets or sheets. But as was typical, the Air Guard came through without a hitch. The main body of troops arrived at Kingsley on 31 July; it was about seven days later before the F-102 arrived. All the F-102 had been grounded the previous Thursday

pending the results of an investigation of a recent accident involving an F-102 of another unit. Once the Delta Daggers arrived, time was made up by the pilots by flying 30 sorties a day.

In February 1961 and to F-102A/TF-102As in March 1971. A victim of increased environmental awareness and post-Vietnam War anti-military attitude, the California ANG unit based at the Ontario IAP lost its jets when it converted from Convair F-102A/TF-102As to Cessna O-2As in 1983. After flying the Cessna for nearly six years, the squadron was redesignated 196 TFS from 196 TASS on 1 October 1982 and moved from Ontario to March AFB to convert to F-4Cs. While flying F-4Cs, the squadron deployed to Spain in May/June 1986 for Coronet Laguna.

1987 21 March, Dean Martin's son Dean Paul Martin (formerly Dino of the 60s group Dino, Desi & Billy) dies when his F-4C, 64-0923, crashes into San Geronio Mountain in the San Bernardino Mountains after takeoff from March Air Force Base, during a snow storm. His Weapon Systems Officer Ramon Ortiz is also KWF. Wreckage found four days later just below summit.

The unit converted to F-4Es during the spring of 1987 and, switching to the recce role and converting to RF-4Cs, it was redesignated 196 TRS, 163rd TRG from 196 TFS, 163rd TFG, on 1 July 1990. The unit, which was redesignated 196 RS, 163rd RG, in March 1992, is expected to take on the air refueling mission in 1994 and to trade its RF-4Cs for KC-135RS.

Equipped with F-4Es, the 196 TFS was to have converted to OA-10As in 1990 but instead received F-4Cs, including 66-0444 photographed at Hill AFB, Utah, in April 1991, and was redesignated he 196 TRS.

On 31 July 2007, at 1557 Zulu (Z), or Greenwich Mean Time, an MQ-1L Predator Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), tail number 04-003127, impacted an uninhabited area approximately 30 miles west of Balad Air Base (AB), Iraq. The mishap RPA (MRPA) was forward deployed to Balad AB from the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron (15 RS), 432d Wing, Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, and launched by a crew from the 46th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron. Crews from the 196 RS then controlled the MRPA via satellite links from a Ground Control Station at March Air Reserve Base, California. The 196 RS is assigned to the 163d Reconnaissance Wing, California Air National Guard. The MRPA was on a mission in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. All maintenance and preflight activities were normal. Approximately 10 hours after an uneventful launch, the Mishap Crew (MC), consisting of the Mishap Pilot (MP), Mishap Instructor Pilot (MIP) and Mishap Sensor Operator (MSO), assumed control of the MRPA after a changeover briefing. The MC was current and qualified to conduct the mission. Forty-five minutes after assuming control, the MC detected low exhaust temperature readings during a routine operations check. They quickly determined engine operations had degraded and level flight was no longer sustainable. The MC applied the engine failure emergency procedures to restart the engine without success. After deciding the MRPA did not have sufficient glide capability to land, the MC was directed to crash the aircraft and maximize its destruction. Fighter aircraft destroyed the wreckage for security purposes. Damage to the MRPA totaled \$3,828,000. There were no deaths, injuries or property damage associated

with the mishap. The Accident Investigation Board President determined, by clear and convincing evidence, the primary cause of this mishap was a partial failure of the manifold air pressure (MAP) sensor selected to control the engine. The sensor's erroneous output decreased fuel flow to the engine, terminating normal engine operations. The wreckage was destroyed in place and none was salvaged; therefore, no determination could be made regarding the specific nature of the failure. The Board President found sufficient evidence to conclude the "Engine Failure" checklist and the lack of a partial MAP sensor failure warning were substantially contributing factors in this mishap. The checklist did not suggest MAP sensor failure as a possible cause of engine failure nor did it cross-reference an alternate checklist identifying this possibility. Additionally, the aircraft did not have the capability to provide visual or aural notification to the crew in the event of partial MAP sensor failure.

On 29 November 2007, at 0800 Zulu (Z), approximately 1-hour into an otherwise uneventful flight, an MQ-1L Predator Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), S/N 06-003163, impacted the ground in an uninhabited area approximately 37 miles northwest of Ali Air Base (AB), Iraq. The Mishap RPA (MRPA) was on an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The MRPA was forward deployed to Ali AB from the 432d Reconnaissance Wing (RW), Creech AFB, Nevada. An aircrew from the 361st Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, 407th Air Expeditionary Group, 332d Air Expeditionary Wing launched the MRPA from the Launch and Recovery Element in Iraq. An aircrew from the 196 Reconnaissance Squadron, 163d RW, California ANG, was controlling the MRPA via satellite links from a Ground Control Station (GCS) located at March ARB, California when it crashed. All maintenance and preflight activities were normal. Approximately 36-minutes after an uneventful launch, the Mishap Crew (MC), consisting of the Mishap Pilot and the Mishap Sensor Operator, assumed control of the MRPA after a change-over briefing. The MC was current and qualified to conduct the mission. At 0731Z, 26-minutes after the MC assumed control of the MRPA, the Primary Control Module (PCM) onboard the MRPA began reporting communication errors with the Right Tail Computer Board (RTCB). Soon afterward, the PCM declared a lost communication condition with the RCTB, and approximately 4-seconds later the aircraft initiated a preprogrammed self-termination function. This caused the MRPA to rapidly pitch up followed by a steep nose-down pitch with a yaw rate of approximately five degrees per second nose-right. This flight attitude continued until the MRPA impacted the ground 85-seconds later. Afterwards, fighter aircraft destroyed the wreckage for security purposes. The MRPA was completely destroyed with the loss valued at approximately \$3,828,000.00. There were no deaths, injuries or property damage associated with the mishap. The Accident Investigation Board President determined, by clear and convincing evidence, the primary cause of the mishap was a failure of the RS-422 receiver. The failure caused a loss of communication between the right tail board receiver and the PCM. Due to the loss of communication, the MRPA executed a preprogrammed flight termination command. Due to the destruction of the MRPA wreckage, no determination could be made regarding the specific nature of the RS-422 receiver failure.

Since the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing conversion from KC-135 to MQ-1 in 2006, the unit has been the first Air National Guard wing to open a Predator maintenance schoolhouse, the first to log a

Predator mission in the United States and the first to open a Predator formal training unit (FTU) for pilots and sensor-ball operators. The "wing and the Air National Guard first FTU class, comprising 10 Guard members from five states, graduated May 15 on March Air Reserve Base, Calif. "It seems every time I speak to a group of people, we've accomplished another first for the Air National Guard," said Lt. Col. Kirby Colas, commander of the 196 Reconnaissance Squadron, 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, during the graduation ceremony. Prior to 2009, the only Predator FTU in the Air Force was run by active-duty Airmen at Creech Air Force Base, Nev. The 163rd's first FTU class began in March and lasted nine weeks. The FTU is slated to teach five classes each year, with about 10 students per class. "This mission is very challenging. not only due to its 24/7 operations but because of the things you see and do," Maj. Gen. Dennis G. Lucas, commander of the California Air National Guard, told graduates May 15. "You just embarked on one exciting journey. You will save lives of individuals you may never meet or ever know." The 163rd FTU instructors are qualified to train Reserve and active-duty Airmen, but its first class consisted of National Guard members only. There were five Predator pilots and five sensor-ball operators from California, Arizona, Nevada, North Dakota and Texas. The Predator sensor ball houses its optics, lasers and video cameras. The 163rd schoolhouse produces Predator crews with almost all the skills required to immediately fly missions. Upon graduation, the students return to their units and enter mission qualification training (MQT). Students learn the unclassified basics at the FTU, while MQT is designed to transition pilots and operators into the classified world and educate them on their new missions. MQT varies in length depending on the unit. Due to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) restrictions, Predators cannot be flown out of March Air Reserve Base, so the 163rd stood up a launch and recovery element (LRE) at Southern California Logistics Airport (SOLA) in Victorville, Calif., where the FTU Predators are stored, maintained, launched and recovered. FAA regulations bar student pilots from operating Predators in commercial airspace, so LRE pilots and sensor operators navigate the aircraft to restricted Army and Marine Corps airspace, where the LRE crew passes controls to the FTU student crew at March Air Reserve Base. The use of Army and Marine airspace creates opportunities for joint training. Lt. Col. Thomas Pritchard, 196 Reconnaissance Squadron FTU commander, said Predator crews are working with Soldiers from Fort Irwin, Calif., during pre-deployment training to simulate missions that both units would perform overseas. The FTU also has worked with joint terminal air controllers from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., and may soon conduct joint training with Marines at Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command in Twenty-nine Palms, Calif. 2009

MQ-1B, T/N 06-3175, MARCH JOINT AIR RESERVE BASE

3 October 2009

At 0353 Zulu (Z) / 0723 Local, Afghanistan on 3 October 2009 (2053 Pacific Daylight Saving Time on 2 October 2009), after normal maintenance and pre-flight checks, the Mishap Remotely Piloted Aircraft (MRPA) taxied and departed from Kandahar Air Field for a reconnaissance mission. There were two mishap crews involved in this mishap, as the mishap occurred shortly after crew swap. Mishap Crew 1 (MC1) consisted of Mishap Pilot 1 (MP1) and Mishap Sensor Operator 1 (MSO1). Mishap Crew 2 (MC2) consisted of Mishap Pilot 2 (MP2) and Mishap Sensor Operator 2. During the flight, MC1 received a direct tasking from the Combined Forces Air Component Commander to provide close air support to United States and Afghan ground forces under attack by Anti-Afghan Forces (AAF). At the time of the tasking, AAF carried out a large, coordinated attack against U.S.

and Afghan ground forces at two remote outposts. Several U.S. troops were killed during the attacks. Given the circumstances of the AAF attack and the immediate and urgent need for CAS, both Mishap Crews (MCs) were consumed with a high-degree of urgency. While en route to the tasking, MC2 assumed control of the MRPA at approximately 0905Z. At approximately 0918Z, despite efforts by MC2 to avoid the terrain at the last minute, MC2 failed to prevent a Controlled Flight Into Terrain of the MRPA. The impact completely destroyed the MRPA. The Accident Investigation Board President determined, by clear and convincing evidence, that the mishap was the result of pilot error caused primarily by MP2's channelized attention away from flying the MRPA and an inattention to the high terrain in the MRPA's immediate vicinity. Furthermore, inattention by both MP1 and MP2 resulted from a perceived absence of threat from the environment. Specifically, they both failed to appreciate the need for a significant increase in altitude required to safely overfly the mountainous terrain located between the MRPA and the target.

Mq-1b, T/N 08-3229, Southern California Logistics Airport  
20 April 2010

On 20 April 2010, at 1057 local time (PDT), a remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), MQ-1B tail number 08-3229 ("RPA 08-3229," "RPA," "aircraft," or "mishap aircraft"), impacted the ground at Southern California Logistics Airport (KVCV, the former George AFB) in Victorville, California. The aircraft and one inert Hellfire training missile were a total loss. Damage to government property was estimated at \$3,743,211.00. The crash did not result in any injuries to people, but did result in minor damage to non-military property (a runway light). After normal maintenance and pre-flight checks, the mishap crew began conducting launch and recovery training at KVCV with RPA 08-3229. The aircraft was piloted remotely by a student aircrew from the 3rd Special Operations Squadron (3 SOS), Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, under the supervision of an instructor aircrew from 163rd Reconnaissance Wing (163 RW), California Air National Guard. The student and instructor crews were physically located at KVCV. The student crew was experienced in Mission Control Element operations and was qualifying in Launch and Recovery Element (LRE) operations in anticipation of a deployment. Approximately 50 minutes into the mission, the mishap aircrew was conducting a touch-and-go landing on runway 17 when the RPA experienced a sudden loss of lift due to low airspeed likely exacerbated by gusting wind conditions. This caused the RPA to descend suddenly to a hard landing on the left landing gear. The ground reaction force on the left landing gear exceeded the design load limit for the gear, causing it to break. Subsequently the left wingtip dragged on the ground and caused the aircraft to depart the prepared surface. The RPA came to rest approximately 300 feet from the initial touchdown location, after completing a left 180 degree turn. The fuselage broke into two main sections, and numerous smaller parts were liberated from the aircraft. The Mishap Investigation Board President determined, by clear and convincing evidence, that the main cause of the mishap was failure of the student pilot and instructor pilot to recognize that the aircraft's speed was too low for the weather conditions at KVCV. The most significant contributing factor was the mishap pilot's experience level and lack of preparatory training. Other significant factors were MQ-1 LRE Instructor Pilot training program deficiencies, poor pilot to vehicle interface, and unexpectedly difficult wind conditions. Investigation also revealed a manufacturing flaw, an inverted element, in

the landing gear box, but there was insufficient evidence to determine whether the flaw contributed to the mishap.

Members of the California Air National Guard's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing at March Air Reserve Base employed two MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft during exercise Grizzly Field 2012 to help with search and rescue efforts after a simulated earthquake struck southern California. The Predators provided full-motion video that helped civil and military responders locate mock stranded survivors during the recent exercise, according to an Aug. 9 March release. "The exercise was an overall success," said Lt. Col. Keith Ward, commander of March's 163rd Operations Support Squadron. Grizzly Field established a baseline for further integration of civilian disaster-response agencies with Air Guard assets and capabilities, such as overhead FMV, said Col. Randall Ball, 163rd RW commander. 2012

The California Air National Guard's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing in December reached 100,000 hours of operating MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft. "This landmark achievement is a testament to the commitment and dedication of our airmen," said Col. Dana Hessheimer, commander of the wing, which operates out of March Air Reserve Base. "Our most valuable asset is our people. Thanks to them, we've been able to assist in domestic emergency response operations and provide global mission capabilities and support for troops on the ground in harm's way," he added. The wing's 196 Reconnaissance Squadron has been flying Predators since November 2006. The wing was the first Air Guard unit to employ the RPA type. It was also the inaugural Air Guard wing to stand up a fully functional formal training unit to instruct Predator pilots and sensor operators and a field training detachment to teach Predator maintainers.. The wing is currently transitioning to MQ-9 Reaper RPAs. 2015

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USAF Unit Histories  
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