

## 27<sup>th</sup> SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING



### LINEAGE

27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, established, 28 Jul 1947  
Organized, 15 Aug 1947  
Redesignated 27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Escort Wing, 1 Feb 1950  
Redesignated 27<sup>th</sup> Strategic Fighter Wing, 20 Jan 1953  
Redesignated 27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing, 1 Jul 1957  
Redesignated 27<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jul 1958  
Redesignated 27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1991  
Redesignated 27<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing, 1 Oct 2007

### STATIONS

Kearney AAFld (later, AFB), NE, 15 Aug 1947  
Bergstrom AFB, TX, 16 Mar 1949-18 Nov 1950  
Bergstrom AFB, TX, 16 Jul 1951-18 Feb 1959  
Cannon AFB, NM, 18 Feb 1959

### DEPLOYED STATIONS

Taegu, South Korea, 1 Dec 1950-12 Dec 1950  
Misawa AB, Japan, 9 Oct 1952-20 Jan 1953

### ASSIGNMENTS

Eighth Air Force, 15 Aug 1947  
42<sup>nd</sup> Air Division, 6 Aug 1951  
Twelfth Air Force, 8 Jan 1958  
832<sup>nd</sup> Air Division, 18 Feb 1959  
Twelfth Air Force, 1 Jul 1975  
Eighth Air Force, 1 Jun 1992  
Twelfth Air Force, 1 Oct 2002

### ATTACHMENTS

Far East Air Forces, 19 Nov-29 Nov 1950

Fifth Air Force, 30 Nov 1950-15 Jul 1951  
Far East Air Forces, 6-13 Oct 1952  
39<sup>th</sup> Air Division [Defense], 13 Oct 1952-c. 13 Feb 1953  
7<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 7 May-17 Aug 1955  
834<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 15 Jul 1958-18 Feb 1959  
3<sup>rd</sup> Air Division [Provisional], 21 Oct-1 Dec 1962

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

P (later, F)-51, 1947-1949  
F-82, 1948-1950  
F-84, 1950-1951, 1951-1958  
KB-29, 1953-1955, 1955-1957  
F-101, 1957-1958  
F-100, 1959-1972  
T/AT-33, 1968-1973  
F-111, 1969-1970, 1970-1996  
EF-111, 1992-1998  
F-16, 1995  
MC-130, 2007

F-84F

### **COMMANDERS**

Col Gwen G. Atkinson, 15 Aug 1947  
Col Ashley B. Packard, 7 Jan 1948  
Col Raymond F. Rudell, 1 May 1951  
Col Donald J. M. Blakeslee, 6 Jul 1952  
Col Richard N. Ellis, 2 Aug 1954  
Col Charles M. Walton Jr., Jul 1957  
BG Ivan W. McElroy, 8 Jan 1958  
Col John L. Gregory Jr., 15 Jul 1958-28 Jan 1959  
Unkn, 28 Jan-17 Feb 1959  
Col Gilbert L. Myers, 18 Feb 1959  
Col Arlie J. Blood, 10 May 1959  
Col Gilbert L. Meyers, 4 Aug 1959  
Col Thomas A. Robertson, 22 Aug 1959  
Col Arvis L. Hilpert, 12 Oct 1959  
Col Jack C. Berger, 17 Jul 1961  
Col Charles E. Simpson, 15 Jul 1963  
Col Dale S. Sweat, 15 Aug 1963  
Col Robert A. Tyler, 31 Dec 1965  
Col Herndon F. Williams, 25 May 1967  
Col Homer K. Hansen, 24 Jul 1967  
Col William L. Ford, 1 Apr 1968  
Col Jimmy J. Jumper, 16 Apr 1968  
Col Frank C. Buzze, 15 Jul 1968  
Col Charles E. Francis, 12 May 1970

Col Richard E. Little, 28 Jan 1972  
Col John H. Bennett, 25 May 1973  
Col Cecil D. Crabb, 18 Jul 1975  
Col Thomas J. Hickey, 6 Aug 1976  
BG Joseph D. Moore, 18 Nov 1977  
Col Robert I. McCann, 7 May 1979  
Col William K. James, 5 Aug 1980  
Col Joseph K. Stapleton, 3 Sep 1982  
Col James E. Salminen, 11 May 1984  
Col Needham B. Jones, 7 Sep 1984  
Col Henry R. Becker, 29 Sep 1986  
Col Donald L. Peterson, 5 Jul 1988  
Col Arnold L. Franklin, 14 Sep 1990  
BG Richard N. Goddard, 30 Jun 1992  
Col Lance L. Smith (interim), Jul 1993  
BG William H. Guth, 15 Sep 1993 *Goth*  
Col Michael J. Koerner, 6 Oct 1995  
Col David E. Clary, 8 Aug 1997  
Col Loyd S. Utterback, 19 Jun 1999  
Col Jeffery A. Remington, 23 May 2000  
Col Robert E. Yates, 28 Mar 2002  
Col Tim Leahy, 1 Oct 2007  
Col Stephen A. Clark 27 May 09  
Col Albert M. Elton II 08 Jul 11

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

Korea

CCF Intervention

First UN Counteroffensive

CCF Spring Offensive

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jan 1981-30 Jun 1982

1 Jan 1988-31 Dec 1989

1 Jun 1996-31 May 1998

1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004

18 Dec 1976 - 17 Dec 1977

1 Jan 1981 - 30 Jun 1982  
1 Jan 1988 - 31 Dec 1989  
1 Jun 1996 - 31 May 1998  
1 Oct 2007 - 30 Sept 2009

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation  
9 Nov 1950-31 May 1951

### **Bestowed Honors**

Authorized to display honors earned by the 27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group prior to 28 Jul 1947

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II  
Philippine Islands  
East Indies; Sicily  
Naples-Foggia  
Anzio  
Rome-Arno  
Northern France  
Southern France  
North Apennines  
Rhineland  
Central Europe  
Air Combat, EAME Theater

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations  
Philippine Islands, 7 Dec 1941-[Apr] 1942  
Philippine Islands, 8-22 Dec 1941  
Philippine Islands, 6 Jan-8 Mar 1942  
Italy, 10 Sep 1943  
France, 4 Sep 1944

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

### **EMBLEM**

Per bend Azure and Or, in sinister chief a dexter hand clenched couped at the wrist; in dexter base a magnolia blossom, leave all Argent fimbriated and garnished Sable, all within a diminished bordure of the second. Approved for the 27th Group on September 12, 1940, and for the 27th Wing on July 11, 1952.

The colors of the shield, ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow, are the colors of the United States Air Force. The blue represents the sky and the yellow represents molten gold. The

clenched fist indicates strength. The magnolia is the state flower of Louisiana, where the 27th Bombardment Group (Light) was first organized.

## **MOTTO**

INTELLIGENT STRENGTH

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

The primary mission focus of the 27th Special Operations Wing is to generate and employ specialized aircraft and highly trained Air Commandos to execute and support special operations missions with unique capabilities including:

Precision Air Fires

Specialized Mobility

Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

Command and Control

Information Operations

Agile Combat Support

Fighter escort operations to meet Strategic Air Command commitments, 1947-1950. Won the Mackay Trophy for successful deployment of 90 F-84s from Bergstrom AFB, TX to Furstenfeldbruck AB, Germany, in Sep 1950 via Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, and England. This was the first long-range mass flight of jet aircraft in aviation history. Deployed at Yokota AB, Japan, 19-30 Nov 1950, then split into two echelons, one at Taegu AB, South Korea, 1 Dec 1950-30 Jan 1951, and the other at Itazuke AB, Japan, 9 Dec 1950-31 Jan 1951. Flew combat in Korea, 6 Dec 1950-30 Jun 1951, including armed reconnaissance, interdiction, fighter escort, and close air support missions. The two echelons combined at Itazuke on 1 Feb 1951, continuing combat from that base. Provided close support for largest airborne operation of the Korean War and escorted B-29 bombers to the Yalu River in North Korea, coming into conflict with enemy MIG-15 fighters. Returned to the United States in Jul 1951 but deployed to provide air defense at Misawa AB, Japan, 6 Oct 1952-13 Feb 1953. Added air refueling as a mission, Jun 1953-May 1955 and Aug 1955-Jun 1957. Deployed at Sturgate RAF Station, England, 7 May-17 Aug 1955. Maj Adrian E. Drew, a member of the wing, broke the world speed record on 12 Dec 1957. Deployed at England AFB, LA, 29 Mar-5 May 1961, and, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, at MacDill AFB, FL, 21 Oct-1 Dec 1962. Deployed at Holloman AFB, NM, 13 Apr-12 May 1966. Trained fighter pilots, mechanics, forward air controllers, and air liaison officers. Performed numerous small-scale deployments, both beyond and within the United States, to meet operational requirements. Took part in joint training exercises with U.S. Army forces. In 1990 and 1991, provided support personnel and equipment for UN operations in Southwest Asia to liberate Kuwait. In 1992, added an electronic combat mission to its fighter role. Between 1992 and 1998, served as the only Air Force wing with operational F-111 or EF-111 aircraft. During the 1990s, deployed personnel and aircraft periodically to Southwest Asia for training exercises, expeditionary rotations, and enforcement of no-fly zones over Iraq. In 1998, began training Republic of Singapore F-16 pilots. After enemy attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, the wing deployed personnel and aircraft globally in operations associated with the War on

Terror.

In March, 1949, Bergstrom received the 27th Strategic Fighter Wing flying F-82

From the time the 27th transferred from its former base at Kearney, Nebr., to the spring of 1950, it continued to fly the F-82, practicing gunnery at the Air Force Gunnery and Bombing Range at Matagorda Island, located off the coast of Texas in the Gulf of Mexico. It performed several longrange escort training missions with bombers of other Eighth Air Force Wings.

In the Spring of 1950, the 27th began to receive the F-84 Thunderjets. And, by the following December, the Wing was flying these "Thunderjets" in the Korean War. During its eight-month tour in Korea and Japan, the 27th Wing was attached to the 5th Air Force.

The 27th SFW has received the Presidential Unit Citation of the United States and the coveted MacKay Trophy, as well as the Presidential Unit Citation of the Republic of Korea.

27th Strategic Fighter Wings, is primarily, to train and organize a force capable of providing protection for Strategic Air Command bombardment and reconnaissance combat elements, by escort and air defense, utilizing the latest available tactical knowledge and advanced weapons.

The 12th and 27th Wings have recently been assigned the swept-back wing, Republic built F-84F

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During its stay at Kearney, the 27th participated in "Operation Snow Bound" in the Nebraska area. "Operation Haylift" was also conducted from the base to accomplish feeding of snowbound cattle from the air, and dropping of supplies to stranded ranch houses.

In January 1949, the 27th took off for its first long-range over-water navigational mission in the Caribbean area. During this flight, the 27th established two firsts in aviation annals. It was the first long-range over-water flight of fighter aircraft to use celestial navigation, and the first fighter mission over water without heavier escort.

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In November 1950, the 27th was ordered to Korea, where it was attached to the 5th Air Force for its seven month TOY tour. While in Korea, the Wing compiled a total of 23,000 combat hours and flew 12,000 sorties for which it received the Presidential Citation.

While there, Col Ashley B. Packard, the Wing Commander, was killed in the crash of a T-33, and Col Raymond F. Rudell assumed command of the 27th on 2 May 1951.

On 10 March 1951, the 42nd Air Division was assigned to SAC and further, to 8th Air Force, and organized at Bergstrom. The 27th became a part of the 42nd AD.

The 27th returned to Bergstrom in June 1952, and remained at its parent base, until 13 October 1952, when it again returned to the Far -East, commanded by Col. Donald J. M. Blakeslee, who had succeeded Col. Raymond F. Rudell as Wing Commander on 5 July 1952. Four months later, the Wing returned "home" to Bergstrom Air Force Base.

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Cannon's Construction Needs Not Urgent: While the buildup of Cannon AFB, N.M., as a hub for Air Force special operations forces is one of US Special Operations Command's large expansion initiatives over the next few years, military construction at the base is not a pressing issue and there is no perceived need to rush any of the planned infrastructure projects, the head of SOCOM told a House panel April 16. "This is a phased growth," Navy Adm. Eric T. Olson, SOCOM commander, told members of a House Appropriations subcommittee. "It was largely not quite a turnkey operation, but it was an up and running base," he said of Cannon's transition. Accordingly, Olson continued, "the Milcon demands, although significant," are not "urgent." Air Force Special Operations Command is moving some aircraft, personnel, and infrastructure from Hurlburt Field, Fla., to Cannon. While a good amount of construction will be needed to turn the former F-16 base into a home for special operators with their unique aircraft, the base already features maintenance facilities and has airmen who stayed behind for the transition, and housing and dining facilities already up and running, Olson said. In Fiscal 2009, AFSOC asks for funds to construct a new C-130 hangar at Cannon. The admiral said he anticipates more projects at Cannon beyond 2009, but that, for now, the construction program is at the right level. AFSOC can grow into Cannon at the rate its assets are planned to arrive. The base's CV-22 Osprey unit, for example, stands up in Fiscal 2010. Olson's comments echoed the sentiment of 27th Special Operations Wing officials during a visit by Air Force Magazine earlier this year. These officials said at the time the MILCON program will increase markedly from Fiscal 2011. (For more on Cannon's transition, read Special Operators Head West in the March issue of Air Force Magazine.)

Bergstrom Air Force Base, covering an area of 3,000 acres, was built during the early days of World War II and was activated officially on September 12, 1942. The base has remained active since that date.

During World War II, Del Valle Army Air Base, as it was named originally, harbored a number of wings and groups of the Troop Carrier Command. While here, these units underwent combat training and, later, spearheaded airborne operations in the European and Pacific Theatres of Operation.

The War Department, on March 3, 1943 renamed the base Bergstrom Army Air Field and later simply Bergstrom Field in honor of Captain John A. E. Bergstrom, a native of Austin, the son of John and Mabel Bergstrom. Captain Bergstrom was killed during the Japanese bombardment of Clark Field, Philippine Islands, on December 8, 1941.

Bergstrom received its present name when the Air Force became a separate service.

After WW II ended, Bergstrom remained active in training troop carrier units, one of which flew in the Berlin-Airlift.

In 1946, units of the base trained 106 Chinese Nationalist flight crews. In the middle of that year, the base was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Tactical Air Command, being put directly under the command of the 9th Air Force. Its units were still troop carrier wings and groups.

Under various commanders and several Troop Carrier Wings, Bergstrom continued its troop carrier operations until late 1948.

In March, 1949, Bergstrom received the 27th Strategic Fighter Wing (Eighth Air Force, SAC), flying F-82 "Twin Mustangs".

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at Matagorda Island, located off the coast of Texas in the Gulf of Mexico. It performed several long-range escort training missions with bombers of other Eighth Air Force Wings.

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Soon after the 27th Wing departed Bergstrom for the Far East, the 12th Strategic Fighter Wing (activated at Turner Air Force Base, Georgia, and identical to the 27th) was assigned to Barnstorm. By March, 1951, the 12th had received enough F-84 Thunderjets to go into active training.

In March too, the Air National Guard Wing with elements from Missouri, Illinois, and Nevada, was assigned to this base. This wing, the 131st remained at Bergstrom long enough to be trained into an efficient active wing and, in late July and early August, 1951, it transferred out, making room for the returning 27th.

The 12th Wing then left for five months temporary duty training in the United Kingdom and returned in the early part of December, 1951.

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Colonel Howard G. Cook presently commands the 12th Wing and Colonel Richard N. Ellis

commands the 27th Wing. Colonel Vance E. Murphy commands the 808th Air Base Group, the unit charged with maintaining Bergstrom Air Force Base. These units comprise the 42nd Air Division, which is commanded by Brigadier General C. T. Edwinson.

The mission of the 42nd Air Division, is to train and keep two tactical wings combat ready at all times. In accomplishing this, it was assigned the 307th Air Refueling Squadron in February 1953, changed to the 27th ARS in late October 1953.

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The 27th Strategic Fighter Wing had its origin in the 27th Bombardment Group which was activated at Barlesdale Field, La., 1 February 1940. The Group consisted of Hq and Hq sq, 27th Bomb Group and the 15th and 17th Bomb Squadrons.

The Group carried on routine training at Barksdale Field until 21 August 1941, when the Group was assigned to the 3rd Air Support Command. Later, the Group was transferred to the Philippine Department, the move being effective 1 November 1941.

Shortly after the arrival of the Group, they were caught in the Japanese attack without having received their planes and as a result, the Group was completely split up. Some flying personnel were evacuated, but the majority were either killed or captured by the Japanese. For their action in the first days of the war, the 27th Bomber Group was cited for three Presidential Citations.

During the spring of 1942, the organization was transferred from Sumac, less personnel and equipment, to Savannah Army Air Base, Georgia, and from there to Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi where it was organized on 14 July 1942, with Lt Col Harry Van Lenven designated commanding officer.

On 12 December 1942, the Group departed from the New York port of embarkation for North Africa. The Air Echelon completed the move in the Group's new A-20's.

In April 1943, all pilots, gunners, and A-20's were transferred from the Group. The Group then received new flying personnel, the A-36 dive bomber, and was redesignated the 27th Fighter-Bomber Group.

After a short training period, the organization entered combat for the second time on 6 June 1943, with Col. John D. Stevenson commanding. The Group moved to Gola, Sicily, from Tunisia, North Africa, after the invasion on 18 July 1943. Col Stevenson was "shot down" in combat in August 1943, and taken as a POW. He was replaced by Col Dorr E. Newton, and the Group moved to San Antonio, Sicily, on 31 August 1943.

In September 1943, the designation of the Group was as follows: 16th to 522nd; 17th to 523rd; and 91st to 524th Fighter-Bomber Squadrons. It was also during September that the 27th Fighter-Bomber Group received its fourth Presidential Citation for the annihilation of a German division which was being rushed from Southern Italy to oppose the Salerno Bridgehead.

In January 1944, the A-36 Fighter Bombers were changed for P-40's and shortly afterwards, for P-47's. Later the organization was redesignated the 27th Fighter Group.

In April 1944, Col Stephen B. Mack assumed command of the 27th, and the Group made

repeated moves to various parts of Europe, finally settling at Salon, France on 26 August 1944, at which time it was assigned to the 12th Air Force.

In September, Col William R. Nevitt assumed command of the 27th and remained in command until the Group was disbanded.

The Group was relieved from the 12th Air Force on 20 February 1945, and on 20 May of the same year, was further assigned to the 9th Air Force.

On 6 November 1945, the 27th Fighter Group returned to the U. S., where it was deactivated at Camp Shanks, N. Y., effective 7 November 1945.

Reactivation of the 27th Fighter Group took place in the European Theater, 20 August 1946, through Headquarters XII Tactical Air Command and was located in Germany. On 25 June 1947, it was relieved from its overseas assignment and assigned to the Strategic Air Command, to be transferred, less personnel and equipment, to Andrews Field, Camp Springs, Maryland.

On 16 July 1947, it was again transferred, less personnel and equipment, from Andrews Field to Kearney Field, Nebraska, for a permanent change of station to be under the 8th Air Force.

The 27th remained at Kearney, leaving only for practice missions at other various bases in the U. S., using F-82's.

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On 16 March 1954, the 27th Wing received its first shipment of the F-84F "Thunderstreak" jets. The Wing is currently commanded by Col. Richard N. Ellis.

27 STRATEGIC FIGHTER WING (SFW) STARTED F-101A AIRCRAFT AIRCREW AND MAINTENANCE TRAINING. AIRCRAFT DEPARTED FOR ALASKA IN OPERATION LOG JAM. 1957

1950

Fox Able Three and the Second Mackay Trophy - In September and October, the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing flew 180 F-84E fighters from Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas, to Furstenfeldbruck, Germany. Nicknamed Fox Able Three, this gigantic ferry mission was divided into two almost equal flights. The first contingent of 90 aircraft left Bergstrom on 15 September. One aircraft aborted the flight before the first leg was completed, but the other 89 fighters continued the mission, stopping five times en route for fuel. On 18 September, 84 fighters landed at Furstenfeldbruck, having covered approximately 5,858 miles in 16 hours and three minutes actual flying time. The other five fighters, held up for mechanical troubles at Keflavik, Iceland, landed in Germany on 19 September.

Airlifted back to Bergstrom by Military Air Transport Service aircraft, the 27th's crews began getting ready for the second phase of Fox Able Three. On 15 October, 92 F-84s took off from Bergstrom, following the same route as the first flight. Bad weather hampered this phase of the flight, and it was not until 28 October that 91 fighters (one aircraft had trouble on the first leg and landed at Memphis, Tennessee) finally landed in Germany. Colonel Cy Wilson, the 27th commander, directed the two flights as task force commander, flying in the lead aircraft.

For this flight, the 27th Wing received the Mackay Trophy for 1950. General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, USAF Chief of Staff, made the presentation to Colonel Raymond F. Rudell, the wing commander, at Bergstrom on 11 December 1951.

Just prior to noon on November 9, 1950, a sudden flurry of hushed whispers swept through the headquarters building at Bergstrom Air Force Base. By noon, the whispers had died and a significant silence echoed the halls.

There was an immediate meeting of staff officers. Then a conference of section officers. Finally a conference of non-coms. Typewriters pounded. Telephones rang. Mimeograph machines hummed with activity. Something big was in the making.

Through the night the activity continued. Warehouse doors, usually closed to those without reams of paper work, seemed suddenly and miraculously opened. The hangar and the flight lines were flooded with improvised lighting facilities. Thunderjet engines roared through the darkness. Trailer trucks and forklifts swarmed about the base like ants around an anthill.

The 27th Fighter-Escort Wing had been alerted for overseas. Effective date of deployment was less than 48 hours off, November 11— Armistice Day. The F-84 Thunderjets were entering the United Nations' police action in Korea.

Pilots and crew chiefs of the 27th Fighter-Escort Group had been less than a week back from their second trans-Atlantic flight. In September and October, the Group had ferried a total of 180 Thunderjets to USAF units in Germany, flying the North Atlantic route.

Geared to preparedness through months of training under the Strategic Air Command's combat readiness program, the 27th swung into action. The move was on.

On the morning of November 11, the first Thunderjets left Bergstrom. By afternoon, every Thunderjet assigned to the 27th Fighter-Escort Group had departed. Quick like that. The F-84s were flown to San Diego Naval Station, California, to be prepared for overwater shipment to Japan and the Far East Air Forces.

On the same day, the initial troop movements began. Maintenance personnel, Fighter Group crew chiefs, and a handful of support personnel were airlifted to San Diego, to accompany the pilots and Thunderjets on the overwater phase of the move.

The first shipment of Thunderjets left California aboard the USS Bairoka just three days later, on November 14.

On November 16, Colonel Ashley B. Packard and his staff left Bergstrom via air for the Far East. The balance of Wing Personnel was being moved daily by air from Bergstrom to Travis AF Base, California for air transportation to Japan.

On the same day that Colonel Packard left, the second shipment of Thunderjets departed California aboard the USS Bataan. By November 27, the balance of the jet fighters was on the Pacific aboard the USS Cape Esperance.

Flying from California to Hickman AFB, Hawaii, to Wake Island, to Haneda AFB, Tokyo, about fifty percent of the Wing personnel were in Japan before the arrival of the Thunderjets.

These airmen and officers were staged at Yokota AFB, a few miles outside Tokyo, where field equipment, winter clothing, and war supplies were issued.

On November 25, the first 27th Fighter-Escort Wing personnel were airlifted to Kimpo AFB, Korea, and a few miles outside Seoul.

The first Thunderjets arrived in Japan on November 30 at Yokasuka. They were unloaded by the Fighter-Group crew members and the 27th's 4015th Organizational Maintenance Squadron personnel. The planes were moved from Yokasuka to Kizu-razu AFB, Japan to be readied for combat.

The 27th was attached to the fanned Fifth Air Force for operations upon arrival in the Far East. Fifth Air Force, on December 1, ruled that the Wing would be divided into two sections — an advanced echelon to operate from Korea, and a rear echelon to maintain the aircraft and administration in Japan.

These same orders designated the Korean phase of operations to be conducted from an airstrip at Taegu, Korea, necessitating a redeployment of personnel from Kimpo. Colonel Packard decided to remain with the advanced echelon, which consisted of the 27th Fighter-Escort Group and a minimum of support personnel. Colonel Raymond F. Rudell, the deputy Wing Commander, was to take charge of the rear echelon.

Rear echelon troops were moved from the staging area at Yokota AFB to Itazuke AFB, Japan, and immediate maintenance operations were begun.

On December 5, Colonel Donald J. M. Blakeslee, then commanding the Fighter Group, led the first flight of Thunderjets from Itazuke AFB to Taegu. The next day, the Thunderjet pilots flew an indoctrination flight with fighter pilots of the 49th Fighter-Bomber Wing, also at Taegu at the time.

On Pearl Harbor Day — December 7 — the first Thunderjet operations began. A flight of four Thunderjets, led by Colonel Blakeslee, flew armed reconnaissance over enemy territory in the Chinnampo area on the west coast of Korea.

Picking targets of opportunity, the flight dropped 32 5-inch rockets and expended 7200 rounds of 50-caliber ammunition strafing enemy positions, knocking out several enemy locomotives, a railroad marshalling yard, sinking a loaded barge in the vital shipping area near Chinnampo, and setting fire to three enemy-held villages.

Other pilots on the first flight included Major (now Lt. Col.) John W. Lafko, Captain Charles E. McWhirk (missing in action since Jan. 2), and 1st Lt. Carlos O. Beasley.

In less than 30 days from the initial alert, the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing was in action — a proof of the effectiveness of combat readiness emphasis stressed these many months by Strategic Air

Command.

In late January, after nearly two months of operations, Fifth Air Force moved the Thunderjets from Taegu to Itazuke, where the rear echelon maintenance program was operative.

This move was the result of the long range effectiveness of the versatile Thunderjets. Taegu was a small airstrip, and there were a number of fighter units stationed there. The F-80 Shooting Stars, the World War II famous F-5 I Mustangs, and the aircraft of allied United Nations countries could not boast the long range of the Thunderjet. For that reason, the F-84s and the 27th Fighter-Escort Group moved once again.

The last missions from Taegu were flown on January 31. On the morning of February 1, operations began from Itazuke, and have continued from there until the arrival of the replacement, 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing.

Ten thousand effective combat sorties and more than 20,000 combat hours in a period just over the five month mark, that's the Thunderjet-flying 27th Fighter-Escort Wing's record in the Korean war — a record worthy of headlines in the military and trade publications. Behind those headlines is the story of maintenance.

The United States Air Force requires regular maintenance inspections of its aircraft. This requirement stems from two factors — that of safety, and that of getting top performance from equipment.

For years, the problem of maintenance has been something of a military headache. Regulations provide for maintenance, defining even the time between inspections, but those regulations haven't provided a really suitable solution to the problem. The regulations fail to solve such problems as time, personnel available, conditions under which maintenance must be accomplished. Those problems fall to the Wing levels.

Almost two years ago, General Curtis LeMay's Strategic Air Command, in gearing itself to peak combat readiness, introduced a new specialized maintenance program. The "different" maintenance program consolidates three major phases of maintenance — organizational, periodic and field maintenance — under the direct supervision of a Wing Maintenance Control section.

On the theory that specialists could and would perform faster, more efficient maintenance, Strategic Air Command established Organizational Maintenance squadrons on Wing levels. The result was a new and "different" maintenance program, a pseudo-assembly line method keyed to producing results.

The different program didn't immediately take hold. There were the usual die-hards. "It can't be done," they moaned, "It isn't practical! We tried a similar arrangement back in...."

But the progressive ones went ahead with the idea, developed it from theory to practice. Today, nearly two years later, those who cried loudest are the most fervent supporters of the specialized

maintenance program.

It has proved a time-saving, money-saving program, utilizing specialist manpower to the utmost. So, how does it work? Let's look at the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing's version of the program — the 27th, commanded by Colonel Raymond F. Rudell of Buffalo, New York, is a tactical fighter unit, assigned to the famed Fifth Air Force for the Korean tour.

All aircraft maintenance, other than the primary maintenance accomplished by the aircraft crew chief, is the responsibility of the 27th Maintenance and Supply Group, commanded by Lt. Colonel Ira Hassler, St. Louis, Mo. Included in the Group are the 27th Supply, 27th Maintenance, 27th Motor Vehicle, and 4015th Organizational Maintenance squadrons.

The pilots, skilled in getting the Thunderjets to the target and back, know their aircraft is in tip top condition. Every assigned aircraft is inspected at least once a month, and very often two or three times, depending on the number of sorties flown

The Republic F-84 Thunderjet was primarily designed for Air Force escort and intercept missions. During the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing's Korean operations, the versatile Thunderjet proved to be one of the most effective tactical weapons of modern aerial warfare.

The pilots and airmen of the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing wrote aviation history during the Korean operations. Much of the heraldry was accorded the other tactical units by virtue of their length of service in the United Nations' pacemakers. The 27th's operations began at a high level, and continued to climb over the months. There were no "slump" periods due to maintenance difficulties or operational delays.

During the first month of operations, from Korea in December, the Thunderjets flew 927 effective sorties of 1025 assigned, totaling more than 1840 combat hours. The 27th pilots flew more than 275 close support sorties, over 525 armed reconnaissance sorties, and over 75 escort sorties during the 25 days of operations.

In January, still operating from Korea, the Group flew 2076 of the 2239 sorties assigned. Of this total, over 400 were close support, over 800 armed reconnaissance, over 350 escort, over 350 special target, and more than 80 fighter-bomber sorties. By the end of January, they had tallied nearly 6000 combat hours.

It was during the period January 20 through 29, that the Thunderjets had their first MIG (enemy jet fighter) encounters. The final score read five MIGs destroyed and nine damaged. First Lieutenant Jacob Kratt, Jr., was credited with two MIGs destroyed and one YAK (conventional-engine enemy fighter) destroyed to emerge as the leading Korean ace at that time.

Operating from Japan in February, the 27th Fighter-Escort Group brought the total combat time to nearly 9500 hours. The planes flew nearly 550 close support sorties, over 850 armed reconnaissance sorties and a number of escort, special target and fighter-bomber sorties.

On March 4, the 27th Fighter-Escort Group crossed the 10,000th combat hour mark, and most of

the pilots had more than 50 missions to their credit. During the balance of the month, they registered more than 4500 additional combat hours bringing the total at the end of March to over 14,500 combat hours. Doing this, the F-84s registered more than 1350 close support sorties, over 830 armed reconnaissance, more than 50 fighter-bomber sorties, and varied other type sorties.

In April, the Group flew over 1045 armed reconnaissance sorties, more than 850 close support sorties, over 100 escort sorties, totaling over 4500 combat hours for the month.

The second phase of MIG encounters came in April, and the final score of enemy aircraft credited to the 27th in air-to-air encounter read:

One YAK destroyed; six MIGs destroyed; five MIGs probably destroyed; and 23 MIGs damaged.

On May 14, Captain Richard T. Rutherford flew the 27th Fighter-Escort Group's 10,000th effective combat sortie. It was coincidental that Captain Rutherford was leading the Group at the time with 136 missions to his credit. Lieutenant Colonel John W. Lafko, was second highest with 134 missions. At the time, over 50 Thunderjet pilots had crossed the 100th mission tally, and another 20-odd pilots were within five missions of the mark.

The 27th was phased out of combat on July 1st. Some of the pilots continued to fly missions with the 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing which replaced the 27th.

About September 1st the 27th was back at its home station at Bergstrom AFB, Austin, Texas.

The 27th Fighter-Escort Wing flew 12,000 combat missions which totaled 25,000 combat hours. On December 11, the 27th FEW was awarded the Mackay Trophy at Bergstrom AFB. General Hoyt S. Vandenberg made the presentation.

The trophy was won for its mass movement across the Atlantic of 180 Republic F-84 Thunderjets, in two flights of 90 each, during the period from September 15 through October 30, 1950. This was the first jet aircraft mass flight of its size to cross the Atlantic. Col. Raymond F. Rudell, 27th commander, received the award on behalf of the Wing.

On a chilly morning in November, pilots and mechanics of the 27th Fighter Group watched as their ship, laden with A-24 "Douglas Dauntless" aircraft slipped under the Golden Gate toward the open Pacific. After the bridge faded from sight, the men went below to get rid of the chill with hot coffee and some talk.

The year was 1941, the destination, Ft. William McKinley in the Philippines, the men and machines of the 27th Fighter Group were fighting and dying in the holocaust which was to change the entire world.

By Christmas of that year, the 27th was moved to Bataan. Four months later, the 27th Fighter Group was just a number on paper. Every plane had been lost, every pilot and ground crewman had been killed or captured in the fighting.

In May of 1942 at Hunter Field, Savannah, Ga., the 27th Fighter Group came alive again with new men and machines. On Dec. 12, 1942, the group equipped with Douglas A-20 "Havocs", shipped out for North Africa. Two weeks later they were airborne against the enemy.

The 27th, already the proud possessor of numerous citations and battle honors, hard won in the Philippines, collected more in the North African campaign. On July 19, 1943, the group arrived in Sicily. There they acquired A-36s which were to be the forerunner of the P-51 "Mustang."

From Sicily the 27th conducted strikes against the Germans in a general push north, winning more battle honors and citations for acts of valor in action against the enemy.

The 27th landed in Italy in September of 1943 and remained based at various air fields there for the next nine months. During this period, the 27th logged more combat time than any group in the U. S. Army Air Force.

Having traded in their A-36s for P-47 "Thunderbolts," the 27th was transferred to Corsica where they stayed for one month. The next stop was France. After eight months there, the group reached German soil. The month was April, 1945, and the 27th did not leave Germany until after the surrender.

On the long road from the Philippines to Germany, the 27th collected 12 battle honors and seven citations for bravery in action against the enemy.

Upon leaving Germany, the 27th Fighter Group returned to the United States and was located at Kearney, Neb. There they were re-equipped with F-82 and were redesignated the 27th Fighter Escort Wing, a part of the Strategic Air Command.

On Mar. 16, 1949, the wing moved to Bergstrom Air Force Base, Tex., and converted to F-84E. In the summer of 1950, the wing won the McKay Trophy for ferrying 190 F-84s. across the Atlantic to two European based fighter wings.

The 27th remained based in Texas until the Korean conflict erupted. December 1950 found the wing in Teagu Air Field, Korea, flying close air support, interdiction, and escort missions with 5th Air Force.

In January 1951, the unit was relocated at Itazuke Air Base, Japan. From there, the 27th continued the battle against the Communists until August 1951 when it returned to the United States to re-equip with F-84Gs.

In October 1952, the 27th deployed 75 F-84Gs across the Pacific to Misorwa AB, Japan, a record for a mass crossing which still stands.

After returning to Bergstrom and re-equipping with swept wing F-84Fs the 27th was redesignated "Strategic Fighter Wing." In the summer of 1957, the wing became the 27th Fighter-Bomber Wing in Tactical Air Command and conversion began to the F-101.

A 27th Wing pilot set an international speed record in the F-101 of more than 1,250 miles per hour over the 1,000 kilometer closed course. Also in 1958, a flight of 27th Wing pilots set a trans-Atlantic speed record, from Andrews AFB, Md., to Liege, Belgium.

In February of 1959, the 27th designation was transferred to Cannon AFB and took over F-100 based here.

The 27th has been in every corner of the world fighting the cold war, carrying the fist and flower emblem to any place which looks like trouble, and quickly assuring anyone who starts something that the 27th will finish it.

Final score: 17 battle honors and 10 citations for bravery.

***27th Tactical Fighter Wing (TAC)***

*Formed as the 27 Bombardment Group (Light) on 22 December 1939 and then activated on 1 February 1940, this unit trained with A-20s in the United States until November 1942. On deployment to Africa it converted to A-36 aircraft and began operations with the Twelfth Air Force in June of 1943, serving in the Mediterranean Theater until the end of the war.*

*During 1944 the unit was redesignated the 27th Fighter Bomber Group and operated P-40s and P-47s. The P-47 served with the unit throughout the war and into 1947 when the Group was assigned to the USAFE. Later, in 1947, it returned to the United States and was assigned to the Strategic Air Command. During this time it was equipped with the F-5 ID; however, by 1948 it was operating F-82Es. By 1950 the unit had re-equipped with the F-84E.*

*Now redesignated 27th Fighter Escort Group, it moved to the Far East for duties with the Far East Air Force. It saw action during the Korean War and was based at Itazuke, Japan until mid-1951.*

*By 1956, the unit was redesignated as the 27th Strategic Fighter Group and, in 1957, re-equipped with the F-101A/C. It retained the Voodoo until 1958 and was finally redesignated as a Fighter Bomber Wing (later, Tactical Fighter Wing).*

*By early 1959, the Wing had received the F-100D and was based at Cannon AFB New Mexico. There were four squadrons assigned to the Wing, the 481st (Green), 522nd (Red), 523rd (Blue) and 524th (Yellow). The 481st was a new squadron to the wing and had joined it when equipped with F-101s and had adopted Green as its color. The 523rd originally carried Yellow as its color and the 524th Blue, but these changed when they began flying the F-100.*

*At first the aircraft carried a fin flash in the appropriate squadron color with the 27th Wing insignia on the starboard side of the fin (between the serial number and flash) and the squadron insignia on the port side. Nose colors were not normally carried, except on Squadron and Wing Commander's aircraft. An F-100D (56-3151) assigned to the 481st Squadron Commander carried three Green and White sloping intake bands, while the Wing Commander's aircraft (56-3404) carried nose bands of Green, Red, Blue, Yellow and*

*A flight of four F-100 Super Sabres of 481st Tactical Fighter Squadron, 27th Tactical Fighter Wing over South Vietnam during 1965. The triangular fin markings are Green.*

*Green (front to rear) with the tail flash in Green, Red, Blue, and Yellow. During February of 1959, the Wing was assigned to the 832nd Air Division and the F-100s now carried the division insignia on the sides of the nose just in front of the cockpit.*

*By late 1960, squadron and wing insignia had been removed and replaced by the Tactical Air Command insignia. All squadron colors were eventually removed and, in 1964, buzz numbers were also removed. During 1964 the USAF was rotating squadrons to Vietnam for a three to four month tour of duty. The 481st TFS had recently completed its regular Far East "TDY" assignment to Misawa Air Force Base, Japan, and had returned home by December of that year. In June of 1965, it was detailed to do a tour in South Vietnam and the squadron left Cannon AFB in June of 1965 with eighteen F-100s. The route took them to Hickam AFB, Hawaii and on to Clark AB, The Philippines for a short duration before proceeding to Tan Son Nhut, South Vietnam, arriving on 21 June 1965. The F-100 was the "Work Horse" during the early stages of the war but as the gradual build up began, more sophisticated fighters with greater speed and firepower, such as the F-105 and F-4, were to take over the F-100's duties over North Vietnam, leaving the F-100 to conduct special assignments such as Fast FAC and Wild Weasel. The majority of the F-100's missions in South Vietnam were close air support.*

*The F-1 OOs were overall natural metal and carried the TAC insignia on the fin. While in Vietnam the squadron painted a solid Green triangle on the tail pointing forward and painted "481 TFS" in Green on the front of the drop tanks. The F-100D was to serve in Vietnam until 1971.*

***Known Aircraft:***

***481st TFS: 56-3054, 56-3100, 56-3151, 56-3285 and 55-3543***

***522nd TFS: 56-3090, 56-2949, 56-3150, 56-3868(F) and 58-1224(F)***

***523rd TFS: 56-3438 and 56-3460***

***524th TFS: 56-3046, 56-3049, 56-3056, 56-3378, 56-3878(F) and 56-3404 (CO)***

To help meet the threat of the Soviet-built MiG-15 fighter in Korea, the US AF diverted Strategic Air Command's 27th FEW with its F-84 Thunderjets to the Far East instead of sending it as planned to England. In early December 1950 the wing established a rear echelon at Itazuke, Japan, and took its F-84s to Taegu AB, South Korea. Less than two months later, fearful that Chinese ground forces would overrun UN jet bases in South Korea, Fifth Air Force withdrew the 27th to Japan. The wing continued combat from Japan until the 136th FBW replaced it in late June 1951.

Members of the 27th Special Operations Wing at Cannon AFB, N.M., earlier this month began testing a new remotely controlled truck at New Mexico's Melrose bombing and gunnery range that pulls moving ground targets used in the training of gunship crews. The truck-target combo will provide "a much more realistic training environment for our air commandos," said 27th SOW Commander Col. Buck Elton in Cannon's Feb. 7 release. The GPS-guided Ford F250 truck pulls a sled target for AC-130 gunners so that they can practice firing their weapons against the target without endangering an operator in the vehicle, states the release. The \$180,000 specially equipped pickup is the first of its kind in Air Force Special Operations Command, according to the release. "This is an unparalleled tool," said Maj. Ian Frady, the deputy range manager. He added, "It opens up a new and unique training opportunity for us." The truck can also play the role of an aggressor in training scenarios, states the release. 2013

**The 27th Fighter Wing was organized on 15 August 1947, with the World War II 27th Fighter Group assigned as an operational unit. In November 1947, they began flying the F-82 Twin Mustang for long range bomber escort missions. Although its mission remained the same, a move to Bergstrom Air Force Base (AFB), Texas, in March 1949, brought a re-designation and new plane. The 27th Fighter-Escort Wing (FEW) received its first jet, the F-84 Thunderjet.**

**Shortly after the wing transitioned to the F-84, the Korean War began. Before deploying to the war zone, the 27 FEW ferried 180 planes, 89 in September and 91 in October, to reinforce units in Europe. The entire wing then flew to bases in Japan and Korea to begin air operations against communist forces in December. Proudly, the 27th became the first F-84 equipped unit to see combat in Korea.**

**Although their specialty was long-range bomber escort, the desperate situation in Korea dictated that the wing assume armed reconnaissance and close-air support missions**

immediately upon their arrival. During their first month in Korea, the wing helped ground forces stop the Chinese Communist Force advance into South Korea. A 27 FEW attack on the North Korean air base at Sinuiju, deep in "MiG Alley," pit 33 wing Thunderjets against 30 MiG-15s. Even though their

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jets were severely outclassed by the more modern MiGs, aircrews fought a pitched half-hour long air battle with them. During the battle, wing aircrews claimed four kills, three probable kills, and four MiGs damaged with no F-84 losses. After flying over 23,000 combat hours and 12,000 sorties, all the wing's units returned to Bergstrom AFB, Texas in July 1951.

The 1950s brought other changes to the wing. As jets evolved so too did the wing's assigned airframes. The wing flew F-84E, F-84G, F-84F, F-101A and F-100D/F airframes. The wing also transferred from SAC to Tactical Air Command (TAC) in July 1957, with a completely new mission. The change in major commands also meant a change in wing designation to the 27th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) on 1 June 1958. On 18 February 1959, the wing departed Bergstrom AFB, without men or equipment, and moved to its present home at Cannon AFB, New Mexico. After arrival at Cannon AFB, the wing transitioned into the F-100 Super Sabre.

During the Vietnam War, the 27 TFW did not deploy to the combat area as in previous conflicts. Instead, the wing deployed individual F-100 squadrons from Cannon to Southeast Asia for varying lengths of time. The 522 Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) deployed to Takhli Royal Thai Air Base (RTAB), Thailand, from 12 December 1962 to 15 February 1963, and again from 16 March to 6 May 1964. They also deployed to DaNang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, from 8 August to 15 November 1964, and to the Philippines from 15 August to 25 November 1965. The 524 TFS also deployed to Takhli RTAB from late 1963 to early 1964. From June through November of 1965, the 481 TFS deployed to Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam.

On 20 November 1965, the 523 TFS transferred to Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines. For the next eight years it flew first with the 405 TFW at Clark AB, then with 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing (TRW) at Udorn AB, Thailand. While flying its F-4D aircraft for the 432 TRW, it received credit for downing two MiGs over Vietnam. The squadron returned to Cannon AFB and to the control of the 27 TFW on 31 August 1973. The 27 TFW assumed a new role on 1 January 1966, when its mission changed to training pilots and maintenance personnel for F-100 units. The role expanded with the arrival of T/AT-33 aircraft. With these new planes the wing trained Forward Air Controllers and Air Liaison Officers.

A brand new aircraft arrived in July 1969, loaned to the 27th from Nellis AFB, Nevada - 10 F-111As facilitated training while the wing awaited its own planes. F-111Es began arriving in October 1969, but their stay was short. In the summer of 1971, wing aircrews ferried the last of them to RAF Upper Heyford, United Kingdom. Finally, on 13 November 1971, the 27 TFW received the first of its F-111Ds.

In May 1977, the 27 TFW deployed a unit of D-models for the first time; operating from Warner Robins AFB, Georgia, for three weeks. A year later, the 27th completed the first overseas deployment of the F-111D, operating from Gardermoen Air Base, Norway, in support of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations.

The 481 TFS inactivated in January 1980, and the 524 TFS was re-designated as the 524th

Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, leaving the 27th with one training and two fighter squadrons. In April 1990, the 428th Fighter Training Squadron was reactivated. The squadron received its first F-111G--an updated SAC FB-111--in June 1990.

During Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM the men and women of the 27 TFW played a role which was not what they envisioned. The aircrews and aircraft of the 27th did not deploy to the region. Instead, only support personnel and a combat support group element represented the wing. By the end of 1990, 241 people from Cannon AFB had deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation DESERT SHIELD. On 16 January 1991, when the U.S.-led coalition force initiated an air assault against key Iraqi positions, the 27 TFW had 325 personnel serving in the Persian Gulf.

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On 1 October 1991, the 27 TFW was re-designated the 27th Fighter Wing as part of an Air Force-wide reorganization. In addition, in June 1992, the 27th Fighter Wing became part of a new major command -- Air Combat Command (ACC). ACC was created when SAC, TAC, and Military Airlift Command merged to form two commands, ACC and Air Mobility Command. The 430th Electronic Combat Squadron (ECS), with its EF-111A Ravens, activated as part of the restructuring plan. The 430 ECS inactivated and replaced by the 429 ECS in June 1993.

The 27th Fighter Wing retired its last F-111D and received its first F-111E and F models in December 1992. F-111F crews and support personnel from the 522nd, 523rd and 524th Fighter Squadrons (FS) began rotations in September 1992 to Incirlik AB, Turkey, in support of Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. Their commitment ended in August 1993. Support personnel and EF-111 crews from the 430 (later the 429th) ECS, joined the F-model crews at Incirlik for Operation PROVIDE COMFORT beginning in December 1992 and continued until their retirement in 1998. In May 1993, EF-111s began their ongoing deployments to Saudi Arabia for Operation SOUTHERN WATCH.

The 27th Fighter Wing was arguably the largest wing in the Air Force throughout the early 1990s with 140 aircraft and more than 5,000 active duty officers and enlisted airmen. The wing served as the only unit in the Air Force operating the F-111 airframe from 1969 to 1998. In May 1995, the replacement of the wing's F-111Fs began with the arrival of its first F-16.

F-16s over Cannon AFB, NM

Much to the consternation of many, the official announcement was made on 2 May 1997, regarding the decision to retire the EF-111A. Exactly one year later the base held the retirement ceremony for the last F-111 airframe. The colors of the 429th Electronic Combat Support Squadron were retired one month later on 19 June 1998.

That same month, the 523 FS deployed to Karup Air Base, Denmark in support of NATO exercise Central Enterprise '98. The 523 FS flawlessly executed offensive counter-air missions including sweep, close-escort and force protection. The 523 FS also performed defensive counter-air strip alert missions for airfield and maritime asset defense.

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In August 1998, the 524 FS deployed to Hill AFB, Utah for exercise Combat Hammer. During the exercise, the 523 FS dropped inert GBU-23 laser guided bombs and fired live maverick anti-tank missiles on Utah's test range. The hit rate was one of the highest ever seen in the Air Force, showcasing the lethality of the F-16 block 40.

On 18 September 1998, the governments of Singapore and the United States signed an

agreement laying the foundation of the Peace Carvin III. As a Foreign Military Sales program for the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF), Peace Carvin III was designed for the continued training of RSAF in rapid deployment and tactical employment of block 52 F-16C/D throughout a wide spectrum of missions including air-to-air, joint maritime and precision air-to-ground weapons delivery.

Reactivated on 12 November 1998, the 428 FS was tasked to take the lead in Peace Carvin III. The 428 FS was a hybrid of USAF and RSAF F-16C/Ds, manned by highly experienced USAF instructor pilots, skilled Singaporean pilots, and a combined RSAF and USAF team of maintenance and support personnel.

While deployed to the Gulf Region in December 1998, the F-16s from the 522 FS played a key role in Operation DESERT FOX. The 522 FS provided close air support alert, defensive counter-air alert and interdiction (bombing military targets in Iraq).

In May 1999, the 428 FS participated in its first official major exercise after its reactivation. The squadron deployed to Tyndall AFB, Florida for exercise Combat Archer. The exercise was designed to test weapons capabilities, tactics and employment. This included the first live firing of radar-guided air-to-air AIM-7 by the RSAF.

In July 1999, the 522 FS deployed to Keflavik Naval Air Station, Iceland to support NATO exercise Coronet Norsemen. The 522 FS served primarily as the combat air arm of the Iceland Defense Force. In August 1999, the 523 FS relieved the 522 FS from the exercise. During Operation ALLIED FORCE in 1999, the 524 FS was notified for "on-call" duty to augment forces in the region. Quick termination of hostilities precluded the 524 FS from seeing action.

In June 2000, the 27 FW embarked on a rigorous six months of deployments. The wing first supported the AEF 7 with the deployment of the 523 FS for Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. Being the lead wing for AEF 9, the wing deployed the 524 FS for SOUTHERN WATCH in September 2000. At the same time, the 522 FS also deployed to the desert for AEF 10 in support of Operation NORTHERN WATCH. Simultaneously, the 27 FW flew missions for both northern and southern Iraq enforcing the UN resolution of no-fly zones. On 11 September 2001, the day of terrorists' attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the 27 FW stood ready. Aircraft from 522 FS, 523 FS and 524 FS went on alert – armed and ready to protect America at a moment's notice. The 27 FW flew many Operation NOBLE EAGLE missions protecting American cities and leaders after the attack.

Following the model set by its predecessors in Vietnam, the wing once again did not deploy as a wing for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, but deployed squadrons. In December 2002, the 524 FS deployed to the desert until April 2003. The 524 FS dropped over 969,000 pounds of precision-guided munitions during the war, more than any other F-16 Block 40 squadron.

A sense of doom best described the feeling that set over Cannon AFB on 13 May 2005, when the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) committee released their recommendations regarding base realignments and closures. Cannon AFB was one of 10 Air Force installations slated for closure. City officials lobbied to keep Cannon AFB open and their efforts were rewarded when on 25 August 2005, the BRAC commission overturned its recommendation. The Air Force was given until 2009 to provide a new mission to Cannon AFB otherwise the base would close in 2010. On 20 June 2006, it was announced that Cannon AFB would become the new home of the 16th Special Operations

Wing (SOW). On 1 October 2007, a new era began at Cannon AFB as the new Special Operations Wing activated as the 27 SOW, a new component of Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). The new mission provided the opportunity to not only continue, but add to the 27th's rich and storied heritage.

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Soon after the wing received its new mission, the landscape of Cannon AFB began to change. Gone were the F-16 Falcons and in their stead – the MC-130W Combat Spear of the newly arrived 73rd Special Operations Squadron. Activated and re-designated as a Special Operations Squadron in October 2006, the 73rd arrived at Cannon in November 2007. On the coat tails of the 73 SOS came the activation of the 318 SOS on 16 May 2008, after nearly 34 years of inactivity. By mid 2008, came the 3 SOS with men and equipment, from Creech AFB, Nevada. Of note, while the squadron itself relocated, the men and women continued to perform their MQ-1 mission maintaining a vigilant eye over the battlefield.

The year 2009 brought tremendous growth to the wing in terms of operational squadrons, as well as, the number of Airmen assigned to the 27 SOW. The wing activated or transferred three operational squadrons – the first being the transfer, from Hurlburt Field, Florida, of the 16 SOS or Spectre on 30 June 2009. Next to arrive, a squadron familiar to Clovis AFB, today's Cannon AFB, yet unknown to many – the 33 SOS, when the squadron activated on 31 July 2009. As a fighter squadron, the 33rd spent a short period of time on the high plains in 1953. A not so long forgotten fighter squadron stood in the shadows throughout the remainder of the summer months of 2009, awaiting its turn to again activate. Inactivated prior to the 27th's mission change, the 524 SOS activated on 2 October 2009, bringing with it a very storied past.

With the operational growth came growth in airframes. The 16 SOS, of Vietnam fame, brought the side-firing Spectre AC-130H gunship. A mere month later, after activation, the 33 SOS introduced Cannon AFB to their version of a remotely piloted airframe, the MQ-9 Reaper. Those familiar with the old 524 FS and its F-111 aircraft were now witness to the new 524 SOS and their De Havilland Dash-8, dual propeller driven airframe. Prior to this time, the Dash-8 had been a part of the 318 SOS.

The wing neared the F-111 days in terms of population in 2009, as the wing continued to expand. Originally expected to grow to an estimated 4,100 Airmen, up from the 1,100 when AFSOC inherited the base, the wing surpassed the 4,700 mark early in 2011.

During 2009, the wing transitioned from a wing in infancy to a fully engaged combat wing. With the 16 SOS continually deployed in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM since 2001, Admiral Eric Olsen, COMUSSOCOM, sought another airframe to divert some of the workload from the AC-130H/U models. The Admiral found that diversion in the way of modification. The MC-130W of the 73 SOS served as his platform for relief. Under a program known as Dragon Spear, the MC-130W underwent modification to an armed overwatch platform, further enhancing the wing's combat capability. The monthly "rotators" became the norm as they accepted deployers and delivered re-deployers monthly.

As the year 2010 arrived, so too did the transfer, without men and equipment, of the 20 SOS. Having flown the now retired MH-53 Pave Low, 20 SOS personnel awaited the arrival of their latest airframe - the CV-22 Osprey. By October 2010, the 73 SOS had deployed its Dragon Spear package in support of Operation NEW DAWN. Yet another of

the wing's squadrons found itself preparing for deployment in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the 318 SOS. Plans had been made and set in motion for the M-28 Sky Truck's first deployment by the end of the year. Meanwhile, the PC-12 finished its third year of continuous worldwide deployments.

Early 2011, specifically 7 April, AFSOC's newest airframe, the MC-130J, had a squadron to call its own – the 522 SOS. The wing activated the squadron on 7 April 2011 and received its newest airframe on 29 September 2011. The 522 had previously been assigned to the 27th as a Fighter Squadron, much like the 524 SOS.





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