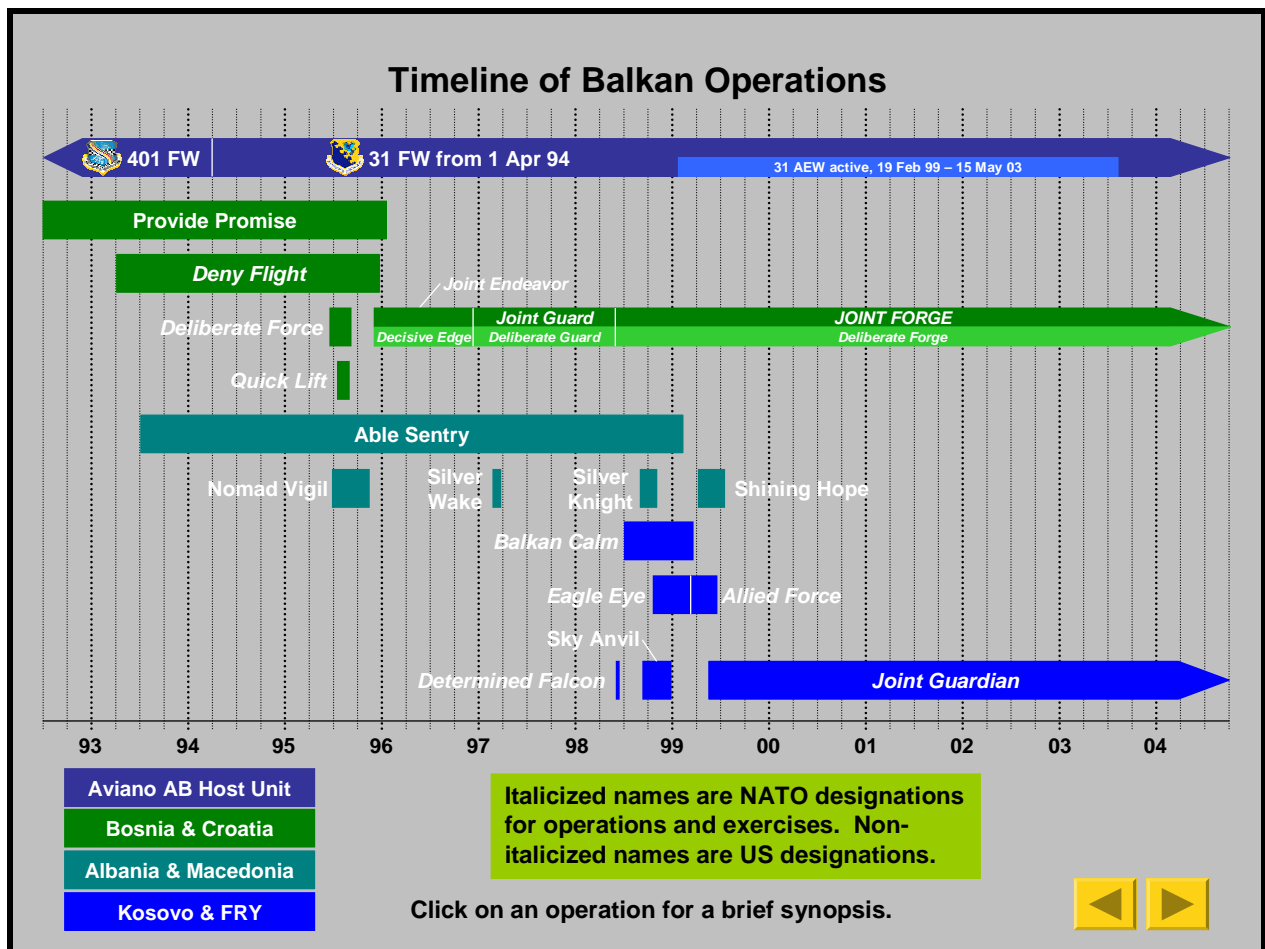


31 FW Support to Contingency Operations since 1994

Upon activation at Aviano on 1 April 1994, the 31st Fighter Wing's (31 FW) new mission centered on efforts to contain the civil war in Yugoslavia. On 31 March 1993, the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed Resolution 816, authorizing UN and NATO military action in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The wing's role in this peacekeeping mission consisted of a series of air operations: DENY FLIGHT, DELIBERATE FORCE, DECISIVE EDGE, DELIBERATE GUARD, and DELIBERATE FORGE. The following graphic will help clarify the various Balkan operations and their chronological contexts.



One month after arriving at Aviano AB, the wing began flying contingency operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In May 1994, the 31 FW's 555 FS started operations in support of Operation DENY FLIGHT, and by September of the same year, the 510th joined her sister

squadron. Both squadrons conducted daily sorties with other NATO forces, enforcing the no fly zone (NFZ) over the region. By 28 August 1995, the wing had flown 1,644 sorties in support of Operation DENY FLIGHT.

On 2 June 1995, Bosnian Serb Forces shot down Captain Scott O'Grady, a 555th Fighter Squadron F-16 pilot, behind enemy lines. Captain O'Grady spent the next six days evading Bosnian Serb Forces by moving during the night and hiding during the day. Finally, on 8 June, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit rescued Captain O'Grady and he returned unharmed to Aviano and a hero's welcome.

On 29 August 1995, in response to the Bosnian Serb's shelling of Sarajevo's central market, NATO initiated Operation DELIBERATE FORCE. This military action resulted in the largest air assault in NATO's history. The 31 FW increased its involvement and support to NATO forces during this 23-day operation, flying an average of 18 sorties a day for a total of 418 sorties. After reducing the threat to Sarajevo and other UN safe havens, NATO and the UN ended Operation DELIBERATE FORCE on 21 September 1995.

On 21 September 1995, with the completion of Operation DELIBERATE FORCE, Operation DENY FLIGHT resumed. The wing continued daily missions to enforce the NFZ over Bosnia-Herzegovina, and by 20 December 1995, had flown a total of 303 sorties. On 15 December 1995, UN Security Council Resolution 816 expired and with it authority for Operation DENY FLIGHT. The UN agreed to terminate the operation and officially turned over authority for the security of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) on 20 December 1995.

On 20 December 1995, NATO's IFOR began Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. The air portion of this mission, called Operation DECISIVE EDGE, ensured Aviano-based aircraft continued to maintain the security of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The 31 FW continued daily flights over the area and, as of 20 December 1996, had flown a total of 1,088 sorties for this operation.

On 20 December 1996, Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR concluded and NATO forces began operating under Operation JOINT GUARD. This new NATO operation also affected the air mission, which changed from Operation DECISIVE EDGE to Operation DELIBERATE GUARD. This new operation implemented by NATO's Stabilization Forces (SFOR, previously IFOR), became one of stabilization to give civilian agencies the opportunity and time to become functional and operational. The 31 FW continued to fly sorties in support of SFOR requirements, and by the end of Operation DELIBERATE GUARD, 20 June 1998, had flown a total of 1,632 sorties in these ongoing peacekeeping efforts. On 20 June 1998, peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina continued under Operation DELIBERATE FORGE.

In the midst of DELIBERATE GUARD operations, the wing also supported generated sorties in support of Operation SILVER WAKE, the emergency evacuation of U.S. citizens and designated third country nationals from Tirana, Albania. From 14-26 March 1997, the 510th flew in support of the evacuations. The sortie totals for SILVER WAKE are included in the wing's DELIBERATE GUARD sortie figures.

Operation ALLIED FORCE (OAF)

On 19 February 1999, the 31 FW activated as the 31st Air Expeditionary Wing-NOBLE ANVIL (31 AEW). Assigned under a joint task force, the 31 AEW flew from Aviano and joined NATO allies in a 78-day air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia). Aviano units, already in place, received nearly 200 additional aircraft and 4,000 additional personnel.

From 24 March-10 June 1999, the 31 AEW flew in OAF. The AEW, the largest expeditionary wing in air force history, flew nearly 9,000 combat sorties and accumulated almost 40,000 hours of combat service over the skies of Kosovo, Serbia, and the rest of the Balkans in support of NATO operations.

The wing accomplished much during OAF as the two permanently assigned flying squadrons, the 510 FS and 555 FS, combined for over 2,400 sorties and over 10,000 combat

hours. Additionally, as the first Aviano OAF squadrons to fly 1,000 combat sorties, 555 FS reached the 1,000 combat sortie mark on 27 May 1999 and the 510 FS followed suit two days later. Simply, the 31 FW operators, maintainers, and supporters proudly accomplished the NATO mission.

Contingency Operations since OAF

Following the end of Operation ALLIED FORCE (OAF) in June 1999, the 31st Fighter Wing became fully entrenched in the Expeditionary Air Force. With the exception of a deployment to Operation NORTHERN WATCH (ONW) in 1998, the wing had not deployed to support a contingency operation since before it activated at Aviano. Instead, the wing fought “in place,” supporting operations in the Balkans.

In addition to the contingency deployments discussed below, the “Buzzards” of the 510th Fighter Squadron and 555th Fighter Squadron “Triple Nickel” continued to fly sorties over the Balkans in support of Operations DELIBERATE FORGE.¹ DELIBERATE FORGE operations over Bosnia began on 20 June 1998. These sorties supported NATO’s Stabilization Forces (SFOR) by supporting ground operations and enforcing the no-fly zone (NFZ). The wing suspended DELIBERATE FORGE sorties with the start of Operation ALLIED FORCE in March 1999.

Sortie reporting for DELIBERATE FORGE ended in advance of ALLIED FORCE. On 11 June 1999, the day after ALLIED FORCE sorties ceased, Operation JOINT GUARDIAN began. JOINT GUARDIAN involved enforcement of the NFZ over Kosovo and support of NATO’s Kosovo Forces (KFOR). Following the end of ALLIED FORCE, all Balkan sorties were reported as JOINT GUARDIAN sorties. Though the historical record is not clear on this point, the end of ALLIED FORCE most likely saw the resumption of JOINT FORGE sorties over Bosnia and the initiation of JOINT GUARDIAN sorties over Kosovo; all the sorties were

¹ “JOINT FORGE” is sometimes used interchangeably with the name “DELIBERATE FORGE.” In fact, JOINT FORGE is the overall NATO operation in Bosnia. DELIBERATE FORGE is NATO COMAIRSOUTH’s air support of JOINT FORGE.

logged as JOINT GUARDIAN sorties. Reporting for JOINT GUARDIAN ended in March 2002 and all subsequent sorties fell under DELIBERATE FORGE. To this day pilots from the 31 FW continue to fly sorties in support of DELIBERATE FORGE.

Summary of 31 FW Participation in Balkan Operations

Balkan Operations	Days ²	31 FW ¹	
		Sorties	Avg/Day
DENY FLIGHT (14 May 94-28 Aug 95)	471	1,644	3.5
DELIBERATE FORCE (29 Aug-20 Sep 95)	22	418	19
DENY FLIGHT (21 Sep-20 Dec 95)	90	303	3.4
DECISIVE EDGE (21 Dec 95-20 Dec 96)	365	1,088	3.0
DELIBERATE GUARD (20 Dec 96-20 Jun 98)	547	1,884	3.4
DELIBERATE FORGE (20 Jun 98-28 Feb 99)	253	1,327	5.2
ALLIED FORCE (24 Mar 99-10 Jun 99)	78	2,403	30.8
JOINT GUARDIAN (1 July-30 Sep 99)	91	104	1.1
JOINT GUARDIAN (1 Oct 99-31 Mar 02)	912	1,087	1.2
DELIBERATE FORGE (1 Apr 02-31 May 04)	791	1,538	1.9

Note 1: Does not include sorties flown by non-31 FW aircraft temporarily assigned to Aviano.

Note 2: The “Days” figures are actual calculations, not flying day calculations. Despite this, the “Average Sorties/Day” should reveal an approximate level of effort useful in comparing the operations.

In 2000, the wing began its full-fledged participation in the Expeditionary Air Force. From March to September 2000, the 510th and 555th Fighter Squadrons conducted back-to-back deployments to a forward Southwest Asia location, in support of Operation Southern WATCH (OSW). While at the forward location, the squadrons flew over 400 combat sorties providing precision-guided munitions (PGM) delivery while patrolling the southern NFZ.

Date	Unit	Location	Combat Sorties	People	Jets	Purpose
3 Mar-12 Jun 00	510	Southwest Asia	222	221	10	AEF 5-PGM
12 Jun-15 Sep 00	555	Southwest Asia	220	187	10	AEF 7-PGM

From February to June 2001, the Scorpions of the 603d Air Control Squadron (603 ACS) deployed to another forward location. As the core of the 386th Expeditionary Air Control

Squadron, the 121 personnel of the 603d served as the primary air control squadron for OSW. Significantly, the deployment marked the first-ever deployment of the 603d outside of Europe.

Later in the 2001, the Buzzards and Triple Nickel flew in support of ONW. From June through December, the squadrons provided Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) while enforcing the northern NFZ.

Date	Unit	Location	Combat Sorties	People	Jets	Purpose
Jun-Aug 01	510	Incirlik	454	221	10	AEF 5-CSAR
Sep-18 Dec 01	555	Incirlik	367	n/a	10	AEF 5-CSAR
18-29 Dec 01	510	Incirlik	4	n/a	5	AEF 5-CSAR

Significantly, the next AEF deployment for the fighter squadrons saw the 555th return to Incirlik. From late March to early May, the Nickel deployed 88 personnel and five aircraft in support of ONW, again providing CSAR support.

Date	Unit	Location	Combat Sorties	People	Jets	Purpose
27 Mar-4 May 02	510	Incirlik	65	82	5	AEF 1-CSAR

The fall and winter of 2002 saw the wing's largest ever deployment effort since arriving at Aviano. From August to December 2002, the 510th and 603d returned to Southwest Asia. The 603d again supported OSW while the 510th supported OSW and missions over Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). Additionally, the 555th deployed its personnel and aircraft, including those personnel and aircraft not deployed with the 510th, to Decimomannu AB, Sardinia. Runway construction motivated the temporary relocation. The squadrons returned to Aviano by year's end.

Date	Unit	Location	Combat Sorties	People	Jets	Purpose
10 Sep-18 Dec 02	510	Southwest Asia	607	185	12	AEF 5-PGM

In late November 2002, the 555 FS deployed to Caslav AB, Czech Republic, to provide combat air patrols over the site of the NATO Summit. The deployment included the real world diversion of an unidentified airliner.

Date	Unit	Location	CAP Sorties	People	Jets	Purpose
18-25 Nov 02	555	Caslav AB	34	166	10	CAP NATO Summit

The wing's support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) began in late 2003. The wing's first major support of OIF occurred during the deployment of the Southern European Task Force (SETAF) in late March 2003. Aviano AB served as the launch point for the airborne/air-land insertion of airborne forces opening a second front in northern Iraq. As the primary supporter, the wing secured, bedded, and fed over 2,300 personnel from the Army and USAF. The operation, the largest airborne operation since 1989's Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama, constituted 62 missions transporting 2,146 passengers and 2,433.7 tons of cargo.

Forces from the wing engaged in Iraqi operations in late 2003. From mid-November 2003 through early June 2004, the Scorpions deployed to Iraq to provide air control over Iraq. In an air control squadron first, the squadron relocated their entire operation from Baghdad International Airport to Balad AB. Under combat conditions, the squadron transferred \$73 million in equipment and over 100 personnel via 20 convoys. Significantly, the squadron accomplished the move with no loss of command and control services. Unfortunately, the squadron also sustained a loss during its time in Iraq. On 10 April 2004, insurgents launched a mortar rocket attack on Balad, killing A1C Antoine Holt and injuring two other Scorpions. Airman Holt's death constituted the 31 FW's first combat fatality since the Vietnam War.

From December 2003 to early March 2004, the Buzzards deployed to Southwest Asia in support of OEF and OIF. Flying almost 900 sorties, including 750 combat sorties, the squadron flew close air support (CAS) and airborne forward air control (FAC-A) missions. Of note, squadron pilots were overhead during and participated in the capture of Saddam Hussein on 13 December 2003. Further, the 510th's overhead presence contributed to a 50% reduction in improvised explosive device and infrastructure attacks against Coalition forces.

Date	Unit	Location	Combat Sorties	People	Jets	Purpose
1 Dec 03-1 Mar 04	510	Southwest Asia	*	*	*	*

* Awaiting data.

The Triple Nickel replaced the Buzzards in late February 2004 and returned to Aviano in early June. Like the Buzzards, the Nickel supported OEF and OIF. The squadron was active in OEF's "MOUNTAIN STORM" in Afghanistan. In Iraq, the squadron performed the first true urban close air support (CAS) missions in recent history, a first in the F-16. Additionally, the 555th spearheaded development of CENTAF's tactics, techniques, and procedures to support and defend convoys. Finally, the squadron pioneered the Air Force's first operational F-16 employment of Advance Targeting Pods.

Date	Unit	Location	Combat Sorties	People	Jets	Purpose
28 Feb-5 Jun 04	555	Southwest Asia	*	*	*	*

* Awaiting data.