

The

Eagle's Eye

60th Anniversary

Florida Air National Guard

Special Edition



Celebrating Sixty Years of
Florida Air National Guard History



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Special Edition Disclaimer:

This special edition of *The Eagle's Eye* magazine is a funded Florida Air National Guard historical magazine published to pay tribute to the 60th anniversary of the Florida Air National Guard and is an authorized publication for the members of the Florida Air National Guard, FLANG retirees, and other parties with an interest in the Florida Air National Guard.

The contents of this special edition of *The Eagle's Eye*, including several photos or reproductions of original news articles and journals, were gathered from a multitude of sources including FLANG unit histories, the personal libraries of current and former members of the FLANG, the Florida Times Union and others. Florida Times Union articles are reprinted with permission. The accuracy of some of the historical notations are based, in some cases, on the best recollection of the parties involved or hearsay after the fact. The contents are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. government, DoD, USAF or NGB.

The editorial content was edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office, 125th Fighter Wing. The editors of *The Eagle's Eye* would like to thank the many unsung heroes at the FLANG geographically separated units (GSUs) and State Headquarters who worked tirelessly under extreme deadlines to provide the research materials for the production of this magazine.

Back Cover: 125th Fighter Wing F-15s sit loaded and ready for war on Runway 13/31 at Jacksonville International Airport (JIA), Sept. 13, 2001. An agreement with JIA that we all hoped would never be used was executed after 9/11 as the 125th took over the runway to make ready a defense against a new and terrifying enemy.

Opening remarks from the Assistant Adjutant General-Air

By Brig. Gen. Joseph G. Balskus
Assistant Adjutant General - Air
Commander, Florida Air National Guard



We are extremely excited to bring you this special edition of *The Eagle's Eye*. It was designed and published specifically to capture an abbreviated history of our Florida Air National Guard, dating back to our beginning, Feb. 9, 1947.

When Col. (Ret.) Frank Kozdras and I began talking about the idea of capturing our history more than a year ago, we knew we would be embarking on creating a publication unlike anything we've produced in our 60-year history.

Our thoughts did not stop there.

Additionally, we envisioned a plan to create an official historical FLANG video and establish two historical display rooms to correctly archive and house the memorabilia that make up our tremendous heritage. Word began to spread, and wonderful men and women who gave years of service to our organization lined up to bring in their photos, news clippings and other documents that were just collecting dust in boxes in attics and closets. We set up meetings in St. Augustine to meet with these former warriors and more than one of these patriots shed tears as they remarked, 'I didn't think anyone would take time to remember.'

So, fellow members, past and present, of the Florida Air National Guard, allow us to show you our appreciation.

This publication, the historical video and the two historical rooms at State Headquarters in Saint Augustine and at the 125th Fighter Wing in Jacksonville, will give proper respect to our beloved FLANG.

Beyond this, we will continue to ensure *The Eagle's Eye* is a statewide publication covering all the units in the Florida Air National Guard. As an ongoing quarterly publication it, in itself, is our historical archive. *The Eagle's Eye* and many other historical books, forms, and pictures, will be stored in the new library that we are developing next to the Saint Augustine historical room in the Air Guard office space at the Saint Francis Barracks. This library will be available to you to explore and even check out items for your reading pleasure when you visit our State Headquarters.

We would not be the organization we are today were it not for the prodigious contributions of those who have served before us. We thank you for instilling in our minds and hearts the spirit to continue in service, valuing the lessons of the past that keep us motivated for a great today and even better tomorrow.

I would also like to thank the team of professionals who put this magazine together.

A special thanks to Maj. Earl Bittner, Senior Editor, who accepted the assignment to put this historical magazine together with the help of Tech. Sgt. Michelle Thomas, Editor; Staff Sgt. Tom Kielbasa, Editor; and Tech. Sgt. Richard Geer who provided the graphic artist skills for the covers.

The 125th Fighter Wing Multi-media team also has my thanks for providing outstanding support by researching archived photos and scanning and cataloging donated items.

An additional thank you is extended to Col. (Ret.) Frank Kozdras, FLANG Historical Research, Maj. Lusinda L. Recor, FLANG Historical Research and Ms. Debbie Cox for photography support.

Last, thanks are also extended to the many anonymous researchers at each FLANG unit who contributed to the editorial content of this magazine.

As you can imagine, the content was sourced from a multitude of people, including the memories of some of our oldest and most precious retirees.

As such, some errors may have occurred and we apologize. But we are confident it is a more accurate and complete historical synopsis than what was available to us before.

Enjoy this special edition of *The Eagle's Eye* with your family and friends and God bless each and every one of you, past, present, and future members, who make the Florida Air National Guard a remarkable state organization and a national treasure!

Florida Air National Guard Beginnings: 159th Fighter Squadron

At the conclusion of World War II, work began to organize an Air National Guard unit for Florida.

A National Guard Bureau document dated March 16, 1946, gave states permission to request an Air Force unit allotment.

Months later, Florida accepted the 159th Fighter Squadron with an authorized strength of 50 officers and 303 enlisted men.

Governor Millard F. Caldwell formally accepted the unit on Aug. 30, 1946, and full federal recognition was granted Feb. 9, 1947.

Qualifications for initial enlistment into the Florida Air National Guard required officers, pilots and other specialists to have served on active duty during WWII.

Enlisted personnel needed at least six months of active duty service time since 1940 in any branch of the armed forces to be a member.

About half of the squadron's original pilots were combat veterans, and a third were bomber pilots.

Roughly half the enlisted personnel served in various branches of the armed forces during WWII.

The newly formed unit fell under the command of Lt. Col. William D. Haviland, with an initial assigned strength of eight officers and ten enlisted Airmen.

A facility for housing the units became available in temporary WWII buildings on the west side of Thomas Cole Imeson Airport in Jacksonville, Fla.

Upon the arrival of the unit's first aircraft, the P-51D *Mustang* at Imeson Airport, the 159th became the first operational Air National Guard unit in Florida.

Manufactured by the North American Aviation Company, these P-51D fighter bombers are the most recognized and celebrated fighters of WWII.

The 159th originally consisted of four units: the 159th Fighter Squadron; the 159th Utility Flight; the 159th Weather Station; and Detachment C, 217th Air Service Group.

During the second year of operation, the FLANG became one of the first six Air National Guard squadrons in the United States equipped with jet aircraft.

The conversion from the P-51D *Mustang* to the new F-80C *Shooting Star* jet became official Aug. 1, 1948, when the unit was re-designated the 159th Fighter Squadron, Jet Propelled (159 FSJ).



P-51 *Mustangs* parked at the first FLANG facility at Thomas Cole Imeson Airport in Jacksonville, Fla. Manufactured by the North American Aviation Company, these planes are the most recognized and celebrated fighters of WWII.



Jacksonville, Fla. The unit was initially housed in temporary buildings used by the Army Air Corps during WWII. Manufactured by the North American Aviation Company, the Mustangs were the most successful fighters of their era.

Headquarters FLANG

Just as the United States Air Force can trace its roots to the U. S. Army (Air Corps), the Headquarters of the Florida Air National Guard can look to the Florida Army National Guard for its origin. The “Air Section” of the Florida National Guard was recognized Nov. 25, 1949.

Originally authorized three officer and six enlisted personnel, the headquarters maintained a coordination role creating general orders for the 159th Fighter Squadron, the 217th Air Service Group and the 159th Weather Station in Jacksonville.

In April 1952, Major Charles F. Riggle Jr., transferred from the Florida Army National Guard to command the headquarters detachment. He served as the Chief of Staff and the Executive Officer

until he was appointed as the first Assistant Adjutant General for Air (AAG-Air) in January 1959. He was subsequently promoted to brigadier general April 1, 1962.

Today, the HQ FLANG maintains a staff of 35 positions, consisting of 13 fulltime AGR and military technicians, 15 traditional Guardsmen and seven State employees to meet the demands of providing a state-centric command function for ten dissimilar geographically separate units comprised of more than 1,800 personnel. The headquarters element directs and manages all the Florida Air National Guard component involvement in Defense Support to Civilian Authorities activities (disaster response), recruiting and retention, budgeting and finance, Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) rotation, communications and force management issues for the FLANG.

Florida Rockets

In 1948, an age when air shows were very popular and when people would come from miles around to watch aircraft perform acrobatic stunts over the local airfield, the Florida Air National Guard established an aerial demonstration team called the “Florida Rockets.” Painted white, and emblazoned with a fighting gator and a rocket, the Florida Rockets were much sought after for air shows and special events. The original Florida Rocket Demonstration Team pilots were Bill Yoakley, Harry Howell, Bill Haviland, and Jack Nunnally. When the Florida Air National Guard first began performing, members flew P-51 piston-engine fighter planes and transitioned to the F-80 Shooting Star.

The Rockets put on a great show in Miami in September 1948 – the first official Air Force Day following the creation of the U.S. Air Force as a separate service. By 1949 their skills were so improved that they provided a formation flyover during the inauguration of President Harry Truman. At a typical air show the Rockets would form a diamond of four aircraft and do both slow and fast flyovers of the field. Later, there would be loops, split diamonds and similar aerobatics.

Generally, one or more of the pilots in turn would demonstrate his individual flying skill by performing a series of spectacular maneuvers over the field. Pilot Bill Yoakley’s five-minute solo included a ten-second descent inverted, a “Cuban 8” (which involved a horizontal figure-eight with rolls and a second loop in the opposite direction), and a pull straight up until running out of speed and falling off onto one wing. Finally, he would fly a couple of inversions, make a high-speed pass in front of the crowd, pull up and drop the landing gear during a slow roll and lastly touch down at just above a stall, braking to a stop within 1,000 feet.



The F-80 *Shooting Star* at Imeson Airport in 1955.



Above: The original Florida Rocket Demonstration Team circa 1948 wore non-matching helmets. Some wore football helmets and others had combat helmet liners modified to hold oxygen masks. Left to Right: Bill Yoakley (left wing), Harry Howell (right wing), Bill Haviland (lead), Jack Nunnally (slot). Below: Lt. Col. William D. Haviland was the first commander of the 159th and was a member of the famous Florida Rockets.



The Tow Target Flight and the Korean War

In the fall of 1950, the United States' involvement in the Korean War required extensive air power commitments from the United States Air Force. To alleviate the strain on active duty forces, President Truman activated the FLANG on Oct. 10, 1950, and the pilots were ordered to report to George Air Force Base, Calif. The small support component of the 159th Utility Flight stayed behind in Jacksonville. On arrival at George AFB, the 159th Fighter Squadron, Jet Propelled, joined the 116th Fighter Group — a group consisting of Air National Guard fighter squadrons from Florida, Georgia (158th) and California (196th).

The group and squadrons reorganized under the Wing-Base Plan on Nov. 1, 1950, and were re-designated the 116th Fighter Bomber Group, commanded by Lt. Col. Howard L. Galbreath. The group received orders to the Far East which overrode their original orders to Europe to replace an active duty U.S. Air Force squadron slated to go to Korea.

On July 1, 1951, the FLANG received a B-26 *Mitchell* bomber aircraft, adding the 205th Tow Target Flight to its force for a six-month period. Nine days later the first elements of the 159th fighter group, along with new F-84E *Thunderjet* fighters, sailed aboard the aircraft carrier *Sitkoh Bay*. The balance of the group followed two days later on the aircraft carrier *Windham Bay*. By Aug. 10, 1951, upon arrival overseas, the 159th Fighter Squadron operated under the command of Maj. Dan Sharpe, U.S. Air Force. The 116th Fighter Group was then assigned to the 5th Air Force commanded by Lt. Gen. Thomas C. Waskow at its new home, Misawa Air Base, Japan.

A primary mission of the Florida Air National Guard during the Korean conflict was one of Air Defense coupled with combat missions over Korea. There, the 159 FSJ concentrated on flying dangerous ground attack missions against enemy supply lines and troops in the field.

In February 1952, the 159th was the first to participate in "Operation High Tide," an experimental combat air-refueling project conducted by the U.S. Air Force. For the "experiment" the pilots deployed into a combat zone, flew operational combat missions, "serviced" their own aircraft and then returned to base. The experiment was a success: pilots flew 92 combat sorties in four days with very credible results. The experiment would later become standard practice. For its part in the Korean conflict, the unit earned the Korean Service Citation with Bronze Service Stars.



In July 1951 the first elements of the 116th Fighter Bomber Group sailed from San Francisco, Calif., aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Sitkoh Bay*. The remainder of the group followed two days later on the *USS Windham Bay*. The journey took 14-15 days to reach Japan by ship then another couple of weeks to ready the aircraft and fly them to Misawa Air Base, Japan.

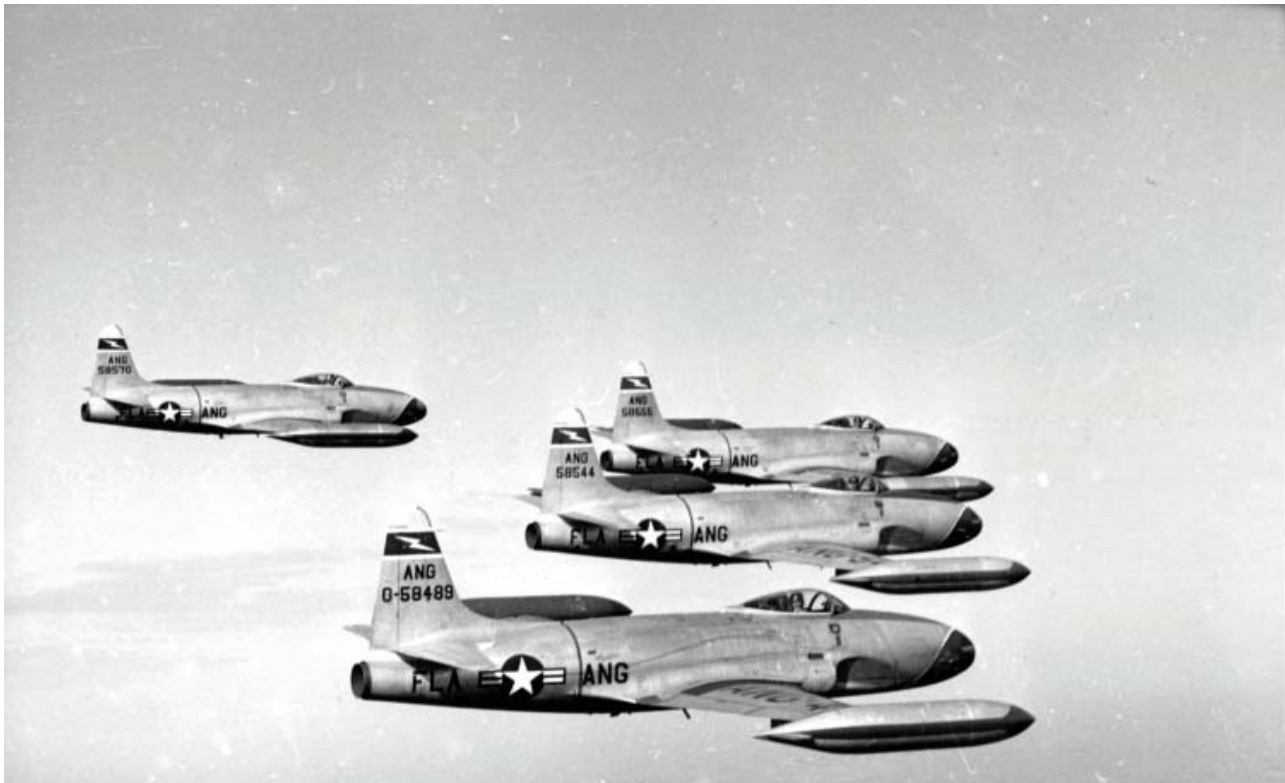




Above: Remnants of the 159th flew the B-26 *Mitchell* bomber at home station in 1951 during the Korean conflict, while the rest of the unit deployed and integrated with the 116th Fighter Group at Misawa Air Base, Japan.

Right: 159th aircraft ready for a winter mission at Misawa Air Base, Japan. Two primary missions for the FLANG during the Korean conflict were air defense and combat missions over Korea.





Above: F-80 fighters in formation.

Right: Members of the Instrument Shop at Imeson Airport in the 1950s.



Aircraft Changes and the Emergence of the 125th

Major Leon A. Moore Jr. assumed command of the 159th Fighter Squadron, Jet Propelled, on July 1, 1952.

Upon release from active duty, the unit returned July 9, 1952, with their new commander to Imeson Municipal Airport. The unit's F-84Es and all its ground equipment were turned over to the U.S. Air Force and left in Japan. On July 10, 1952, the 159th Fighter Squadron, Jet Propelled, was re-designated the 159th Fighter Bomber Squadron, dissolving the 159th Utility Flight and integrating it into the unit. Six months later, the 159th Fighter Bomber Squadron was re-equipped with F-51H/*Mustangs* and re-designated the 159th Fighter Bomber Squadron Augmented (FBSA).

The unit integrated various support aircraft into its inventory during this period. The unit received T-6s for instrument training, B-26s (photo) for target towing, and C-47 and C-45 transports. During the early 1950s, the U.S. Air Force was in the process of rebuilding its squadrons with jet fighters and jet bombers and changes to the Florida Air National Guard aircraft inventory were constant, fast and furious.

For example, from October to December 1954, the 159th FBSA was equipped with nine different types of aircraft including the T-6, B-26, C-45, C-47, C-54, F-51H, T-33, F-80, and F-86A. By the end of December 1954, things settled down and the 159 FBSA had an entire squadron of F-80Cs for the second time. There were 43 officers and warrant officers, and 472 enlisted men in the unit.

In July 1955, while still equipped with F-80Cs, the unit was re-designated the 159th Fighter Interceptor Squadron with a mission change to Air Defense. By July 1, 1956, the unit reorganized into 125th Fighter Group (125 FG). The activation of the 125th coincided with the conversion to the F-86D *Sabre Jet*, an all weather interceptor. The F-86 made the 125th a self-sustaining unit capable of performing the Air Defense mission in all types of weather, day or night.

Alert Duty, Flying Safety Award and First Female Member

On Jan. 1, 1957, the FLANG assumed the Air Defense Command alert commitment for the Jacksonville area. The objective of the program was to supplement the regular Air Defense force and to improve fighter crew proficiency. That commitment began with 14-hour-day participation, and eventually evolved into a round-the-clock mission Oct. 1, 1958.

Throughout 1957, an estimated 88 full-time Air Technicians of the Florida Air National Guard serviced an average of 86 transit aircraft each month. The professional attitude and the high state of maintenance of aircraft by these Airmen earned the unit the Air Force Flying Safety Award. The award, one of two given nationwide, was bestowed upon the unit for achieving an outstanding record in preventing aircraft accidents. Also in 1957, Dr. Marion Elizabeth McKenna joined the FLANG, as the first female member, and eventually became a lieutenant colonel. A nurse for the FLANG, McKenna served 14 years, 8 months and 29 days and ultimately went on to become the Dean of the College of Nursing, at the University of Kentucky.



Lieutenant Wally Green and Capt. Dick Locker race to their aircraft during an alert scramble.

1958 William Tell Weapons Meet



Members of the winning team at the 1958 William Tell Weapons Meet.

In 1958 the Missile Team from the 125th Fighter Group, represented the ANG in the sixth World Wide Weapons Meet at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. They competed against the best teams in the U. S. Air Force, and fired the first perfect score in the history of the event.

Team members Col. Robert Dawson, Lt. Col. Leon A. (Buck) Moore, Maj. John M. Taylor, Capt. Robert L. Southwell and 2nd Lt. Dean T. Biggerstaff brought home the Richard I. Bong Trophy for winning the 1958 USAF Weapons Meet in the F-86 division (photo). The trophy was named after World War II veteran Richard I. Bong — better known as the “Ace of Aces” — who downed 40 enemy planes in the Pacific Theatre and who later received a Congressional Medal of Honor.

The FLANG was the Air National Guard’s representative in three subsequent weapons meets: twice with the F-106 *Delta Dart* aircraft in 1984 and 1986, and once with the F-16 *Fighting Falcon* in 1992.



The Supersonic F-102 Delta Dagger



In 1959 and 1960, the 125th underwent two aircraft conversions which greatly increased the unit's inventory and operational costs. In June 1959, the unit converted from the F-86D to the F-86L. Another major conversion began July 1, 1960, when the unit converted from the F-86L to the F-102A supersonic fighter. The new F-102A *Delta Dagger*, with all-weather interceptor capability, provided new challenges for the unit; throughout the conversion the maintenance section of the 125th Fighter Group faced and successfully solved the challenges of training its personnel for the advanced and highly technical weapons system of the F-102.

During the transition to the F-102, the unit continued operation of the F-86L aircraft to perform the Air Defense Command Alert mission. Due to the scope of the technical challenges involved in this transition, many unit personnel deployed to various U.S. Air Force technical schools for two to four weeks. A U.S. Air Force Mobile Training Detachment deployed to Imeson Airport for six months to ensure all members of the unit successfully completed training in their respective fields.



FLANG members march down the streets of downtown Jacksonville during a Veterans Day parade in 1957.

Facilities Expanded and a New Type of Training

Although there were numerous upgrades to FLANG facilities since its inception, the years 1961 and 1962 were significant years of expansion. During the period the airbase facilities at Imeson Airport gained approximately \$500,000 worth of additions that included a new engine shop, alert hanger, supply and equipment shed, weapons calibrator shelter, ammo maintenance shop and a new electrical distribution system.

A new procedure of “in place” training was also initiated in 1961 whereby unit members remained at home station to perform annual field training. In 1962, that plan was further modified to the “Texas Plan” enabling Guardsmen to schedule their annual training during special exercises and peak workloads throughout the year. In addition to benefiting the unit, it also gave individual Guardsmen a choice as to when they could perform annual field training.

A New Home for the FLANG

One of the most significant events in the history of the Florida Air National Guard occurred Oct. 24, 1968, when the 125th Fighter Group moved into a brand new, state of the art, multi-million dollar facility.

The new Air Guard Base was located on 157.6 acres adjacent to the new Jacksonville International Airport. The new base was the first Air National Guard facility to be designed and constructed specifically for Air National Guard use. The new base became a model for future Air National Guard base construction projects around the country.

Seventeen years later, the FLANG would secure another 174.36 acres, and currently the FLANG holds a lease for a total of 343 acres with the Jacksonville Aviation Authority.

Aircrews Kept Busy, an Alert 'First' and the First Female to Enlist

The 125th Fighter Group provided personnel for special assignments including: ferrying F-102 aircraft from Holland to the United States, ferrying F-102 aircraft to Turkey, and providing four F-102 aircrews to augment NORAD Alert forces at Homestead Air Force Base, Fla.

A significant realignment of the Aerospace Defense Command also took place during the latter part of 1969 when the 32nd Air Division and the First Air Force deactivated. The 20th NORAD Region at Fort Lee, Va., assumed the operational control of the 125th Fighter Group upon the deactivation of those two units.

In 1972, the Aerospace Defense Command called upon the FLANG to assume the mission of Air Defense along the Gulf Coast states, and the unit established a detachment of F-102 aircraft to operate on alert status from New Orleans, La. With approximately 40 personnel permanently assigned to the detachment, this was the first time aircraft and personnel assigned to one state assumed an alert mission in another state on a permanent basis. The U.S. Air Force later assumed that mission.

On March 3, 1973, Airman Basic Susan Oldham became the first female to enlist in the Florida Air National Guard when she repeated the Oath of Enlistment for 125th Communications Officer Capt. Isaiah James. Oldham, now Chief Master Sgt. Susan Shonka, who currently serves as the FLANG State Command Chief Master Sgt., also holds the distinction of being the first female command chief for the FLANG.

F-106 Conversion and the Bicentennial

In 1975 the 125th Fighter Group converted from the F-102 *Delta Dagger* to the F-106 *Delta Dart*. By the end of the year, with the conversion complete and the F-106 formally integrated into the 125th Fighter Group weapons inventory, alert status resumed at Jacksonville International Airport. Pilots and crewmembers received extensive training in the operations and maintenance of the new aircraft. They soon gained the expertise needed to handle the sophisticated all-weather supersonic aircraft.

During the 1976 bicentennial period, the FLANG flew a specially painted F-106. During the conversion to the F-106, the unit received aircraft tail number 8076. With the 200th anniversary of our nation coming up, the unit decided to paint the '76' F-106 red, white and blue with the words



The F-106 specially painted red, white and blue for the Bicentennial in 1976.



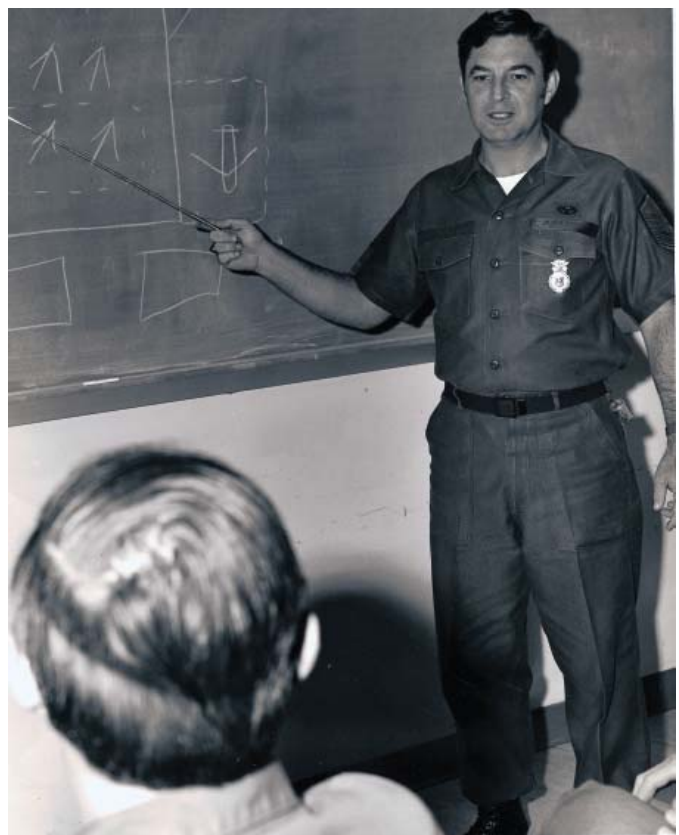
Above: A 125th F-106 intercepts a Soviet *Bear* heavy bomber
 Below: Master Sgt. Ed Jolley teaches a security of nuclear weapons class in 1979.

“City of Jacksonville” on the fuselage. 125th personnel completed the paint job in one day. General Chappie James, the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff at the time, flew with the FLANG in Korea and on other occasions in Jacksonville. When he saw the paint job he loved it and subsequently gave the unit permission to leave the aircraft painted that way through the bicentennial.

The “Easter Egg” plane, as the painted F-106 was called, scrambled several times to include a scramble to intercept a Russian *Bear*. The enemy pilots were probably not sure what to think of the colorful plane and immediately turned and left U.S. air space.

The bicentennial aircraft received wide publicity, and was featured by national and international aviation magazines. It flew every bicentennial event and Fourth of July holiday event held in Jacksonville that year.

With the close of the bicentennial year, the career of one of the Florida Air National Guard’s most noted officers ended: Brig. Gen. Leon A. Moore Jr., a charter member of the 159 FS, retired Dec. 1, 1976. Moore joined the unit as an engineering officer and served his country for more than 38 years. Colonel William M. Whittaker was chosen to succeed Moore.



Organizational Changes

On Oct. 1, 1972, the 125th Fighter Group was re-designated as the 125th Fighter Interceptor Group with no change in its Air Defense mission.

On Oct. 1, 1979 the 125th Fighter Interceptor Group received reassignment orders to the Air Defense Division of Tactical Air Command (TAC). The Air Force announced the withdrawal of the Aerospace Defense Command (ADC) as a separate command and assigned the Air Defense role to Tactical Air Command.



New members of the FLANG take the Oath of Enlistment circa 1980.

Outstanding Unit Award; the Larry Elliott Chapel

In 1980, the 125th Fighter Interceptor Group received its first Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

The award represented outstanding achievement from 1977 to 1979.

In the early 1970s 125th Chaplain, Lt. Col. Larry E. Elliott, held religious services every Sunday (UTA) morning and unit members were allowed to attend on a voluntary basis.

During this time, initial planning began for the construction of a formal chapel on the base. Elliott held chapel services first in the 125th Security Police classroom (at the time located in the headquarters building), and then moved to the hangar classroom. In the spring of 1984, the courtyard in the center of the administration (HQ) building was enclosed and transformed into the

base chapel. Volunteers from the 125th Fighter Group built the first and only ANG chapel using non-appropriated funds. Almost two decades later the chapel was officially named the "Larry E. Elliott Chapel" to honor Chaplain Lt. Col. Larry E. Elliott.

Elliott also started Operation Christmas Stocking, an effort to collect Christmas gifts for underprivileged children in the northeast Florida area in 1976.

Thirty years later, Operation Christmas Stocking is still going strong, having collected more than 31,000 gifts for local kids.



Chaplain Larry Elliott conducts a service in the 125th Base Chapel circa 1990's.



Members of the 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron volunteered and deployed to Saudi Arabia in 1990 to support Operation's Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

290th Joint Communications Support Squadron

The 290th Combat Communications Squadron was formally activated and designated a unit of the FLANG Jan. 7, 1984 at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. The unit's primary role was to provide augmentation to communications missions in support of the six unified commands.

In 1985, the squadron was re-designated the 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron – its current designation. The unit was initially authorized a strength of nine officers and 186 enlisted personnel. In April 1985 the 290th's Staff Sgt. Ellen O'Rear became the first female in the FLANG to graduate from the U.S. Army Airborne course at Ft. Benning, Ga. She performed a total of 47 parachute jumps while assigned to the 290th. In April 2007, Lt. Col. Loretta Lombard, who was named as the first female 290th commander in April 2006, also completed the course and became the first female FLANG commander to do so.

Primarily the 290th provides mission-ready personnel and communications systems to support United States national security objectives during times of crisis and to contribute to the welfare of the state of Florida during peacetime. The 290th has deployed to support real world operations, including sending 11 volunteers to Saudi Arabia in August 1990 to support Operation Desert Shield. Additional volunteers followed to support Operation Desert Storm. Missions followed in countries like Haiti, Kenya, Somalia and many others.



Staff Sgt. Ellen O'Rear (second from left) and members of the 290th prepare for a parachute jump from a helicopter in the mid-1980s. O'Rear was the first female in the FLANG to graduate from the U.S. Army Airborne school.

Engineering Era: 202nd REDHORSE Squadron

The 202nd RED HORSE (Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer) Squadron joined the growing list of FLANG units in the mid-1980s. On Jan. 5, 1985, after receiving federal recognition, the unit conducted a formal ceremony at the unit's temporary facilities at Camp Blanding to honor the occasion. Approximately 43 charter members and guests braved near freezing weather to witness Adjutant General of Florida Maj. Gen. Robert F. Ensslin Jr., present the squadron guidon to the unit's commander, Lt. Col. Frank W. Kozdras.

The unit boasts skill sets that include specialties in constructing airfield lighting, asphalt paving, communications, concrete, disaster preparedness, mobile facilities erection, water purification, K-Span construction, aircraft arresting systems repair, water well drilling, and demolition team duties. RED HORSE units are frequently called upon to supply manpower for humanitarian and civic assistance projects. Originally the unit operated out of six temporary facilities with only 24,000 square feet of space to use for administration, shop, and warehouse functions, but in January 1993 the unit's permanent facilities were completed and dedicated. The unit currently occupies a 55,000-square-foot complex located on more than 140 acres of leased land at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center.



Above: Colonel Richard Pezzulo, then Chief of Civil Engineering at NGB, Lt. Col. Frank Kozdras, 202 RHS commander, and Maj. Gen. Robert Ensslin, FLNG Adjutant General, look at some of the unit's equipment in 1985, the year the unit began. Below: Since its inception, the 202nd RED HORSE Squadron has provided heavy engineering support to locations around the world.



Fighter Air Defense

The 125th Fighter Interceptor Group flew the F-106 *Delta Dart* for 12 years, but by the end of 1986 the U.S. Air Force began to phase out the F-106 and convert the units flying the *Delta Dart* to the F-4 *Phantom* aircraft.

However, the F-4 was not ideal for the 125th mission and the Air National Guard Bureau decided to transition the 125th to the F-16 *Fighting Falcon*.

In January 1987, the unit converted to the F-16A. On April 1, 1987, the 125th jets became the first F-16 unit to sit alert in an Air Defense role as a fighter interceptor. That conversion marked the 11th fighter aircraft conversion for the unit.

On Friday April 17, 1987 – less than three weeks after assuming alert responsibilities – two F-16s from the 125th intercepted two Soviet TU-142 *Bear-F* anti-submarine warfare aircraft about 350 miles off the coast of Jacksonville.

Counterdrug Mission

On April 1, 1988, the 125th Fighter Interceptor Group alert mission at Homestead AFB, Fla., was re-designated Detachment 1.

The mission continued without change as a second alert facility for the 125th. The 125th supported the drug interdiction mission in Florida. In April 1989, the 125th began providing support to the U.S. Customs Service. 125th personnel received training from customs officials on proper cargo search procedures and customs service methods of operation.

In February 1990, the 125th accepted a C-130H *Hercules*.

In 1992, the unit added a C-26 *Merlin* aircraft to the 125th inventory.



In February 1990 the 125th accepted a C-130H Hercules transport plane into its inventory.



Maj. Sam Shiver (left) and Capt. Siegfried von Schweinitz have been part of recent Air National Guard flights to intercept Soviet planes. — Stan Badz/staff

Air Guard intercepting Soviets off coast

By Susan P. Respass
Staff writer

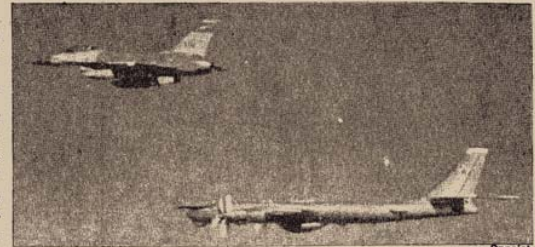
Fighter jets from the Florida Air National Guard in Jacksonville have scrambled four times in the last two weeks to intercept Soviet planes snooping off the Florida coast, Air Guard members said yesterday.

The reconnaissance flights are the first off the East Coast since March 1988 by Soviet planes, they said.

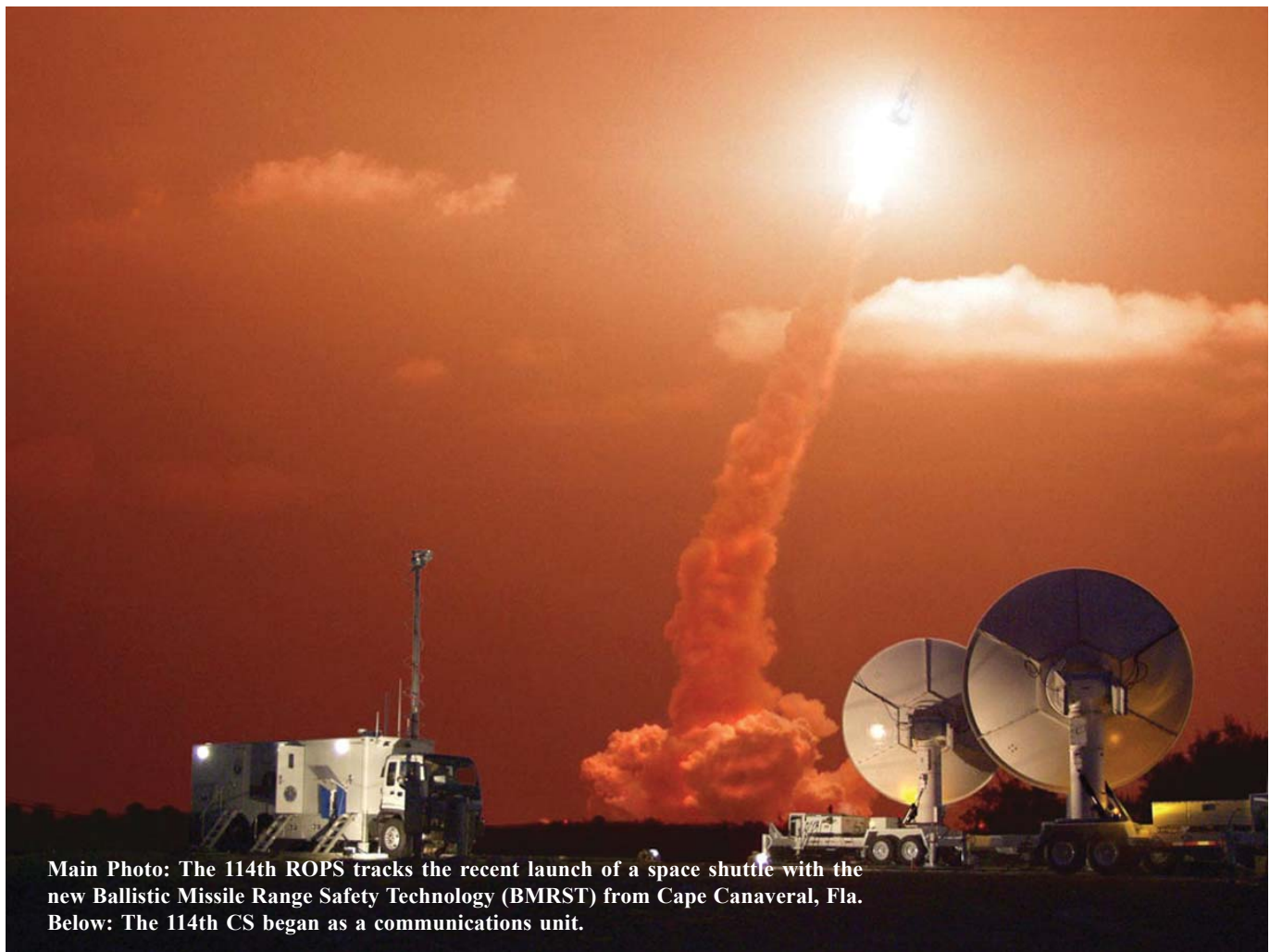
The latest alert for the 125th Fighter Interceptor Group, based at Jacksonville International Airport, came shortly after noon Tuesday, when two Soviet TU-95 Bear reconnaissance bombers were sent off the coast, said Maj. Craig R. McKinley, air operations officer for the interceptor group.

"We don't want to get the public alarmed," McKinley said. "They are not flying over Ponte Vedra or anything like that."

Although the Soviet planes did not enter U.S. air



Above: A Florida Times-Union article published circa 1990, describes one of several times F-16As scrambled from the 125th to intercept unauthorized aircraft.



Main Photo: The 114th ROPS tracks the recent launch of a space shuttle with the new Ballistic Missile Range Safety Technology (BMRST) from Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Below: The 114th CS began as a communications unit.

114th: Changing for the Future

The 114th Communications Squadron was federally recognized May 15, 1989. The unit's initial manning was one officer and 69 enlisted personnel. Based at Patrick Air Force Base on the central east coast of Florida, the short history of the 114th is filled with worldwide activity and one constant – change.

Originally formed to support NATO missions near the end of the Cold War era, the 114th's initial mission was to provide secure communications, including satellite voice and data capabilities, to combatant commanders and to support other federal or state missions as directed.

The 114th was called to federal service for Operations Desert Shield/Storm in late 1990, serving in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. In 1993 the unit was re-designated the 114th Combat Communications Squadron with the mission of providing quick reaction tactical communications services.

The transition to the unit's space mission began in July 1993 as five drill-status Space Launch officer positions were added to expand the FLANG into future mission areas. In 1995, the squadron began building up Space Launch Operations personnel to support the 45th Space Wing in launch operations. The space mission started to grow, and the unit transitioned to the 114th Range Flight in 2003; in 2006 it became the 114th Range Operation Squadron.



Weather Readiness Training Center

In the mid-1970s all Air National Guard Weather Flights were realigned to support U.S. Army units. The units were tasked to provide weather observing support to units including National Guard, Reserves and active duty components. In 1991 the Weather Readiness Training Center (WRTC) was established to support the

robust training requirements Air Guard weather personnel needed to integrate with the Army.

The WRTC was federally recognized Dec. 15, 1992, at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center near Starke, Fla. The WRTC provides post-technical school standardized training to Air National Guard Weather members to enhance their combat readiness. The first class graduated in 1993.

The original curriculum included hands-on training for a variety of technical equipment used by weather personnel, but the syllabus was expanded later to meet changing technical training.

In 2000 the WRTC training was converted from an “as needed” weather course to a continuous 17-week formal school. Four years later a small Field Training Element was added to the WRTC; its mission was to travel to units throughout the U.S. and train new weather personnel.



The new Weather Readiness Training Center facilities were dedicated Jan. 21, 2005.



Weather specialists rely on computers and other sophisticated technology to accurately predict weather for combat operations.

159th Weather Flight is Born

The expansion of the Florida Air National Guard continued with the addition and federal recognition of the 159th Weather Flight (159WF) on Dec. 15, 1992.

The flight, originally chartered with just 18 members – three officers and 15 enlisted personnel – set up initial operations in an old World War II-era warehouse at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center.

The mission of the unit was to provide the highest quality meteorological services to varying national, state and local missions. As is the case with many Air Force weather units, the 159th was originally tasked to provide weather support to the U.S. Army.

The flight originally provided support to the 53rd Separate Infantry Brigade (SIB) during its annual training periods at Camp Blanding and other deployed locations.

Later the Flight picked up responsibilities for weather support of National Guard units from New York and Puerto Rico.

Flight members also support the State Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee during state emergencies.

Alert Facility Closes; New Mission Aircraft

Due to budget issues, the U.S. Congress decided to close several alert operations around the country and so the alert mission that began in Jacksonville in 1957 ceased on Oct. 1, 1993.

The Homestead alert site became the unit's sole alert site. Jacksonville would not have another alert mission again for another eight years.

The 125th Fighter Wing continued to play a major support role in the nation's struggle against the import, manufacture, distribution and use of illegal drugs. Florida was one of the first states to receive the C-26 aircraft, a popular tool for law enforcement agencies to use in the domestic drug war. Serving in a variety of roles to assist federal, state, county and local agencies, the C-26's operating territory encompassed the Southeast Region of the United States including the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Florida Keys.



The C-26 Merlin flies over Jacksonville, Fla.

125th becomes a Wing and gets the F-15 Eagle

The 125th was re-designated the 125th Fighter Wing (FW) on Aug. 1, 1995. In 1995, the 125th



Lieutenant Col. Tom Cucchi, pictured here as a major, is one of the 125th's F-15 Eagle pilots.

Fighter Wing converted from the F-16 to the F-15 Eagle as its primary fighter aircraft. Five years after the conversion to the F-15, Fighter Data Link (FDL) technology was incorporated into the F-15 allowing the pilots to link flight data with multiple users, providing real-time information on air and ground threats. The 125th continues to incorporate newer technology in its 1970s era F-15s. One recent example was the addition of 220E model engines.

More Firsts for the FLANG

Since the days of the Air Defense F-16 conversion, the 125th has accomplished a series of “firsts” in the air defense community. The 125th was the first operational Air Defense F-16 unit to employ the AIM-7 missile and destroy a drone during Combat Archer at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. Also, it was the first unit to deploy to Howard Air Base, Panama, for the Joint Chief’s counterdrug mission “Coronet Nighthawk,” and the first unit ever to complete a transition from one fourth-generation fighter to another when it converted from the F-16 to the F-15 in August 1995.

In January 1989, Chief Master Sgt. Eddie Hillsman became the first African American to attain the rank of Chief Master Sgt. in the FLANG.

On Nov. 1, 2001 the Florida Air National Guard celebrated another milestone in its short history. On that date the command of the Florida National Guard, Army and Air, was placed in the hands of Major Gen. Douglas Burnett, as The Adjutant General. Burnett is the first Florida Air National Guard officer to become the ‘TAG,’ the highest military appointment in the State of Florida.

Colonel Jeanette B. Booth also holds a place in Florida Air National Guard history. She was named Vice Commander of the 125th Fighter Wing, the first female officer in the FLANG to be

appointed to that position and also the first female officer in the FLANG to pin on the rank of full colonel March 21, 2002.

The present Director of the Air National Guard, Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley, is a former FLANG fighter pilot and previous Air, Group and Wing commander (1991-1996). He served as the youngest Wing commander in FLANG history. McKinley replaced Maj. Gen. Emmett R. Titshaw, who currently serves as the ANG Advisor to ACC.

Titshaw holds the distinction of being the first true Drill Status Guardsman to command the 125th Fighter Wing and also to pin on the rank of two-star general.



Then Col. Craig R. McKinley, was the youngest Group/Wing commander in FLANG history. He commanded the 125th in the early 1990s and went on to become the Director of the Air National Guard.



Major Gen. Douglas Burnett shakes hands with then Gov. Jeb Bush after accepting command of the Florida National Guard Nov. 1, 2001 as Burnett’s wife Judy looks on.

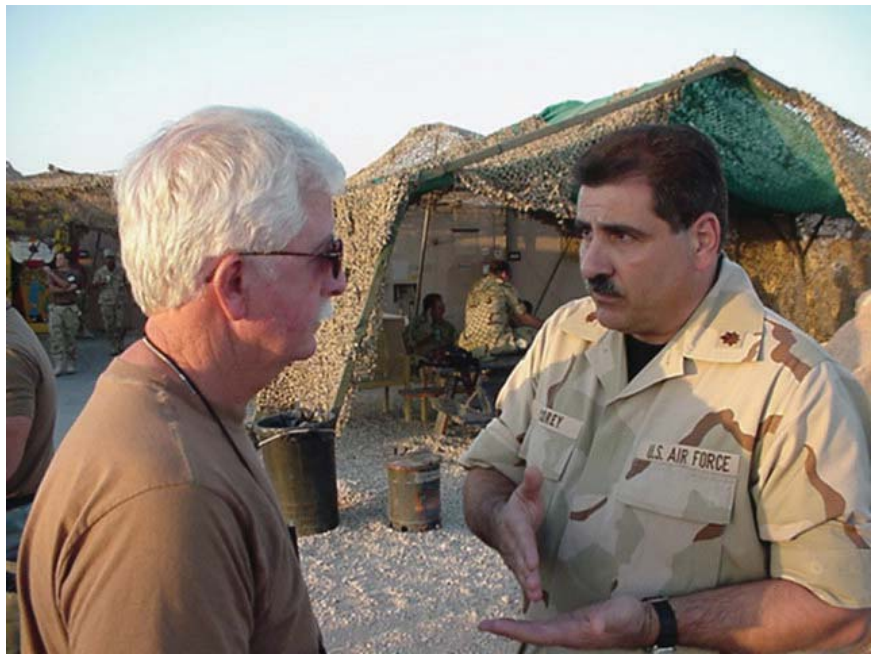
OCONUS Deployments

The 125th Fighter Wing deployed to Keflavik, Iceland, in April 1998 where it sat its first ever OCONUS 24-hour alert with F-15s as a part of a long-standing NATO treaty with the Iceland government.

From May - July 1999, the unit deployed to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey for Operation Northern Watch. The 125th deployed six F-15s and approximately 115 personnel over a seven-week period.

In the spring of 2000, the 125th deployed 98 personnel to Laage, Germany, where the unit participated in Agile Archer 2000. During the

deployment the unit conducted combat training against the German MiG-29 Fulcrum. In fall 2000, the 125th deployed to Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia, for Operation Southern Watch.



Then Major Ron Corey discusses maintenance issues with Chief Master Sgt. Rick Jones at Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia during an Operation Southern Watch deployment in the fall of 2000.

Watching America's Skies

On Oct. 1, 1995, the Florida Air National Guard was given an established mission that had been a U.S. Air Force tasking since the late 1960s: the Southeast Air Defense Sector (SEADS) at Tyndall Air Force Base near Panama City, Fla., was transitioned from the U.S. Air Force to the Air National Guard, and became a Geographically Separated Unit assigned within the Florida Air National Guard (FLANG). The Southeast Air Defense Sector (SEADS) was responsible for providing detection and Air Defense for more than 3,000 miles of U.S. coast line from North Carolina to Texas. With responsibility for defense of approximately one million square miles of airspace, SEADS was the busiest of the three sectors comprising the Continental United States North American Aerospace Defense Command Region (CONR).

SEADS members 'man' the 'scopes' 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year as shown in this undated photo from the early 2000s.





Major Thomas Kafka, F-15 Fighter Pilot Instructor with the 1st Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Wing ANG Associate Unit, discusses flight tactics with student, Lt. Nick Lofthouse, prior to flying a training mission August 12, 2005. Major Kafka, along with 29 other Florida Air National Guard Instructor Pilots work seamlessly alongside their Active Duty counterparts with the 325th Fighter Wing, Tyndall Air Force Base, to train U.S. Air Force Fighter Pilots.

325th Fighter Wing ANG Associate Unit

Originally designated as Detachment 1, Southeast Air Defense Sector (SEADS), the 325th Fighter Wing Air National Guard Fighter Associate Unit was officially activated on Oct. 1, 1999 at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.

The small FLANG unit was made up of 16 full-time AGR and 18 drill status instructor pilots, and six fulltime AGR enlisted support personnel.

The unit mission is to train active duty and Air Guard pilots to fly the F-15 *Eagle* in the air dominance role. The Associate Unit members are completely integrated into all aspects of the 2nd, 43rd, and 95th Fighter Squadrons, as well as the 325th Operations Support Squadron, at Tyndall AFB.

The associate unit is operationally controlled by the 325th Operations Group under the overall direction of the 325th Fighter Wing.

The unit provides highly experienced instructor pilots that make up more than 25 percent of the 325th Fighter Wing instructor manning and is responsible for a similar percentage of more than 13,000 training sorties and 17,000 flying hours annually. Associate unit instructors oversee all aspects of training for Formal Training Unit pilots under eleven different formal syllabi.

The Associate Unit's tenure is short but its impact on total force initiatives is not: the unit is credited with having the first FLANG member (Major Tom Kafka pictured above) transition from the F-15 *Eagle* to the F-22A *Raptor*.

The unit was officially re-designated as Detachment 1, Florida Air National Guard Headquarters, effective May 11, 2007.

Final Fight against the MiGs

During September and October 2002, the 125th Fighter Wing hosted Agile Archer 2002 at Naval Air Station Key West, Fla. The highlight of the exercise was to train with the German Air Force MiG-29 Fulcrum aircraft and pilots from Laage, Germany. In addition, the deployment enabled Navy F-18 and 125th Fighter Wing F-15 pilots to obtain unprecedented experience in combat tactics against the MiG-29 as the German Air Force was soon to be in the process of transitioning the Laage Squadron from the MiG-29 to the Eurofighter.





Above: Members of the 125th Fighter Wing file through a processing line during an Operational Readiness Inspection in 1990. Below: Chief Master Sgt. Leigh Dumas watches as members of the 114th Range Operations Squadron, Titusville, Fla., assemble a BMRST at the 125th Fighter Wing, Jacksonville, Fla., June 8, 2007.

Inspections Ratings Soar

The FLANG is well known in ANG and USAF circles for doing well on inspections. A few recent examples are:

In 1999, SEADS received the first ever “Outstanding” rating for a Sector on an Operational Readiness Inspection conducted by Air Combat Command’s Inspector General. The 125th Fighter Wing received an “Outstanding” on its Operational Readiness

Inspection in January 1998 and again in March 2006. The 125th Detachment 1 at Homestead ARB, Fla. received an “Outstanding” rating during an Alert Force Evaluation by NORAD in February 2003; this was first “Outstanding” earned in the U.S. Air Force after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Detachment 1 repeated the score again in 2006.

The 114th Range Flight (now 114th ROPS) received an Outstanding rating by the U.S. Air Force Space IG Team in 2004 and 2006; the first-ever stand-alone ANG space unit to do so.



State Disaster Response

When Hurricane Andrew made landfall in South Florida on Aug. 23, 1992, the wind meter at the Air National Guard Alert Detachment facility at Homestead went to the top of the scale and broke at 180 miles per hour. Andrew was a small and ferocious Category 4 hurricane. It wrought unprecedented economic devastation as it passed through the northwest Bahamas, the southern Florida peninsula and south-central Louisiana. The devastation totaled nearly \$25 billion. The fighter alert was completely destroyed and so the mission moved to Key West Naval Air Station. In less than three weeks the Det. was operational and ready to resume alert.



In 2004, four strong hurricanes hit Florida in a period of six weeks, causing more than \$42 billion in damages. Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne left 25,000 homes destroyed or uninhabitable, another 40,000 significantly damaged, more than five million residents without power for up to two weeks, and left more than 20 million tons of debris. Nine million Floridians





Top Left: A photo of the damage from Hurricane Andrew at Detachment 1, Homestead AFB, Fla. in 1992. **Bottom Left:** Florida Air National Guardsman Senior Airman Chris Proulx, a radio communications system operator with the 290th Joint Communication Support Squadron, provides satellite communications to members of the Florida Army National Guard staged at the Marathon Key Regional Airport during Hurricane Rita relief missions. **Top Right:** Airmen from the Florida Air National Guard's Jacksonville-based 125th Fighter Wing provide ice to a hurricane disaster victim in Vero Beach, Fla. in 2004. **Bottom Right:** Governor Charlie Crist meets with emergency responders at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center in February 2007 as the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Douglas Burnett, looks on.

were under evacuation recommendations at some point during the four hurricanes, with up to 350,000 staying in as many as 370 official shelters through individual storms.

Beginning with the recovery efforts for Hurricane Andrew, through the record storm seasons of 2004 and 2005, FLANG units have served in a variety of roles. Members of the 125th Fighter Wing, the 202nd RED HORSE Squadron, the 114th Range Operations Squadron, the 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron and the 159th Weather Flight have been among the units continually tasked to provide humanitarian relief and other services to hurricane victims. In 2006, the FLANG opened its Joint Air Operations Center in St. Augustine, Fla., where all Air movements are coordinated during emergency operations.



The War on Terror and Beyond

The Sept. 11, 2001 attacks consisted of a series of coordinated terrorist suicide attacks by Islamic extremists. That morning 19 terrorists affiliated with al-Qaeda hijacked four commercial passenger jet airliners. The hijackers intentionally crashed two of the airliners (United Airlines Flight 175 and American Airlines Flight 11) into the World Trade Center in New York City, one plane into each tower, resulting in the collapse of both buildings and irreparable damage to nearby buildings. The hijackers crashed a third airliner (American Airlines Flight 77) into the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia, near Washington, D.C. Passengers and members of the flight crew on the fourth aircraft (United Airlines Flight 93) attempted to retake control of their



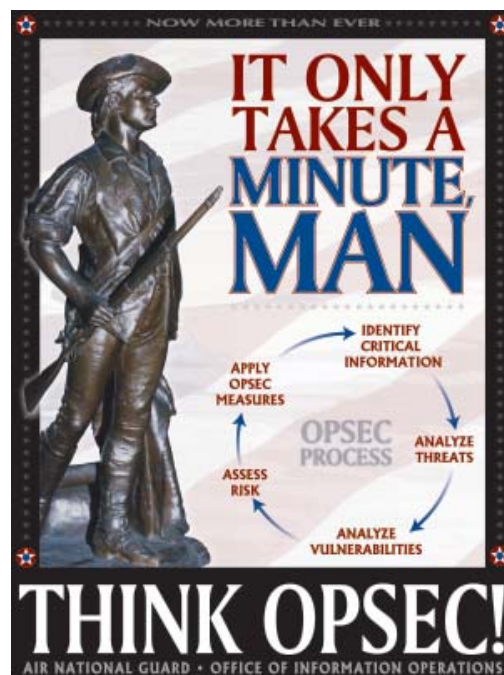
Above: An F-15 Eagle from the 125th Fighter Wing conducts a combat air patrol Nov. 29, 2001 for the first shuttle launch after the 9/11 attacks. Below: Security at all of the FLANG facilities increased immediately after 9/11/2001.



plane from the hijackers; that plane crashed into a field near the town of Shanksville in rural Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

The events of Sept. 11, 2001 were an attack on America. Florida Air National Guard members responded to the active duty recall when a second alert location stood up at Jacksonville — quite an accomplishment since the closure of the Jacksonville alert facility in 1993. For many years the 125th maintained an agreement that in case of an emergency it would be allowed to take over Runway 13/31 at the Jacksonville International Airport.

On Sept. 11, 2001, several loaded F-15 aircraft lined Runway 13/31 for the first time in history. The unit also simultaneously conducted numerous combat air patrols throughout the state for several months after the attacks. Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the 125th has supported several missions in the Middle East: security forces, communications specialists, pilots, engineers and others have all deployed overseas to support the war effort.



The construction skills of the 202nd REDHORSE Squadron became a valued resource in the recent war on terror. Unit members assisted with the reconstruction and re-opening of Baghdad International Airport.

After the events of September 2001, the 114th Combat Communications Squadron deployed to Qatar for six months, and to MacDill Air Force Base for a year, to support Central Command (CENTCOM) for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The 159th Weather Flight participated in the ongoing Global War on Terrorism by also deploying personnel in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

As part of the Global War on Terrorism all members of the 202nd RED HORSE deployed to the Middle East to support Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The unit deployed their equipment and personnel to assist with construction projects in Doha, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Iraq, with several members involved in the reconstruction efforts at the Baghdad and Tallil Airports. In 2004 the unit deployed 12 members (affectionately referred to as the “dirty dozen”) to support missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Qatar, and the Horn of Africa.

Also in 2004, the RED HORSE partnered with the 125th Fighter Wing Medical Group to form Florida’s Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or High-Yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) unit. As one of only 12 teams nationwide, the team trains to respond to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) incidents. After training for six months the fledgling team was evaluated by First Army and earned a 96 percent rating - the highest rating of all units evaluated.

In 2006 the RED HORSE deployed for a seven-month mission supporting operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The mission required the members to facilitate more than 130 construction projects as the lead element for the 557th Expeditionary Red Horse Squadron and the 1st Expeditionary Red Horse Group.

As part of the Global War on Terrorism the 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron deployed 32 personnel and several tons of equipment to the Philippines, where they provided Special Operations Command, Pacific JTF 510, with satellite and internet communications, secure and non-secure phone service, video-teleconferencing services. The unit simultaneously deployed a six-member team in support of the Operation Fundamental Justice (detainee transport) missions and another 10 personnel to the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan to support U.S.





Bottom Left: Master Sgt. Joe Kane of the 125th Fighter Wing mans an entry control point at the Florida Air National Guard base in Jacksonville, Fla. Because of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, force protection levels increased at facilities throughout the Florida Air National Guard.

Top Right: Members of the 202nd Red Horse Squadron return from an 8 month deployment to Southwest Asia at the Jacksonville International Airport, Florida on May 12, 2007.

Bottom Right: The opening of the new 601st Air Operations Center at Tyndall Air Force Base in June 2007 increased the ability of the Florida Air National Guard to monitor air traffic in the continental United States.



Central Command, coalition forces and other U.S. government agencies with communications support. The unit rotated the same number of personnel seven times to each of these locations during its two-year activation.

Since the initial Global War on Terrorism activation ended in September 2003, the 290th has maintained a continuous 120-day Air Expeditionary Force rotation cycle to the Middle East. Consequently, almost every one of the 290th's more than 230 members has answered the call to serve overseas. The unit continues to send communications support teams to both Iraq and Afghanistan to support the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force, Central Command, coalition forces, and other U.S. government agencies in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

The tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001 also marked a change in the way SEADS and NORAD/NORTHCOM monitored air-traffic in the Continental United States (CONUS). Prior to 9/11, NORAD only monitored air traffic entering U.S. airspace. After 9/11, NORAD, along with the FAA, began to monitor all air traffic in CONUS airspace and quickly set up 69 alert sites around the country within 18 hours of the terrorist attacks. Previous to the 9/11 attacks, there were only seven alert sites in continuous operation. SEADS was the first air defense sector to secure the skies over the SEADS area of responsibility by integrating FAA radars. Operation Noble Eagle, the CONUS military response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 was subsequently initiated by NORAD. SEADS mission was relocated to the Northeast Air Defense Sector in November of 2006 and the former SEADS members took on a new role. Now known as the 601st Air and Space Operations Center (601st AOC), the AOC monitors all the air traffic in the Continental U.S. Region. On June 1, 2007, the 601st AOC opened the doors on its brand new, state-of-the-art, 37,000-square-foot, and \$30.5 million air and space operation center. This new facility enhances the 601st AOC ability to protect America's skies from attack, as well as provide life-saving relief during natural and man-made disasters. The 601st AOC consists of a Combined Air and Space Operations Center, two air defense sectors, the Western Air Defense Sector or WADS and the Eastern Air Defense Sector or EADS, more than 54 gained Wings, including fighter, tanker and reconnaissance assets.

No matter how monumental the task, the Florida Air National Guard stands ready to protect the United States of America and aid in state emergencies, if called upon. From the 159th Squadron to the 125th Fighter Wing to the Geographically Separated units, the history of the FLANG is one of constant change. People are the heart of change. The men and women of the Florida Air National Guard continue to serve their country with selfless dedication and professionalism. Today our members continue to serve in deployed locations and we commend them and their families for their dedication and sacrifice.

Members of the 125th Security Forces Squadron deployed to Jordan and other locations in southwest Asia in 2003 in support of Opera-





Charles F. Riggle Jr.
May 16, 1960 - June 6, 1975



Calvin M. Edwards
Aug. 13, 1975 - Aug. 7, 1980



William M. Whittaker
Aug. 8, 1980 - July 31, 1983

Florida Air National Guard



Otha R. Smith Jr.
Dec. 28, 1983 - Sept. 26, 1987



Donald E. Barnhart
Sept. 29, 1987 - Nov. 28, 1989



Wallace M. Green Jr.
Nov. 29, 1989 - May 31, 1996

Assistant Adjutants General



Douglas Burnett
June 1, 1996 - Nov. 2, 2001



Emmett R. Titshaw
Nov. 3, 2001 - Sept. 30, 2006



Joseph G. Balskus
Oct. 1, 2006 - present

Florida Air National Guard General Officer Honor Roll



Brig. Gen. Charles F. Riggle Jr.
1962



Brig. Gen. Leon A. Moore Jr.
1967



Brig. Gen. Calvin M. Edwards
1975



Brig. Gen. William M. Whittaker
1980



Brig. Gen. Otha R. Smith Jr.
1983



Brig. Gen. Homer H. Humphries
1984



Brig. Gen. Donald E. Barnhart
1987



Brig. Gen. Wallace M. Green Jr.
1989



Maj. Gen. Douglas Burnett
1993/2002



Maj. Gen. Emmett R. Titshaw
1997/2006



Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley
1998/2001/2006



Brig. Gen. Robert W. Sullivan
1999



Maj. Gen. Charles V. Ickes II
2003/2006



Brig. Gen. Joseph G. Balskus
2003



Brig. Gen. Charles M. Campbell
2006

Florida Air National Guard State Command Chiefs



Chief Master Sgt.
Hubert T. Norton
1978-1979



Chief Master Sgt.
Wade L. Hastings
1979-1987
1990-1991



Chief Master Sgt.
Jimmy D. Hicks
1987-1990



Chief Master Sgt.
Joseph K. Whitworth
1991-1993



Chief Master Sgt.
Charlie R. Childs
1994-2001



Chief Master Sgt.
Susan E. Shonka
2001-present

FLANG Chiefs of Staff

Brig. Gen. Leon A. Moore	Oct. 1, 1966	Dec. 25, 1976
Col. James R. Higgins	Dec. 5, 1977	March 19, 1981
Col. Wallace M. Green Jr.	March 26, 1981	May 31, 1982
Brig. Gen. Homer H. Humphries	June 1, 1982	June 28, 1989
Brig. Gen. Douglas Burnett	Nov. 1, 1989	May 31, 1996
Brig. Gen. Emmett R. Titshaw	June 1, 1996	Nov. 2, 2001
Brig. Gen. Joseph G. Balskus	Nov. 3, 2001	Sept. 30, 2006
Brig. Gen. Charles M. Campbell	Oct. 1, 2006	June 1, 2007
Col. (Dr.) Joseph K. Martin	July 1, 2007	



125th Fighter Wing Commanders.

Lt. Col. William D. Haviland	Dec. 4, 1947	Sept. 25, 1950
Brig. Gen. Leon A. Moore, Jr.	Nov. 28, 1952	Sept. 30, 1966
Col. James R. Higgins	Dec. 20, 1966	Dec. 1, 1976
Brig. Gen. William M. Whittaker	Dec. 2, 1976	Dec. 18, 1980
Col. Dean T. Biggerstaff	Dec. 19, 1980	March 2, 1987
Col. Marion D. Garrett	June 13, 1987	Jan. 29, 1990
Col. Emmett R. Titshaw, Jr.	Jan. 30, 1990	Sept. 30, 1991
Col. Craig R. McKinley	Oct. 1, 1991	March 1, 1996
Col. Charles V. Ickes II	March 2, 1996	Aug. 10, 2002
Col. James A. Firth	Aug. 11, 2002	Nov. 6, 2004
Col. Scott K. Stacy	Nov. 7, 2004-	

*** The 125th became a Wing in 1995. Prior to this, the Group Commander or Air Commander served as the overall Base Commander.

125th Fighter Wing Senior Enlisted Advisor / Command Chiefs

Chief Master Sgt. Harry J. Wagner	1989 - 1991
Chief Master Sgt. Joel A. Chappel Sr.	1991 - 1993
Chief Master Sgt. Joseph P. Poltis	1993 - 1996
Chief Master Sgt. James E. Summer	1996 - 2000
Chief Master Sgt. Charles W. Wisniewski	2001 - 2006
Chief Master Sgt. Sharon C. Ervin	2007 -

125th Fighter Wing Alert Detachment Commanders

(Location: Homestead ARB, Fla. unless noted other)

Lt. Col. Harry B. Hoover (New Orleans)	Jan. 7, 1973	July 26, 1974
Lt. Col. Jack H. McDougall	Oct. 1, 1983	Sept. 3, 1992
Lt. Col. Jack H. McDougall (Key West)	Sept. 3, 1992	Dec. 1, 1993
Lt. Col. Greg W. Visyak (Key West)	Nov. 15, 1993	Dec. 31, 1995
Lt. Col. William B. Burney	Jan. 1, 1996	Nov. 13, 1998
Major Rolf E. Thyrrer	Nov. 13, 1998	July 15, 1999
Lt. Col. David W. Woods	July 15, 1999	Sept. 14, 2002
Lt. Col. William S. Bair	Sept. 14, 2002	Jan. 7, 2005
Lt. Col. Michael O. Birkeland	Jan. 7, 2005	

159th Fighter Squadron Commanders

Major Bill D. Haviland	1947 - 1950	Lt. Col. John G. Aldous	1990 - 1992
Major Arthur H. Bridge	1950 - 1951	Lt. Col. Theodore N. Kraemer	1992 - 1994
Lt. Col. Daniel F. Sharp	1951 - 1952	Lt. Col. Richard S. Ritter	1994 - 1995
Major Lawrence Poutre	1952 - 1952	Lt. Col. James D. Thompson	1995 - 1996
Major Leon A. Moore, Jr.	1952 - 1956	Lt. Col. Siegfried G. von Schweinitz	1996 - 1997
Lt. Col. John M. Taylor	1956 - 1964	Lt. Col. Chris N. Michalak	1997 - 1999
Lt. Col. James R. Higgins	1964 - 1965	Lt. Col. James A. Firth	1999 - 2001
Lt. Col. Robert G. Mason	1965 - 1974	Lt. Col. James W. Agee, Jr.	2001 - 2002
Lt. Col. Dean T. Biggerstaff	1974 - 1980	Lt. Col. Robert M. Branyon	2002 - 2003
Lt. Col. Douglas D. Bright	1980 - 1984	Lt. Col. Scott A. Studer	2003 - 2004
Lt. Col. Homer L. DeWeese	1984 - 1988	Lt. Col. Thomas B. Cucchi	2004 - 2006
Lt. Col. Emmett R. Titshaw, Jr.	1988 - 1989	Lt. Col. Robert J. Wetzel	2006 -
Lt. Col. Forrest C. Clarke	1990 - 1991		





290th Joint Communications Support Squadron Commanders

Lt. Col. Robert E. Smith	Jan. 7, 1984	May 13, 1988
Lt. Col. Robert W. Sullivan	May 14, 1988	March 1, 1991
Lt. Col. Paul N. Paquette	March 2, 1991	July 10, 1998
Lt. Col. David H. Barnhart	July 11, 1998	July 13, 2001
Lt. Col. Eric L. Buchanan	July 14, 2001	July 9, 2004
Col. David H. Barnhart	July 10, 2004	April 7, 2006
Lt. Col. Loretta J. Lombard	April 8, 2006	



202nd REDHORSE Squadron Commanders

Col. Frank W. Kozdras	Jan. 5, 1985	March 31, 1993
Col. Jere Cook	April 1, 1993	Sept. 25 2003
Col. Wallace J. Paschal II	Nov. 6, 2003	



114th Communications / Range Operations Squadron Commanders

Major Robert E. Chandler	May 15, 1989	Jan. 5, 1991
Major David H. Barnhart	Jan. 13, 1991	Aug 8, 1994
Major Michele M. Agee	Aug. 8, 1994	Jan. 6, 1998
Major Daniel P. Bates	Jan. 10, 1998	Dec. 1, 2003
Lt. Col. Rembert N. Schofield ***	Dec. 1, 2003	Aug 17, 2007
Lt. Col. Todd M. Oller	17 Aug 2007	

*** Denotes dual status:Commander of 114CBCS (ACC) Dec. 1, 2003;
commander of 114RANF (AFSPC) November 2002.



WRTC Commandants

Lt. Col. Susan V. Lindsey	July 1, 1996	June 26, 2004
Lt. Col. Loretta J. Lombard	June 27, 2004	April 7, 2006
Major John H. Waltbillig, Jr.	Oct. 4, 2006	



159th Weather Flight Commanders

Major Perry L. Dunlap	Jan. 1, 2001	Nov. 15, 2002
Lt. Col. Stephen M. Longobardi	Jan. 12, 2004	



SEADS/601st Air Operations Center Commanders (FLANG)

Col. Craig R. McKinley	July 1, 1996	Jan. 15, 1998
Col. Theodore N. Kraemer	Jan. 16, 1998	May 24, 2001
Col. Larry L. Kemp	May 25, 2001	May 22, 2003
Col. Charles Campbell	May 23, 2003	Oct. 5, 2006
Col. David E. Kriner	Oct. 6, 2006	



325th Fighter Wing ANG Associate Unit Commanders

Col. Charles M. Campbell	Oct. 1, 1999	May 22, 2003
Col. Billy T. Graham, Jr.	May 23, 2003	

