

103 ATTACK SQUADRON



MISSION

The professionals of the 103 Attack Squadron employ the General Atomics MQ-9 in combat air patrols directly support combatant commanders across the globe providing; intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance gathering capabilities, combat search and rescue and weapons employment when called upon. The 103 ATKS is also critical to the development and implementation of tactics, techniques and procedures with the Air Combat Command and the U.S. Air Force.

LINEAGE

103 Observation Squadron activated in National Guard, 27 Jun 1924

Ordered to active service, 17 Feb 1941

Redesignated 103 Observation Squadron (Medium), 13 Jan 1942

Redesignated 103 Observation Squadron, 4 Jul 1942

Redesignated 103 Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter), 2 Apr 1943

Redesignated 103 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 11 Aug 1943

Redesignated 40 Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, 21 Oct 1943

Inactivated on 2 Nov 1945

Redesignated 103 Bombardment Squadron, Light, and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946

Activated 20 Dec 1948

Redesignated 103 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Medium, Photographic 1 Aug 1951

Redesignated 103 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Medium 16 Jun 1952

Redesignated 103 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, Heavy 16 Oct 1952

Inactivated, 1 Jan 1953

Reallocated to the ANG and redesignated 103d Fighter-Bomber Squadron, activated 1 Jan 1953

Redesignated 103 Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, 1 May 1955

Redesignated 103 Air Transport Squadron, Heavy, 1 Apr 1962

Redesignated 103 Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1966

Redesignated 103 Tactical Air Support Squadron, 27 May 1969
Redesignated 103 Fighter Squadron, 31 Mar 1992
Redesignated 103 Attack Squadron

STATIONS

Philadelphia Airport, Philadelphia, PA, 1923-36
Pitcairn Field, Philadelphia, PA, 1936-41
Harrisburg Mun Aprt, PA, 27 Feb 1941
Hillsgrove, RI, 23 Dec 1941
Hyannis, MA, 9 Jun 1942
Ft Devens AAFld, MA, 20 Aug 1942
Reading AAFld, PA, 8 Jun 1943
Birmingham AAFld, AL, 20 Nov 1943
Will Rogers Field, OK, 11 Feb-11 May 1944
Guskhara, India, 10Jul 1944
Alipore, India, 9 Aug 1944 (detachment at Cox's Bazar, India, after c. 10Dec 1944)
Cox's Bazar, India, 18 Jan 1945
Akyab, Burma, 14 Feb 1945
Alipore, India, c. 15 May 1945
Kanchrapara, India, Sep-c. 4Oct 1945
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 1-2 Nov 1945
Philadelphia Airport, PA
Willow Grove, PA, 15 Mar 1963
Horsham AGS, PA

ASSIGNMENTS

Pennsylvania NG (divisional aviation, 28th Division), 27 Jun 1924
II Amy Corps, 17 Feb 1941
59th Observation Group, 1 Sep 1941 (attached to 26th Observation Group after Dec 1941)
26th Observation (later Reconnaissance; Tactical Reconnaissance) Group, 29 Mar 1942
111Reconnaissance Command, 21 Oct 1943; I (later 111)
Tactical Air Division, 18 Apr 1944
AAF, India-Burma Sector, 3 Jun
Tenth Air Force, 5 Jul 1944
8th Photographic (later Reconnaissance) Group, 18 Jul 1944-2 Nov 1945
111th Bombardment Group (later 111th Composite Group, 111th Bombardment Group, 111th Strategic Reconnaissance Group) 1948-16 Jun 52
111th Strategic Reconnaissance
111th Fighter-Bomber Group (later 111th Fighter-Interceptor Group, 1953)
111th Fighter Group (Air Def)
111th Air Transport Group
111th Military Airlift Group
111th Tactical Air Support Group
111th Tactical Fighter Group

111th Fighter Group
111th Operations Group

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

Not equipped, 1924-1926

JNS-1

PT-1

BT-1

O-1

O-2

O-11

O-17

O-38B

O-46, 1937

O-47A, 1943

O-47B

O-52

O-38, 1937

O-49

O-57

P-39

P-40

B-25

F-5

B-26

B-26

RB-29

F-51

F-80

F-84, 1954

F-94, 1956

F-89, 1959

C-97

U-3, 1969

O-2

OA-37, 1981

OA-10, 1988

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

Maj John S. Owens, 1927 Jun 24-1 Jul 1932

Maj John V. Dallin 2 Jul 1932-7 Aug 1938

Maj Edgar M. Scattergood, Jr. 8 Aug 1938-1 Sep 1941

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Antisubmarine, American Theater
India-Burma, Central Burma

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



103 Observation Squadron emblem: On a hurt a Pegasus salient or. (Approved, 10 Apr 1931)



40 Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron



MOTTO

BLACK HOGS

OPERATIONS

Constituted in the National Guard in 1921 as the 103 Squadron (Observation), assigned to the 28th Division, and allotted to the state of Pennsylvania. Redesignated as the 103 Observation Squadron on 25 January 1923.

The 103 was founded and eventually commanded by Maj Charles Biddle. This new National Guard squadron was based on the sod fields of Philadelphia Airport as a unit in the Army 28th Division. The 103 has operated continually since its federal recognition in 1924.

Organized and Federally recognized on 27 June 1924 at the Philadelphia Airport, Philadelphia, PA. Relieved on 15 February 1929 from assignment to the 28th Division. Concurrently assigned to the 315th Observation Group (III Corps) and further attached to the 28th Division for command and control purposes.

Assigned on 1 October 1933 to the 43rd Observation Group (III Corps). Relocated in 1936 to Pitcairn Field near Philadelphia.

The entire squadron called up to support flood relief efforts in central and eastern Pennsylvania in March-April 1936. Conducted summer training at Langley Field, VA, 1924-27 and Middletown Air Depot, PA, 1928-40.

Also flew reconnaissance operations in support of the 28th Division and 52nd Cavalry Brigade during summer training; flew tracking missions for the 213th Coast Artillery Regiment (AA); and flew spotter missions for the 107th, 108th, 109th, and 176th Field Artillery Regiments at Tobyhanna Firing Range.

Relieved from the 43rd Observation Group on 30 December 1940 and assigned to the II Corps.

Inducted into active Federal service 17 February 1941 at Philadelphia, and transferred to the Harrisburg Municipal Airport, arriving there 27 February 1941. Further assigned on 1 September 1941 to the 59th Observation Group (II Corps).

In Feb 1941, as the war in Europe raged, the unit was ordered to active service, performing antisubmarine patrols off the coast of New England. In 1943, the 103 finally moved into the latest combat aircraft. First, the pilots and maintenance personnel were given steady upgrades in equipment beginning with the P-39, P-40, and the B-25. Eventually this culminated in training on the P-38 Lightning, or to be more specific, the photo-reconnaissance version called the F-5C. The twin-engine F-5C had all the [P-38] guns replaced by cameras.

After a year's worth of training, the 103 ended up in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater of war in 1944 where it operated out of various fields in India and Burma. It was heavily involved in photo reconnaissance activities over Burma, supporting the US Army forces fighting the Japanese in the jungles there. The 103 personnel stayed in that theater until the end of the war.

The 1953-54 years saw the wing make the significant leap from propeller to jet aircraft. First the pilots and maintenance personnel were given F-80 to fly and train on. That set up the arrival of the unit's newest aircraft, the F-84 which arrived in 1954. As part of that effort, in 1956 the 103 began training with a different aircraft: the F-94A, B, and rocket-firing C models. The last jet fighter aircraft of this time was introduced to the unit in May 1959: the F-89H. Pilots operated air defense alert duty starting in 1960.

The 103 FIS's F-94Cs were sent to Davis-Monthan AFB during the early summer months, and as the F-89Hs were slow in arriving, their first summer encampment was accomplished with limited aircraft resources. On January 1, 1960, the 103 FIS was able to commence daylight ADC runway alert status with their Scorpions.

On January 25, 1961, one of the aircraft that had been used to develop the wingtip armament configuration for the F-89H, but had been retrofitted to F-89J standards, 53-2449, caught fire on takeoff from Greater Pittsburgh. The pilot attempted to turn the aircraft away from a populated area, but lost control and crashed resulting in two people being killed. The other accident involved an aborted takeoff that sheared the nose landing gear.

On April 1, 1962, the 111th FIG was retasked as an Air Transport Group and they replaced their Scorpions with C-97s. At this time they were relieved from the 112th FIW and assigned to the 118th Air Transport Wing, Tennessee ANG.

The new decade brought some big changes to the 111th. In 1962, the unit made the 'large' transition from the F-89J to the C-97. One year later, the 111th ended its' 39-year history at Philadelphia airport and moved to brand new facilities on the north end of the Willow Grove Naval Air Station. The new mission moved the wing into the Military Air Transport Service.

In 1969, the unit changed mission yet again returning to its original roots as an observation unit. The new 111th Tactical Air Support Group initially flew the U-3A, a Cessna-310, as an intermediate aircraft until it received the aircraft it needed for Airborne Forward Air Control: the O-2

The Forward Air Control mission was sustained with the unit's switch to the OA-37 1981.

The 111th finally received a current line aircraft with the transition to the OA-10A in 1988.

The wing took advantage of this aircraft upgrade by volunteering for a 90-day deployment to Kuwait in 1995, to support joint combat flight operations for Operation Southern Watch over Iraq. Twelve aircraft were deployed to Al Jaber AB - a joint-use base by U.S. and Kuwait Air Forces. The base was fairly austere as it had suffered considerable war-damage from Desert Storm I. Missions included Combat Search and Rescue alert, Kill Box flights over Iraq, Airborne Forward Air Control and joint training missions over Kuwait. This is considered the best of the wing's deployments to Kuwait, because our personnel were free to see the country and meet its people.

About 40% of the wing participated in the deployment; another interesting element was a small side deployment to Qatar. The 111th was the first Air Guard fighter unit deployed to Al Jaber and also the first ANG Wing to volunteer for a solo 3-month Operation Southern Watch deployment. The combat flight missions over Iraq were to enforce United Nations resolutions and occurred in the decade between Desert Storm I and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In 1996, the 111th FW pilots transitioned from the OA-10 AFAC mission to the universal A-10 attack mission. Now our pilots primary task was to provide Close Air Support (CAS) of our joint service ground forces, as well as performing AFAC and CSAR duties as before. This change to the normal A-10 role aligned us with all the other A-10 units in the active duty and Air Reserve Component (ARC).

The second 111th FW deployment to Al Jaber occurred in 1999, again to support joint combat flight operations for Operation Southern Watch over Iraq. Missions included Combat Search and Rescue alert, Kill Box flights over Iraq, Airborne Forward Air Control and joint training missions over Kuwait. Use of the A-10 was more limited than before, due to the aircraft's relative lack of a precision weapon capability [except the AGM-65 Maverick missile]. Interestingly, this deployment spurred the ANG A-10 Wing Commanders at a conference in 2000, to search for ways to improve the precision performance of this venerable aircraft (which resulted in Targeting Pod integration in 2003).

Immediately following the 9/11 attacks on NYC and Washington, DC, the 111th FW voluntarily deployed on very short notice back to Al Jaber to support joint combat flight operations for Operation Southern Watch over Iraq and Operation Enduring Freedom over Afghanistan. Missions included Combat Search and Rescue alert and joint training missions over Kuwait.

111th Weapons personnel assisted in the loading of combat ordnance for the first sorties into Afghanistan in November, 2001. From October 2002 - January 2003, the wing was the lead unit for a short notice, voluntary, out-of-cycle AEF deployment to Bagram AB, Afghanistan. Bagram had been a massive Soviet base during the decade when they occupied Afghanistan (1979-89), but was almost completely destroyed in that period and civil war afterwards. The 111th aircraft supported joint combat flight operations with US Army, Special Forces, and coalition ground forces in Afghanistan. The A-10s were flown and maintained in the most primitive conditions, yet the 111th personnel flew 100% of the assigned tasking for their entire deployment – at four times the normal sortie rate of home. Other unique aspects of the operation were total ‘blacked out’ night-time operations (no lights on the field or camp – everything was done by night vision goggles); an extensive number of mines/UXOs around and on the air field; extreme weather conditions and enemy shelling using 107mm rockets.

Upon returning to the U.S. in January 2003, the 111th FW again volunteered to participate in another SWA deployment to Al Jaber AB, Kuwait [fourth visit] from February 2003 - May 2003. The wing deployed for joint combat flight operations, in support of US Army, Marine and British ground forces as part of the initial phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Wing personnel were initially stationed at Al Jaber before transferring to Tallil AB, Iraq, midway through the initial campaign. Tallil was a former Iraqi air force base, which had not been used in a decade. During this campaign, which included direct support for coalition armor forces during the entire invasion from the Kuwait border, through Basra and Baghdad, the wing pilots and maintainers successfully operated at a very high sortie rate. Tallil operations set another milestone due to its austere nature and forward location.

The 111th Fighter Wing’s achievement of voluntarily deploying to austere bases in two separate combat operations within a five month period [2003] was part of the reason the unit was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, with Valor, in 2005.

The 111th Fighter Wing converted to the Litening II Targeting pod in 2004; and participated in new DAWG EYE / ROVER training in that same year. The 111th voluntarily donated one of its airframes in 2004 to be converted to the A-10C, for the year-long testing of that new system. The first A-10C [111th FW tail # 641] was rolled out in January, 2005. Future plans call for a conversion to the A-10C aircraft, which is a major upgrade from the analog to the digital realm, in the 2006-08 timeframe.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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