

114th AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

114th Tactical Control Flight Activated and organized, May 15, 1982

114th Tactical Control Flight federally recognized, 11 Sep 1982

Redesignated 114th Air Traffic Control Flight, 1 Oct 1985

Redesignated 114th Air Traffic Control Squadron, 16 May 1997

STATIONS

State College, PA

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

As the newest member of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard team, the 114 Air Traffic Control Squadron, Johnstown, was organized and activated May 15, 1982, as the 114th Tactical Control Flight, State College. With an authorized strength of five officers and 23 airmen, they were assigned to the 152nd Tactical Air Control Group, New York Air National Guard.

"They came into the world as radar control, with a mission of radar bomb direction," said Col. Jim Herron, who was instrumental in getting the unit in Pennsylvania. For this mission, unit members would essentially talk with fighter pilots and provide them with radar data to drop bombs -- very accurately.

"For pinpoint bombing, the unit's mission was very effective. There was a downside pilots had to fly at a fixed altitude and airspeed," added Herron. During those early years, the 114th used the AN/TPB-1C Radar Bomb Directing Set. "Our initial summer camp in 1983 was definitely in the field," remembers Master Sgt. Roger Thurston, 114 First Sergeant and original unit member.

"It was at Fort Indiantown Gap on top of a mountain called Landing Zone Blue. "The bomb directing set was our only radar at that time and we were helping aircraft bomb targets at the Gap's Bomb Range. Our entire unit of 28 people was on hand for the first live bombs that were ever dropped at the range," said Thurston. "As the aircraft flew over, you couldn't see them (the bombs) coming, you would just hear a buzzing before the explosion. Troops were diving for cover everywhere. It was a great first deployment."

The AN/MPN-14 Radar Set came into use in 1985. Along with the radar came the new mission of air traffic control. "It takes completely different equipment; it takes completely different skills, transitioning from guiding bombs to air traffic control," said Master Sgt. Thomas L. Lattimer, 114 air traffic controller. "The new radar set was a complete ground-controlled approach facility. It used an air traffic control center to identify and locate approaching aircraft and instructed pilots in guiding their aircraft to a safe landing during reduced visibility."

Four major systems were incorporated into the new radar set: a search radar, a precision radar, two-way radio communications and a selective identification feature. "The transition to air traffic control also increased unit size from 28 to 68 people -- a significant gain," said Herron. He added that it took quite a while to get some of the other new equipment shipped from the Far East. By 1986, an AN/TSW-7 Mobile Control Tower and an AN/TRN-26 Mobile TACAN (Tactical Air to Navigation) were in use by the flight. For the next several years, unit members gained proficiency supporting a number of exercises and deployments. The flight was maturing into a group of highly-skilled air traffic controllers and radar maintenance technicians.

During June 1990 annual training, members of the 114th assisted the 271st Combat Communications Squadron with their Operational Readiness Inspection at Letterkenny Army

Depot. Also in 1990, the 114th was reassigned to Tactical Air Command as their gaining command October 1. The National Guard Bureau's Exercise Centre Vigilance '91 at Phelps Collins Combat Readiness Training Center, Alpena, Michigan, was the 114th's call to annual training in 1991. About the same time, other flight members participated in training on upgraded radar systems. The training was hosted by the 236th Combat Communications Squadron, Hammond, Louisiana.

In 1992 and for the fourth year in a row, the 114th provided logistical and managerial assistance to the Special Olympics summer games held at Penn State University. They also were active in the local "Scouting for Food" campaign to benefit the needy. That same year, air traffic controllers and power production technicians deployed to Honduras in support of Operation Fuertes Caminos, while others went to Alpena, Michigan, to support live flying exercise Centre Vigilance '92. At home the unit's equipment and personnel were deployed to Westmoreland County Airport, Latrobe, in June to conduct the first Sentry Keystone Exercise.

In 1992, flight was selected as not only the first in the Air National Guard, but the first in the entire United States Air Force to deploy an MPN-14K in support of drug interdiction- labeling the 114 a leader among sister units. For their successful efforts, the 114 was named the Combat Communications Unit of the year. The following year, the 114 was named the Air National Guard Air Traffic Control unit of the year. The same year during an ORI (Operational Readiness Inspection) the 114 was benchmarked for regenerating (Setting up, Operating and passing flight check) the MPN14-K faster than any other Air Force unit, again setting the standard for other units to follow.

"This was a milestone exercise for us. It was the first time we supported live flying," stated Maj. Thomas, 114th commander. "We set up radar under field conditions and Cleveland Center delegated airspace to us. The first aircraft we worked were 193rd, C-130s practicing approaches into Westmorland County Airport."

Additional support was provided during 1992 to air shows and flying conducted throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Air traffic controllers and radio maintenance people coordinated military fly-bys at Three Rivers Regatta in Pittsburgh, and provided communications support for the United States Air Force Thunderbirds at Westmoreland Airport.

During the same year members deployed to Alpena, Michigan, to assist in flying operations for Exercise Centre Vigilance '93. In June, the unit deployed to Ft. Indiantown Gap to conduct the initial Sentry Readiness Exercise. Later in the year and for the first time in the unit's history, the entire flight was activated by the governor to provide communications, transportation and rescue assistance to the Pennsylvania State Police during the blizzard of '93. " We assisted over 150 stranded motorists and provided critical support in areas with limited assets," said Thomas.

In 1994 the unit deployed much closer to home: Dover Air Force Base, Del., for the unit's first Operational Readiness Inspection. According to Thomas, "Unit personnel broke an Air Force and Air National Guard record by regenerating all air traffic control and landing systems within

established time criteria." Then, for the second year in a row, air traffic controllers and maintenance technicians traveled to the wilds of Colombia. Shortly before the 1995 Christmas holiday season, the 114th was called to support Operation Joint Endeavor. The NATO-led peacekeeping mission had most of the world's attention and the 114th was among the first units to deploy with active duty, Guard and reserve forces. Working from Taszar Air Base in Hungary, they provided critical air traffic control and communications as U.S. and NATO forces began building up for Bosnia peacekeeping efforts.

"We assisted the first units with erecting a radar set-up to control air space in lower Hungary," said Master Sgt. Allen Angley. "The deployment had problems too numerous to mention, but we did overcome them with many unit members serving 145-day tours."

Other exercises and operations during 1995 and 1996 included Operation Snake Bite, air defense operations in Florida; Operation Steady State, support of drug interdiction in Colombia; Exercise Global Yankee, a combined forces exercise involving over 60 units from the Air Force, Air Guard, Army, Navy, Marines and Canadian Forces; Operation Tanker Task Force, an operation in Crete supporting relief efforts in Somalia; and Operation Angel Partner, drug interdiction in California. They also assisted the Federal Aviation Administration, by providing their mobile tower and personnel in Erie and Ohio while technicians removed asbestos from the fixed control towers.

While unit members regrouped from the grueling schedule from 1996, early in the new year another call came to the unit: Presidential activation orders. The unprecedented call required the deployment of nine air traffic controllers and two maintenance technicians to support Operation Joint Guard at Taszar Air Base, Hungary. For some, this was their second journey to serve in the operation. The 9-member team augmented the 265th Combat Communications Squadron from March 24 to August 16, 1997.

114 Tactical Control Flight

Established: May 1982

Johnstown Pennsylvania

Deployment: Fort Indiantown Gap 1983;

Equipment: TPB-1C Radar Bomb Directing Set; MPN-14

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.