

118 TACTICAL AIRLIFT GROUP



MISSION

LINEAGE

356 Fighter Group constituted, 8 Dec 1942

Activated, 12 Dec 1942

Inactivated, 10 Nov 1945

Redesignated 118 Fighter Group

Allotted to ANG (Tenn), 24 May 1946

Extended federal recognition, 2 Oct 1947

Redesignated 118 Composite Group, Nov 1950

Redesignated 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 1 Feb 1951

Redesignated 118 Air Transport Group (Heavy), 1 Apr 1961

Redesignated 118 Tactical Airlift Group

Inactivated, 26 Feb 1975

STATIONS

Westover Field, MA, 12 Dec 1942

Groton AAFld, CT, 12 Mar 1943

Mitchel Field, NY, 30 May 1943

Grenier Field, NH, 4 Jul-15 Aug 1943

Goxhill, England, 27 Aug 1943

Martle-sham, England, 5 Oct 1943-4 Nov 1945

Camp Kilmer, NJ, 9-10 Nov 1945

Berry Field, TN, 1 Apr 1951

Memphis Mun Aprt, TN, 12 Apr 1951
Shaw AFB, SC, 15 Jan 1952-1 Jan 1953
Nashville, TN

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-47
P-51

COMMANDERS

2LT Joseph Moris Jr, 28 Dec 1942
Cpt Harold J Lister, 29 Dec 1942
LTC Harold J Rau, 9 Feb 1943
Col Einar A Malmstrom, 28 Nov 1943
LTC Philip E Tukey Jr, 24 Apr 1944
LTC Donald A Baccus, 3 Nov 1944
Col Philip E Tukey Jr, n Jan 1945-unkn
LTC Enoch B Stephenson, 1 Apr 1951
LTC William J Johnson Jr, May 1951
LTC Ralph F Newman, 16 Aug 1951
Col James L Rose, Jan 1952
LTC Stanley W Irons, 2 Jun 1952
Col Robert R Smith, Nov 1952-unkn
Lt Col R.K. Gallagher
Col King C. Matthews, Apr 1962
Col Oscar T. Ridley, 26 Mar 1971

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Holland, 17, 18, and 23 Sep 1944

EMBLEM

On a light blue oval with a yellow border an aerial camera supporting binoculars and a torch, the whole group winged, all yellow with flame proper and lenses blue and white, above the torch and between the tips of the wings three white stars. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The three white stars, in combination with the colors red and blue, are symbolic of the flag of the State of Tennessee. The binoculars and aerial camera upon which the numerals 118 are superimposed, depict the primary mission of this organization, which is visual and photographic reconnaissance for tactical units of the Armed Forces. The torch, in combination with the stars, depict the night photo aspects of the mission of this organization. (Approved, 5 Jan 1954)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Moved to England, Aug-Sep 1943, and assigned to Eighth AF. Served in combat from Oct 1943 to May 1945, participating in operations that prepared for the invasion of the Continent, and supporting the landings in Normandy and the subsequent Allied drive across France and Germany. Used P-47's until they were replaced by P-51's in Nov 1944. From Oct 1943 until Jan 1944, operated as escort for bombers that attacked such objectives as industrial areas, missile sites, airfields, and communications. Engaged primarily in bombing and strafing missions after 23 Jan 1944, with its targets including U-boat installations, barges, shipyards, airdromes, hangars, marshalling yards, locomotives, trucks, oil facilities, flak towers, and radar stations. Bombed and strafed in the Arnheim area on 17,18, and 23 Sep 1944 to neutralize enemy gun emplacements; received a DUG for this contribution to the airborne attack on Holland. Flew its last combat mission, escorting B-17s dropping propaganda leaflets, on 7 May 1945. Returned to the US in Nov. Inactivated on 10 Nov 1945.

The Headquarters, 118 Fighter Group, was also federally recognized on 3 February 1947 and consisted of 105 Fighter Squadron stationed at Berry Field, Nashville, Tennessee, 155 Fighter Squadron, stationed at Municipal Airport, Memphis, Tennessee, and the 156 Fighter Squadron, stationed at Charlotte, North Carolina. The entire Group was a part of the 54 Fighter Wing, with Headquarters at Marietta, Georgia. The training set up for the 118 Fighter Group during this stage was basically identical to other Air National Guard Groups; however, the 118 Fighter Group was enjoying an enviable reputation for flying proficiency, both in Headquarters and in the assigned squadrons. On 15 June 1947, the reorganized 105 Fighter Squadron held its first drill at Berry Field since receiving federal recognition. The drill occurred at a time when planes of the 155 Fighter Squadron of Memphis came over the field in combat formation to salute the 105 Squadron.

On 1 November 1950, the 118 Fighter Group was redesignated Headquarters, 118 Composite Group as was the Maintenance and Supply Group, 118 Medical Group, and 118 Air Base Group. On this date the 118 Composite Group picked up the 153 Fighter Squadron, at Meridian,

Mississippi, having lost the 156 Fighter Squadron, Charlotte, No Carolina on 1 October 1950. The 105 Fighter Squad remained under the 118 Composite Group.

On 1 February 1951, a handpicked cadre, operating as an advanced detachment, went on active duty in order to expedite and facilitate in every way possible, the reorganization of the 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Group into the federal service. This advanced detachment did administrative services and suffered the brunt of the headaches usually associated with reorganization of a scale of any magnitude.

Ordered to active duty 1 Apr 1951 and assigned to Tactical Air Command. Used RF-47, RF-51, RF-80, and RB-26 for training and maneuvers. Relieved from active service and returned, without personnel and equipment, to control of ANG (Tenn), 1 Jan 1953.

General Order number 41, Headquarters, 14 Air Force, dated 27 February 1951 ordered, among other units, the 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Group into active federal service, effective 1 April 1951.

The entire wing was ordered to extended active duty for a period of twenty-one (21) months, effective 1 April 1951. Due to the fact that facilities at Berry Field were inadequate for an active organization of this nature, the 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, with the 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Group was reassigned to Municipal Airport, Memphis, Tennessee effective 12 April 1951. On 13 April 1951, the wing was released from assignment to the Fourteenth Air Force, Continental Air Command, and was assigned directly under the Tactical Air Command, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. The 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing remained under the command of the Tactical Air Command until 3 August 1951, when it was assigned to Headquarters, Ninth Air Force, Pope Air Force Base Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Tactical squadrons of the wing included the 155th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, a Tennessee Air National Guard squadron stationed at Municipal Airport, Memphis, Tennessee, the 106 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (Night-Photo), an Alabama Air National Guard squadron stationed at Municipal Airport, Birmingham, Alabama, and the 185 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, an Oklahoma Air National Guard squadron stationed at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing operated the Wing and Group Headquarters and the 155 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron at Municipal Airport, Memphis, Tennessee, however, the 106 Tactical Squadron and the 185 Tactical Squadron remained at their respective stations, due to space limitations at Memphis. Until 12 January 1952, at which time, the wing, and all units under its command were reassigned to Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina. This marked the first time that all units of the wing had been stationed at the same base, since its order to extended active duty.

The squadrons now comprising the Group were assigned directly to Headquarters, Tactical Air Command, while the Group, as such was still under the Directorate of the 14 Air Force. On 13 April 1951 pursuant to an order from Tactical Air Command, the 106 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Night Photo, and the 155 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron and 185 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron were reassigned to the 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Group. The

185th Squadron was located at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and was equipped with P-51's; the 106th Squadron was located at Birmingham, Alabama and was equipped with B-26's; and the 155th Squadron was located at Memphis, Tennessee and was equipped with P-51's. The 105 Fighter Squadron, formerly with the 118 Group had been assigned to the Air Defense Command, and the 153 Squadron, also formerly with the 118 Group was assigned to Strategic Air Command.

First Mission, 15 Oct 1943

Last Mission, May 1945

Total Missions: 413

Aircraft missing in action: 122

Enemy aircraft claims: 201 air; 75.5 ground

Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 12 Oct 2010

Updated:

Sources

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

Unit yearbook. *118 Air Transport Wing, 1964-1965*. Delman Printing Co. Charlotte, NC. 1965.