

139 AIRCRAFT CONTROL AND WARNING SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

139 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 139th AC&W Squadrons were transferred to Lackland AFB after activation. Both organizations had surplus airmen and officers who became the cadre for establishing new radar units within the 33rd Air Division. Several Colorado Guardsmen served as commanders of the new units. Maj. Richard Saltrmarsh was assigned to Bartlesville, Okla., to command the 796th AC&W Squadron, while Maj. James Dupler commanded the 793rd AC&W Squadron at Hutchinson, Kan. Similarly, Maj. Herb Edmunds commanded the 797th AC&W Squadron at Fardland, Mo., and Maj. Walter Sherrill headed the 798th AC&W Squadron at Belleville, Ill

The 139th AC&W Squadron, commanded by LTC John R. Mack, occupied a radar site at Lackland

AFB. Existing equipment had been sent elsewhere, so when the men arrived at their newly assigned station there was no available radar hardware. Although they received little training until new equipment arrived some six months later, the 139th became extremely proficient in clean-up details. Of the AC&W radar and communication units that were ordered to active duty in 1951, only the 138th and the 609th were returned to state control. The other organizations were either retained on active duty or disbanded.

Marking a year of transition for the flight, Capt. Gary Fuller was sworn in as commander in April 1982 and the unit designator changed on July 1 to the 139th TCF. In December, the unit's call sign was changed to "Andromeda," symbolic of the 139th's "boundless quest for excellence." This degree of excellence was acknowledged in December 1982 during a HQ TAC management effectiveness inspection and again in March 1983 by the 154TCG standardization/evaluation team inspection.

In January 1983, members of the 139th augmented the 138th TCF in an overseas deployment to Honduras in support of "Ahaus Tara" ("Big Pine I"), a two-week exercise conducted under the authority of USAF Southern Command, headquartered at Howard AFB, Panama. This exercise gave the Honduran military their first opportunity to exercise all branches of service in one combined exercise and paved the way for a series of exercises which continues today.

Under the command of Maj. Donald R. Simonson, who was appointed in May 1983, the unit deployed to Punkin Center, Colo., in support of "Sentry Aspen Flag III" in June 1983 and then in July to Bald Mountain, Idaho, in support of "Owyhee Roundup."

Relocation of the unit from Colorado Springs to Buckley ANGB officially began on March 1, 1984, and was completed two weeks later. Also in March, Maj. Robert C. Stack assumed command of the unit with Maj. Simonson continuing as detachment commander. In August 1984, the 139th TCF deployed to Jacks Valley at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs for survival training. Lt. Col. Simonson resumed command of the 139th in the same month, guiding the unit through a long series of exercises in its final three years of service. In September, the unit supported a "Gallant Eagle" exercise in Strawpeak, Calif., as well as the 134th TCF's training mission at McConnell AFB, Kan.

In May 1986, the TAC inspection team arrived to begin an inspection of group headquarters — the most thorough inspection received to date. The inspection team presented their findings in a critique long remembered by all who attend and the U.S. The group and its units would play an important role in the defense of Western Europe.

During the NGB's public telecommunications network augmentation feasibility demonstration in October 1984, the 139th, operating in two-and-one-half feet of snow, was the only unit in the test with no failures.

In early 1985, the unit deployed as the primary adversary radar force to Gila Bend, Ariz., as part

of "Quick Force '85-2." Personnel were under attack and practiced chemical/ biological defense; site defense and security were exercised as well in the successful exercise. Flight controllers received similar high praise at "Sentry Star 85-2," Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, in April.

In July 1985, the 139th TCF convoyed to Bald Mountain, Idaho for "Owyhee Roundup" ("Seesaw/Sentry Eagle '85"). The unit supported the exercise's Red pilots, who extolled the value of the 139th's GCI in getting them to the right place at the right time and into the right engagements. According to a TACS after action report, "Because of effective GCI tracking, sorting and control, the Red forces were able to evade engagement by Blue fighter cover while successfully attacking almost every Blue striker." As a result of their outstanding performance at Owyhee Roundup, the 139th was invited by the TAC IG to return to Idaho (Mountain Home AFB) in September to participate in "Coronet White '85-18."

The first ANG unit to deploy for 90 days in support of Poker Buff, the 139th helped set high standards for future ANG participation in contingency operations in the area. Welcomed home with yellow roses and a family buffet in November (and an awards ceremony two months later), the unit was thankful to have completed the successful mission with only positive incidents and results. Col. Addison C. Rawlins, deputy commander for operations, HQ, 24th Composite Wing (TAC) commented on the operation: "While deployed in support of JCS operation "Poker Buff," the 139th TCF's performance was outstanding; they did much to improve the exercise and provide continuity to "Poker Buff II" transition. They also unselfishly donated their time and money to purchase and distribute school supplies to several local schools. In addition, they invested many personal hours to work self-help projects that greatly enhanced the quality of life at assigned Air Force facilities. The Air Guard can be proud of their accomplishments in this real-world environment."

In their final exercise, the 139th TCF deployed for 60 days in early 1987 to Tonopah, Nev., to participate in a "Green Flag '87-3" test to prove the value of radar netting. On June 15, 1987, the 139th Tactical Control Flight was officially deactivated after 11 years, three months and 10 days dedicated service to state and nation. Deactivation was an outgrowth of the monumental "Year of the TACS" study which realigned TACS units across the country to maximize training opportunities. The mission of the 139th was transferred to the 116th TCF at Camp Rilea, Ore. For Lt. Col. Simonson and a majority of the men and women under his command, life began anew within the 227th Air Traffic Control Flight (ATCF), Air Force Communications Command. There are three original members of the unit who are currently with the 227th ATCF CMSgt. Milton E. Lilja, MSgt. Christopher DeFord and MSgt. Ronald D. Duffy.

In the short history of the 139th TCF the unit accomplished far more than many units do in many more years. On all exercises and deployments the unit's radar was maintained and operational when needed; maintenance and operations personnel always performed in an exemplary manner, showing teamwork and esprit de corps to "get the job done." The unit has been involved in many community activities such as open houses, family days, youth activities, health fairs and food drives for the aged and needy.

139th (Air National Guard)
Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron
Colorado ANG
Allotted: 24 May 1946 to ANG
Assigned: on 1 June 1951 at
Lackland AFB, Texas as 159th AC&WG
Relieved from active duty: 1 February 1953 and returned to control of Colorado
Greeley, Colorado

139th ACP' Squadron: assigned on 1 Jun 51 at Lackland AFB, TX as the 159th ACFW Group; transferred to 33rd Air Division on 6 Feb 52; an ANG unit called to active duty for 21 months, it was relieved from active duty and returned to control of the State of Colorado on 1 Feb 53.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.