

171 AIR REFUELING SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

374 Fighter Squadron constituted, 28 Jan 1943

Activated, 10 Feb 1943

Inactivated, 24 Oct 1945

Reconstituted and redesignated 171 Fighter Squadron and allotted to MI NG, 24 May 1946

171 Fighter Squadron (SE) extended federal recognition, 25 Apr 1948

Redesignated 171 Fighter Squadron (Jet), 1 Jul 1950

Redesignated 171 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1 Feb 1951

Redesignated 171 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Nov 1953

Redesignated 171 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 1958

Redesignated 171 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 22 Jul 1972

Redesignated 171 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Sep 1978

Redesignated 171 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

Redesignated 171 Airlift Squadron, 15 July 1994

Redesignated 171 Air Refueling Squadron, 1 Apr 2008

STATIONS

Richmond AAB, VA, 10 Feb 1943

Camp Springs AAFld, MD, 26 May 1943

Millville AAFld, NJ, 15 Aug 1943

Camp Springs AAFld, MD, 18 Sep 1943

Richmond AAB, VA, 30 Sep-11 Nov 1943
Bottisham, England, 30 Nov 1943
Little Walden, England, 28 Sep 1944 (operated from St Dizier, France, 23 Dec 1944-1 Feb 1945)
Chievres, Belgium, 1 Feb 1945
Little Walden, England, 7 Apr-11 Oct 1945
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 23-24 Oct 1945
Wayne City Airport, Detroit, MI
Selfridge ANGB, Mt Clemens, MI, Jun 1971

ASSIGNMENTS

361 Fighter Group, 10 Feb 1943-24 Oct 1945
127 Fighter Group, 25 Apr 1948
191 Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 1 Oct 1962
191 Fighter-Interceptor Group, 1 Jan 1973
191 Tactical Fighter Group, 1 Jun 1978
191 Fighter Group, 16 Mar 1992
191 Airlift Group, 15 Jul 1994
127 Airlift Group, 1 Apr 1996
191 Airlift Group, 1 May 1999
127 Air Refueling Group, 30 Sep 2007

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-47
F-84, 1950
F-51
F-86, 1953
F-89, 1955
RF-84, 1958
RF-101, 1971
RF-101
F-106, 1972
F-4, 1978
F-16, 1990
C-130, 1994
KC-135

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

LTC Thomas A. Hess, #1976
LTC Eric R. Hagelthorn, #1986
LTC Michael T. Thomas July 2003–Aug 2004

LTC David Brooks Aug 2008–Apr 2011

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Offensive, Europe

Air Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM





On a disc Argent, a hurt fimbriated Sable surmounted by a lightning bolt bend sinister Or fimbriated of the second, overall the profile of an Aztec Indian high priest to dexter in traditional feathered head dress Proper; all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached below the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "171 AIR REFUELING SQUADRON" in Yellow letters. Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. This emblem has been in existence in various forms since World War II. It was created by members of the 361st Fighter Group while traveling from Virginia to Shanks, NY to report for duty. It began with an idea gleaned from symbols viewed during the trip which were drawn into a concept and finalized upon arrival in New York. The emblem of the 361st Group was used as the template for all four units in the Michigan Air National Guard. The Aztec Indian head represents Michigan's long-standing heritage, and the lightning bolt signifies the unit's willingness to act at a moment's notice in support of community and country. The emblem is historic and epitomizes triumph, courage, duty, and strength by all who have and will bear this patch.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Michigan Grey Wolves

OPERATIONS

The present 171 Fighter Interceptor Squadron was established January 28, 1943 under the wartime designation of the 374th Fighter Squadron from Richmond, Virginia, and gained battle honors from Normandy, Northern France, Aidenes-Alsace, Central Europe and the Rhineland. The unit was based in Scotland, Belgium, France and England during the Second World War. Combat in ETO, 22 Jan 1944-20 Apr 1945.

Upon deactivation in 1945, the 374th became the 171 Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, on May 24, 1946 when it was redesignated and allocated to Michigan's 127th Fighter Group.

The wing was alerted on August 1, 1961 for possible activation for the Berlin Crisis. The Wing began assembling and packing equipment for the activation but the call up did not occur.

The 191st Fighter Interceptor Group, then commanded by Col. Donald K. Reid, formally joined the Aerospace Defense Command in July 1972. Selfridge's largest flying organization, the 191st FIG, was now tasked with the heavy burden of area responsibility for the nation's defense. The 191st FIG is a fulltime partner with the Air Force Aerospace Defense Command units, assuming a 24 hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week runway alert posture. The unit must fulfill identical training requirements and the same operational readiness commitments as their regular Air Force counterparts.

In March 1972 Maj Edward B. DeLaquila was fatally injured in a crash of an RF-101 at Selfridge ANG Base.

The 171 FIS "Six Pack" at Selfridge Field received its first F-106A (58-0767) on 29 Dec 1972. The squadrons initial batch of 18 aircraft came from the 2nd FIS and consisted of 18 F-106A's and two F-106B's. The squadron operated the Delta Dart for fewer than 6 years replacing them with the F-4C Phantoms. The last aircraft to depart this squadron was an F-106B (59-0150) which transferred to the 84th FIS on 16 Aug 1978. The squadron operated 24 Delta Darts in all, and experienced no losses.

Monday, February 3, 1975 marked the return of a full-time 24 hour a day alert mission to Selfridge. Pilots of the "Six Pack" were flying some of the same F-106 Delta Darts that were flown by Selfridge 94th FIS pilots in the mid '60s. The Group had previously served a 14 hour a day alert from late 1954 to June 1956 flying the F-89C Scorpion out of Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

A midair collision incident involved three other unit aircraft on training flight near pigeon mi, 3 mar 92; Lt Col Roy A. Keyt, commander 171 Fighter Interceptor Squadron killed in accident.

191 Fighter Interceptor Group, Detachment 1, Seymour Johnson afb deactivated 30 Sep 1992.

Participated in combat archer training at tyndall afb, fl, 2 - 8 may 1993;

Flew first humanitarian airlift on mission to Rwanda, 9 Sep 1995.

January 1998—the 171 Airlift Squadron (AS), 127th Airlift Group (AG) deployed three C-130Es and personnel to Howard AFB, Panama in support of Operation Coronet Oak. The 171 flew 176 hours in the Southern Command Area Of Responsibility (AOR), which included drug interdiction airlift support missions to Honduras and Peru.

16 June 1998—A 171 AS C-130 transported 24 7th Army Special Forces troops, a Raven team and four tons of cargo from Howard AFB, Panama to Santiago, Chile for a joint training exercise.

July 1998—A 171 AS C-130 and aircrew participated in another Baltic Challenge exercise in Lithuania, transporting 213 passengers, 97 tons of cargo during 39 sorties.

August 1998—A 171 AS C-130 deployed to Puerto Rico in support of the Puerto Rico Air National Guard's conversion to the C-130.

October 1998—The 127th Airlift Group deployed to Howard AFB, Panama in support of Operation Coronet Oak. While there, Hurricane Mitch struck Central America. After the storm cleared, 171 AS crews were the first on the scene to deliver emergency personnel, supplies and water to hurricane-ravaged Honduras. The unit continued flying such missions for the duration of their two-week deployment.

November 1998—Members of the 127th Logistics Squadron and Aerial Port prepared and loaded 365,000 pounds of food onto C-5 Galaxy transports in support of relief efforts in Honduras, following the devastating hurricane. The following month, the 171 AS delivered medical supplies to the country.

May 1999—Howard AFB in Panama closed. The 127th Airlift Group was the last unit to operate from there as a part of the 22 year-old mission known as Operation Coronet Oak. 30 April was the last day of Coronet Oak C-130 operations in the region. Following their departure from Panama, the squadron moved to Muniz ANGB, Puerto Rico where it became the first unit to fly Coronet Oak missions from the base. Panama rotations began in 1978 when then-President Jimmy Carter signed two treaties releasing the Panama Canal to Panamanian control. Air National Guard (ANG) and Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) C-130 units deploy to the region to provide theater airlift support for Southern Command throughout Central and South America. Among the typical missions flown by aircrews are support of U.S. troops/special forces personnel and DBA agents, alert, re-supply and medical evacuation. Units deploy for two-week rotations.

December 1999—127th Airlift Group personnel and aircraft made a Coronet Oak deployment to Puerto Rico for the first time. The unit flew humanitarian missions into Venezuela, following storms and flooding.

Gabonese troops help load cargo on a 171 AS C-130E during the Gabon 2000 exercise. (

January 2000—C-130s and personnel from the 127th Airlift Group deployed to Africa to participate in the French Gabon '00 peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance exercise.

May 2000—C-130s and personnel from the 127th Airlift Group deployed to Oman in support of Operation Southern Watch.

September 2001—In early September, F-16s and personnel of the 127th WG made an Operation Southern Watch deployment to the Saudi Arabia to enforce the no-fly zone in Iraq. Later that month, C-130s of the 127th Airlift Group deployed in support of Operation Joint Forge, delivering personnel and supplies into Bosnia.

January 2002—The 127th Airlift Group flew transport missions into Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay is the site of a prison facility where captured Taliban, Al Qaeda and other terrorist suspects are held. C-130 aircrews from the 127th AG flew the missions from their Coronet Oak airlift hub at Muniz ANGB, Puerto Rico.

February 2002—127th AG C-130s and personnel made a 45-day deployment to Kadena AB, Japan to bolster airlift loads, as demanded by Operation Enduring Freedom.

June 2002—The aircrew of a C-130 of the 171 AS flew to Normandy France to participate in ceremonies commemorating the anniversary of the D-Day invasion, which occurred 6 June 1944. Selfridge C-130s performed airdrop displays for audiences.

December 2002—275 Members of the 127th Airlift Group deployed to Ramstein AB, Germany in support of Operation Joint Forge. 127th Guardsmen provided airlift support to war ravaged Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. 85 missions were flown in support of NATO operations and humanitarian efforts. During this deployment They set an unparalleled record for meeting mission timetables, with a 96% on-time takeoff rate. 171 Maintenance Squadron troops kept aircraft in mission-ready condition 100% of the time during the deployment.

May 2003—A joint Michigan ANG and Army NG exercise was held, in which elements of Company F, 425th Infantry Regiment conducted parachute drops from C-130s of the 171 AS. 31 paratroopers were dropped over Selfridge during the three day exercise.

September 2003—The 127th WG received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its service from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2001. During this time, the wing was repeatedly called upon to serve in such operations as Northern Watch and Southern Watch in Iraq, Joint Forge in

Germany, and a number of other missions and deployments. Following the 9/11 attacks, the 127th WG flew 24-hour combat air patrols. While serving in Operation Northern Watch in Southwest Asia, the 107th simultaneously stood alert in defense of CONUS as a part of Operation Nobel Eagle. The 127th Airlift Group also stood alert during this period and flew supporting missions in Germany, earning an excellent ORI rating in so doing. In addition to this accolade, the 107* FS received the Air Force Association Air National Guard Outstanding Unit Award for 2002 and the National Guard Association of the United States Distinguished Flying Unit Award.

January 2004—127th Airlift Group returned from deployment in Operation Joint Forge in Germany. It became readily apparent that new facilities at Ramstein were needed to deal with the increased personnel presence (which included other ANG C-130 units) brought on by the war in Iraq.

January 2004—the first of many regular deployments by the 127th Airlift Group to the Middle East in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom commenced. These 45-day deployments would continue until January of 2007.

October 2005—The 127th Airlift Group deployed to South America in support of Operation Coronet Oak. This operation saw the 127th flying airlift missions for U.S. Southern Command

August 2006—127 AG deployed its C-130s for the final time in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

November 2006—The 171 AS embarked on its last combat deployment with the C-130 Hercules.

January 2007—Last wartime deployment of C-130s of the 171 Airlift Squadron, 127th Airlift Group ends. The deployments by the 127th AG in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom began in January of 2004, During this time, personnel and aircraft were rotated on 45 day intervals to the Middle East, while still maintaining Operation Coronet Oak in South America and providing airlift assets during Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. The unit flew more than 3,000 missions and transported 62,000 passengers and 6,600 tons of cargo during its wartime deployments. C-130Es of the 171 AS were equipped with the Joint Precision Airdrop System, which uses GPS to improve accuracy of airborne drops and allows for them to be done from the safety of higher altitudes.

April 2007—171 AS officially began its transition from the C-130E to the KC-135T. The C-130s were transferred to Puerto Rico and Little Rock, AK., marking the end of three and a half decades of C-130 operations at Selfridge.

August 2007—the 127th AG deployed a C-130 and personnel to the Alpena CRTC for readiness training. This was to be the last of such deployments before the group's conversion to the KC-135, That same month, the group was named 2007 Distinguished Flying Unit by the NGAUS.

December 2007—the first KC-135 was handed over to the 127th Air Refueling Group by the 927th Air Refueling Wing (Air Force Reserve Command), which was the former aerial refueling unit based at Selfridge. The 927th transferred to MacDill AFB, FL. in 2008 as a part of the 2005 BRAC decision. Lt Col David Brooks was named the first commander of the 171 Air Refueling Squadron.

May 2009—Over 100 personnel and several newly-acquired KC-135 of the 127th Air Refueling Group deployed to Turkey for a summer tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. KC-135S provided tanker assets to aircraft involved in Central Command's area of responsibility.

April 2009—the 127th Air Refueling Group flew its first aerial refueling mission on 12 April. The flight took place immediately after the change of command ceremony was held, which marked the unit's transition from the C-130E to the KC-135T.

2011 The eight KC-135s of the Air National Guard's 127th Air Refueling Group at Selfridge ANGB, Mich., will sport the distinctive checkerboard design long associated with military aircraft at the base, but absent since the group began flying KC-135s in 2008. The group's commander's aircraft already features the slanted checkerboard stripe-in a black and yellow paint scheme-on its fuselage at the forward edge of its wings. This design also features the group's logo, and the KC-135 also has a distinctive marking on its tail as part of this transformation. "This [artwork] not only represents our heritage, it also tells people that we are proud of the work our airmen are doing today, representing Michigan around the world in today's Air Force," said Lt. Col. David Brooks, 127th ARG commander. The checkerboard design dates back to Selfridge's days as a Strategic Air Command installation prior to transferring to Air Guard control in 1971, according to group officials. The group's other KC-135s are expected to get the checkerboard over the next year or so-albeit in a more subdued black and gray paint scheme.

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 8 Oct 2010
Updated: 12 Apr 2021

Sources

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