

184 ATTACK SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

184 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 15 Oct 1953
184 TRS Night Photo extended federal recognition 15 Oct 1953
Redesignated 184 TRS (Photo Jet), 1 Jan 1957
Redesignated 184 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron
Redesignated 184 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 15 Jun 1972
Redesignated 184 Fighter Squadron, 16 Mar 1992
Redesignated 184 Attack Squadron

STATIONS

Ebbing ANGB, Fort Smith, AR

ASSIGNMENTS

188th Fighter Wing

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

RB-26, 1954 **1953**

RF-80, 1956

RF-84, 1957

RF-101, 1970

F-100, 1972

F-4, 1979

F-16, 1988

A-10, 2007

Support Aircraft

T-6, 1953

C-47, 1953
T-33, 1955
C-54, 1967
U-3, 1971
T-29, 1972
C-131, 1975
C-12, 1990

COMMANDERS

LTC Hugh B. Correll, Oct 1953
Maj Bob Wilson, 1955
LTC William A Stanton, 1956
Maj Edward Schneider, #1960
LTC Hugh B. Correll, 1960-1963
LTC Mark Anderson, #2011

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



On a white diamond within a blue border containing twenty-five white stars, a knife in horizontal position passing through a noose hanging from the upper point of diamond; handle of knife, red with light blue highlights and black shading, blade light blue and gray; noose, old gold. The Squadron Emblem was approved and registered on 2 Aug 1954. The outline of the insignia was taken from the Arkansas State Flag symbolizing Arkansas as the twenty-fifth state

admitted to the union. The hangman's noose reflects the fact that Fort Smith was the home of "Hanging Judge" Issac C. Parker, who as a Federal Judge was charged with law enforcement of the whole Indian Territory. The Bowie knife was originated in Southwest Arkansas by a blacksmith named James Black. It was of unusual temper and balance, making it an effective hunting and fighting knife for frontiersmen. It was made famous by James Bowie, who resided for some time in Arkansas and later lost his life defending the Alamo. The title of "Ricks' Rippers" was adopted to honor the late Major General Earl T. Ricks, who was instrumental in the allocation of this unit to Fort Smith and under whom a number of men in the squadron had served.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Ricks' Rippers
Flying Razorbacks

OPERATIONS

July 1953, the first office was set up in the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce building for A recruiting members for the new Air National Guard unit. LTC Frank Bailey, head of the Arkansas Air Guard, met Mayor Hestand at the airport to discuss the initiation of Fort Smith's Air Guard Unit. In that meeting, LTC Bailey reached an agreement to lease 80 acres of the Fort Smith Municipal Airport for the purpose of establishing a home for the 184 TRS.

On 15 Oct 1953 the 184 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron was federally recognized. On that day, LTC Hugh B. Correll was sworn in as the Commander of the newly formed unit. There were 112 Officers and Airmen sworn in as members of the 184 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron. LTC Hugh B. Correll administered the "oath" at the Goldman Hotel. Dubbed "Rick's Rippers" in honor of MG Earl T. Ricks, former Adjutant General and highly decorated World War II Air Force pilot from Arkansas, the unit's first roll call was answered by 19 officers and 93 enlisted personnel.

MSgt Cecil E. Laffery's efforts, in recruiting Fort Smith's Air Guard unit, quickly grew to the strength of 151 men, including 25 officers by the end of 1953. On 29 Jan 1954, the first RB-26 was stationed at the base. Several months later during the summer, the 184 TRS attended its first summer training camp for two weeks at Gulfport, Mississippi.

During their first summer camp, the unit had two T-6 and eight RB-26 mission aircraft. The RB-26s had cameras and flash bombs. They would drop the bomb and take a picture when the bomb exploded (flashed). The men were ready. The Saturday Parade at Gulfport was a "must" for the Wing. The 184 TRS was part of the 118th TRW in 1954 along with Nashville, Memphis, and Little Rock. Personnel worked in long sleeve heavy twill shirts buttoned at the cuff even though the temperature stayed above 100 degrees every day. In Jul 1953, LTC Frank Bailey, head of the Arkansas Air Guard, met Mayor Hestand at the airport to discuss the initiation of Fort Smith's Air Guard Unit. In that meeting, LTC Bailey reached an agreement to lease 80 acres

of the Fort Smith Municipal Airport for the purpose of establishing a home for the 184 TRS.

Dedication of the Air National Guard's base at Fort Smith added new importance to Arkansas as a center of defense activity. The investment of \$3,000,000 in the physical plant, \$14,000,000 in the cost of equipment, and well over \$500,000 annually in salaries set the 184 TRS as a major operation in Arkansas. As evidenced in a quote from the Southwest Times Record in February 1956, "Arkansans who worked to bring the Fort Smith installation to reality performed well in the interests of the state and the nation."

1 Jul 1960: Became TAC-gained upon implementation of gaining command concept.

1 Oct 1961: Called to active duty but remained in Ft Smith. The squadron was activated for one year during the Berlin Crisis of 1961.

20 Aug 1962: Returned to state control.

During its tenure up to 1963, the unit received and flew missions in six different aircraft that included: C-47A, T-6, RB-26B, T-33, RF-80, and RF-84F. To augment its newly constructed base facilities, the 184th added a control tower and 1700 ft. runway extension in 1957. In addition, the unit was activated for the Little Rock school crisis in September 1957, the Berlin Crisis from 1 Oct 1961 to 20 Sep 1962, and added to its strength during this period reaching totals of 378 enlisted and 43 officers.

In predawn blackness at Andrews AFB, MD, Saturday morning, 8 Aug 1964, support personnel of the 113th Tactical Fighter Wing blinked sleepily in the bright lights set up by Air Force photographers to document the beginnings of Operation "READY-GO", the Air National Guard's first non-stop deployment of jets to Europe. After their baggage was weighed, they climbed on buses and rode to the flight line where two C-121's from New Jersey and Pennsylvania Guard units waited to begin the long flight to Hahn Air Base, Germany. At Birmingham, AL., and Fort Smith, AR., the same sights could be seen as support personnel of the 117th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing boarded other support aircraft for the flight to Ramstein Air Base, Germany. These were the people who rarely fall into the spotlight which beams on the jet pilots, whose skilled hands see that the aircraft are ready to go. They were the forerunners of more than 750 air guardsmen from 22 states and the District of Columbia who participated in a two-part operation — one involving the tactical fighters, the other, the Tac Recon — both made possible by the Guard's own aerial tankers. The 19 F-100's from 113th left from Hahn on 11 August, 12 RF-84F's of the 117th, jetted from Birmingham to Andrews AFB to Dow AFB, Maine, departed for Ramstein AB on 13 and 14 Aug They were refueled along the way three times by the three groups of the 126th Air Refueling Wing, Chicago. More than 30 Acft from 16 Air National Guard Transport units supported the operation. "READY GO" has been pronounced a success by all concerned with it. MG G. Reid Doster, 117th Commander, told reporters: "I can only call this operation a complete success. Our plan called for a movement of 12 aircraft to Germany on this deployment and 12 is what we did. We flew all the missions called for. Our only dark spot was a bit of bad weather that delayed departure for a day for eight of the 12

planes from Dow AFB. This is another illustration of the professional capabilities of the civilian pilots of the air guard."

About 50 members of Fort Smith's Air Guard Group began their return trip from Ramstein Air Base, Germany. They have been participating in operation "READY GO" which is the first time in history that air guard planes have deployed non-stop to Europe during peacetime. The complete operation utilized 30 guard planes and approximately 700 air guardsmen representing 25 states. While in Germany the men have flown tactical reconnaissance missions for the 7th U.S. Army in Europe. They have flown 30 tactical sorties which includes 70 targets in a time of 149 hours and 30 minutes.

Different members of the unit have been briefed in various phases of European command affairs including missile bases, Supreme Headquarters Allied powers in Europe, Commander in Chief of European Forces North and South, United States Air Force Europe and NATO. All of the local members are due home sometime Sunday.

A mercy mission was flown to New York this past weekend by members of the local 188th Tac Recon Group. Making the flight were Major Joe C. Hall, pilot of the C-47; Cpt Charles McSwain, co-pilot; and MSgt Truman Wright, flight engineer. According to Maj Hall, the trio first flew to Memphis, Tenn, where they picked up an accident victim who had broken his neck and was suffering from paralysis from the neck down, affecting both arms and legs. They then flew him to a rehabilitation center near New York City. It was because of the severe nature of the injury that immediate air transportation was required.

18 Nov 1970, Maj Henry E. Ebbing Jr., Shaw AFB, SC RF-101 crashed

The Fort Smith-based 188 Tactical Fighter Group will be deployed 1 Oct to Balikesir Air Base, Turkey, to participate in NATO exercises, detachment commander LTC Billy Straug announced Friday, Straug said eight F-4C and 137 men from the Arkansas Air National Guard unit will join members of the 122nd Tactical Fighter Wing of the Indiana Air National Guard (luring the two-week exercise called "Cornet Crown." American units will conduct air, land and sea exercise with units from the United Kingdom, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Turkey, The exercise, Straug said, has nothing to do with recent developments in the Middle East. "This exercise has been on the books for approximately 18 months." he said. It will take the brown and green Phantoms - camouflaged so as not to be seen from above as they fly at treetop levels – 11½ flight hours to reach their destination, Straug said. They will travel at speeds of about 530 mph. The 20-year-old jets will make one stop at Lajes Field, Azores, and will be refueled in-flight seven times during their journey to Turkey, Straug said.

5 Jun 1985, Maj Douglas C. Coleman, 32, and Captain Richard Lumpkin, 31, were killed when their F-4 crashed into a valley between two mountains near Waldron the previous morning, June 5. They had been flying a routine low-level training mission when something went terribly wrong. One of the two other jets they were flying with reported that immediately prior to the crash, there had been no signs of trouble, and no distress signal was sent. Whatever went

wrong caused the crash in the blink of an eye.

The Coronet Cherokee deployment brought Air National Guard members from their home states to Turkey in October for a major NATO exercise - and tests of their combat skills, free of the limits imposed by heavy air traffic.

The 188th Tactical Fighter Group, Fort Smith, AR, and the 122nd Tactical Fighter Wing, Fort Wayne, IN, deployed to Turkey as part of the Checkered Flag series of deployments, which exposes U.S.-based tactical air units to operating procedures in areas outside the continental United States.

A total of 24 F-4Cs and F-4Es of the two units flew from their home bases to Lajes Field, Azores, and from there to Belikesir, Turkey, to participate in the NATO exercise Display Determination '86. They were refueled in the air four times on the trip to Lajes and five times en route to Turkey by Strategic Air Command KC-135 and KC-10, while ground crews and support people and their equipment were airlifted to Turkey by Military Airlift Command planes. Mediterranean, turning NE over the Aegean Sea and on to Belikesir, Turkey. This route was taken to avoid violating air space of other countries. Display Determination, under the direction of Adm Arthur S. Moreau, Jr., commander of Allied Forces Southern Europe, employed some 12,000 soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen, an amphibious task force of 16 Italian, Turkish and U.S. ships and Turkish and U.S. air units. The exercise is designed to test plans for the defense of NATO's Southern Region. At Balikesir the ANG units lived under canvas. U.S. Air Forces in Europe Civil Engineering Squadrons, constructed the "Tent City". It was supplemented by maintenance and storage facilities provided by their Turkish hosts. "Lived under canvas" was very literal. The people of the 188 TFG slept and ate in tents and used pit toilet rest rooms under tents. The shower facilities were in tents with water being hauled in and heated. Showering was restricted to just a limited amount of time each day with men and women sharing the same shower of course, not at the same time. There was no running water, therefore, no drinking fountains. For drinking water, there was a lister bag that you could use to fill your canteen. The hangar was the only building that was shared by all of the guard shops, but was able to accommodate only one aircraft at a time.

Members of the Arkansas Air National Guard have returned from the first ever air guard redeployment in Israel, More than 100 members of the 188th Fighter Wing returned home today after a three-week deployment to Israel where they trained with the Israel Air Force. The 188th was the only U.S. Air National Guard unit in the region training with the allied forces. The public affairs officer for the 188th Fighter Wing said the movement allowed training in a realistic desert environment, closely, simulating a real-world scenario. The maneuver was the first deployment of 2000 for the 188th Fighter Wing. The training allowed better understanding between the forces while at the same time improving readiness.

First F-16 delivery to the squadron was on 1 Jul 1988 and the formal acceptance of the F-16 happened on 15 Oct 1988.

The first of 17 upgraded fighter aircraft scheduled for assignment to the 188th Fighter Wing, touched down Friday morning. Escorted by Col Phil Bunch, commander of the 188th Maj Mark Kessens guided the unit's first F-16C to rest on the tarmac at Ebbing ANGB. The used, but newer F-16C, will replace the F-16 A/B the unit received on its 35th anniversary in Oct 1988. The final F-16Cs should be received in late December or early January, and the F-16A's will be sent to the 162nd Fighter Wing in Tucson, Arizona, for use in pilot training.

17 Dec 1993, F-16, LTC John M. Steward, midair collision with F-15 off the coast of Brunswick, GA on training mission

In early 2001 the 184 FS began to retire its F-16A/Bs to AMARC in exchange for F-16Cs. They never received any D-models. Because the squadron flew the rarely seen block 32, the squadron became a source for spare F-16s for the USAF Thunderbirds flight demonstration team. In the end the 184 FS never had to give up any of their aircraft as the Thunderbirds took needed aircraft from home based 57th Fighter Wing.

Squadron deployed in support of Operation Southern Watch Prince Sultan AB, Saudi Arabia (24 Oct 2002 to Dec 2002)

In early 2005 the 184 FS was preparing to take the TARS pod to Iraq but requested that they be able to carry the TARS pod in conjunction with a targeting pod. This combination had not been certified and the tight deadline that this needed to be completed by forced Air Force Material Command to find a way to get this done quickly. The 40th Test Squadron at Eglin AFB, FL was tasked with the job. As there were three possible configurations, LANTIRN, LITENING and Sniper, it was decided to choose the pod that would be the most troublesome and only test fly that one. Lockheed Martin was consulted and in the end the LANTIRN pod was chosen for the test. The 40 TS was to facilitate the test flight but equipment availability caused the 40th TS to look at the 107 FS who use the TARS pod operationally. Members of the 40th TS traveled to Selfridge to use both aircraft and pods of the 107 FS. A flight test sortie was quickly put together. When the aircraft returned to Selfridge a quick external examination was done on the TARS pod and all appeared okay. Closer inspection showed that the ECS scoop, located immediately in-line to the LANTIRN pod, was damaged and insulation torn. An exact cause of the problem could not be determined and the time limit required for the 184 FS to meet its deployment date. The short-term solution was put forward to keep airspeed below 0.95 Mach in this configuration and warn that scoop failure could still reoccur. A second flight in a 107th FS aircraft was successful under the above mentioned restriction and the certification of the TARS with targeting pod was made. The 184 FS was able to obtain its request for capability in enough time for the deployment.

Squadron deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom Balad AB, Iraq (May 2005 to Sep 2005)

Many units were affected by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure panel and the 184 FS was no exception. Initially it was decided that the squadron would lose all aircraft and shut down.

With a great deal of effort by Arkansas' leaders caused the BRAC panel to change its decision on the 184 FS and give it a new mission. The squadron would still lose its F-16s but in their place would get a total of eighteen A-10s. One of the deciding factors was Fort Smiths location near Fort Chaffee, a former National Guard training post. This location is a perfect spot for the A-10 to practice its low-flying air-to-ground mission. On 18 Oct 2006 the 184 FS began giving up F-16s when two departed for the 194 FS located in California. By April of 2007 the 184 FS had already begun to receive the A-10 and pilots had already commenced cross training back in October. On 14 Apr 2007 the 184 FS marked the day with a celebration 'Viper Out/Warthog In' day. The 184 FS took the opportunity to display their new A-10 paint scheme and to still fly the F-16 but the 184 FS at this point was officially an A-10 unit. The A-10s themselves came from the Massachusetts ANG. The last vipers, #86-0238 and #86-0285 departed on 28 Apr 2007.

The 188th Fighter Wing dominated the skies of Fort Hood, Texas, with the A-10 at a week-long joint wartime training exercise with the U.S. Army and Danish forces. Approximately 80 members of the 188th participated in the March 3-7 exercise here, flying many missions throughout the week. The unit trained with the Army's 4th Infantry Division and the Danish 21st Cavalry, an attack helicopter squadron. The 188th also worked with the 9th and 11th U.S. Air Force Air Support Operations Squadrons. "This was a great way for us to enhance our wartime capabilities," said Col. Kevin Wear, 188th Fighter Wing commander. "This was also our first deployment with the A-10, and we really appreciated this unique training opportunity." To provide close air support, the A-10s typically assist ground forces by seeking out and destroying high-value targets, providing cover fire, serving as a convoy escort and calling in potential threats to warn forces. In this training exercise, the aircraft also escorted Danish attack helicopters and participated in the integrated firing attacks. "Working with the U.S. Army and Danish forces is another chance for the 188th to show how valuable we are to the overall mission of the U.S. Air Force," Wear said. The A-10 is specifically designed for close-air support of ground forces. Its wide combat radius and short takeoff and landing capability enable it to operate in and out of locations near the front lines. "Our mission is close-air-support," said Lt. Col Clark Walker, 184 Fighter Squadron commander. "We are another weapon source for the ground commanders to achieve their objective. We have a unique ability to move quickly in support of the commander and ground forces." The A-10's 30mm Gatling gun can fire 3,900 rounds per minute, and can defeat an array of ground targets to include tanks. Some of their other equipment include an inertial navigation system, electronic countermeasures, target penetration aids, self-protection systems, and AGM-65 Maverick and AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles. "These missions were exactly the scenarios we would face in Iraq or Afghanistan," said Capt. Chris Simpson, 188th pilot and project officer for the deployment. "This was a great opportunity for us to hone our skills and look at how we can do it better. It was also a chance to improve overall tactics for the Air Force, Army and coalition forces." Although the 188th only began its transition to the A-10 one year ago in April, Simpson was confident pilots and ground crews were ready for the challenge. "We have a very skilled maintenance package and very talented pilots," Simpson said. "Both were certainly up to the task, and this exercise was the opportunity for them to prove it." The first deployment for wartime training for the wing, this was only the first of many to come. "This is our mission, and we practice locally, but we need to go where the Army is since they are our principle customer," Walker said. "We'll be doing a lot

of this going forward. It's our job to train with the Army." The 188th will also begin updating many of the systems in the current A-10. Beginning in the fall of 2008 the unit will start sending its aircraft, two at a time, to Hill AFB, UT, for the upgrades to the cockpit avionics system, Walker added 2008

The 188th Fighter Wing has received the last two of its newly acquired A-10 reports the Times Record. Once on the BRAC 2005 hit list, the unit has transitioned from F-16s to A-10s, receiving its first Hogs last spring. Wing commander Col Kevin Wear told the newspaper that the unit's pilots are all through their basic A-10 qualification training and progressing with more advanced training. Meanwhile, the Air Guard maintainers are acquiring expertise in A-10 maintenance, which, according to CMSgt. Mike Lensing, 188 FW aircraft superintendent, require more work than the unit's previous F-16s. The 188th A-10s are slated for avionics and precision weapon upgrades before the unit deploys in early 2010.

The last two A-10C ground-attack airplanes assigned to the Arkansas Air National Guard's 188th Fighter Wing left Fort Smith for good, ending the wing's manned flying mission, and ushering in its new mission, which includes operating MQ-9 remotely piloted aircraft. "Seeing a manned airplane leave, knowing it was for the last time, was kind of hard to watch," said 188th FW Vice Commander Col. Peter Gauger at the unit's conversion ceremony on June 7 at Ebbing ANG Base, reported KFSM News of Fort Smith. "I was a little emotional and sad, to be honest with you," he added. During the ceremony, the 188th FW got a new designation: the 188th Wing, and officials inactivated the wing's former maintenance and operations units. The wing simultaneously redesignated the 184 Fighter Squadron the 184 Attack Squadron, for transition to operating the RPAs. Officials likewise christened the new 188th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group, 153rd Intelligence Squadron, 223rd Intelligence Support Squadron, and 288th Operations Support Squadron to support the new mission set. 2014

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 7 Sep 2010
Updated: 2 May 2021

Sources

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